

Why I'm proud to be a Student Nurse

A fictional story by Alia Schimanke

The alarm startles me at 5am. Here we go, another day at clinical as a Level 1 BCIT Student Nurse. I am apprehensive, yesterday was rough. My patient did not trust in my abilities and asked for a 'real nurse'. Fair enough, he asked me so many questions that I didn't have answers for. His comment really made me question whether I was suited for this type of career. Lying in bed, my mind is overwhelmed with the responsibilities I have, the things I need to remember, the emotions I have to deal with and the realization that I have committed to this. These are other people's lives I am responsible for! What if I screw up? What if I miss something? Will I ever cut it as a 'real nurse'? Will I even make it to level 2? As I lie there, contemplating calling in sick, I remind myself 'this is what it's about, this is what I signed up for. One day, it will be worth it'.

I get on the unit, 0715. My patient from the previous day has been discharged, so I go to greet my new patient. A sweet old lady, sleeping soundly in her bed. I rouse her gently, introduce myself, "I'm Alia, a BCIT Student Nurse – I'll be helping you today!"

"Student Nurse?" she says sleepily "how wonderful".

"How wonderful?" I think to myself, "You're being sarcastic. I am going to spend the morning bothering you to take your vitals, and to do assessments. I'll have to take your blood pressure twice because I think I got it wrong the first time, and maybe it's too high. Then take your apical heart rate and realize it's too low! I'll chase around the primary nurse to alert her of my findings only for her to tell me that she's busy and what I've told her is not really that important...what? I'll give you a bed bath while I, a stranger, examine your most personal parts. I'm going to discuss with you how many bowel movements you've had in the last week, what it looks like and smells like. How is this wonderful for you?"

I sigh, "Yes, Student Nurse", I say back "I hope you don't mind"

"Of course I don't mind!" She says. "It takes a special person to want to be a nurse, I'm happy to help you with your education."

Her comment made me stop and think for a second. She was right. From a very young age I knew I wanted to be a nurse. There is a force inside me that wants to help people in one way or another and I believe nursing is the answer to that. Though sometimes I question my decision to commit to nursing as a career, its patients like this who really make me proud that I am a Student Nurse.