

Career Pathways Assessment

Vickie Rogers

UIN# 01010636

Old Dominion University

Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements in the course
Nurs 401: Career Pathway Assessment
Old Dominion University
NORFOLK, VIRGINIA
Fall, 2014

Career Pathways Assessment

When I was in elementary school we went on a field trip to the hospital. I was fascinated with the environment and the nurses in their crisp, white uniforms. They appeared intelligent, kind, giving, professional and important. I wanted to be like them. My desire to be a nurse continued to grow as I grew older. I wanted to help others, feel I had a purpose, and contribute to the betterment of society. I have often wondered if the nurses I met that day on my field trip realized they made such a positive and lasting impression. Also, I love science and I have always been amazed with how the human body works. Nursing was the perfect fit.

Educational Experiences

I was awarded a scholarship to attend Bluefield State College. I graduated in 1988 with my ADN. Throughout my career, I have always understood the benefit of cross-training. This mindset, has given me experience in a variety of areas. Learning about different areas and facets of nursing has helped me have a better understanding of the struggles and challenges of other nurses. It made me more empathetic and I formed better relationships with other departments. Taking ACLS, PALS, and TNCC was very important to me. I wanted to be competent and confident in emergency situations. It was essential for me to have the knowledge to be able to help in emergencies and not feel lost or incompetent. I wanted to be a high functioning member of the team to possibly make a difference in the outcome for the patient.

Work Experience

I have worked in many areas of nursing. I started out on a med-surg floor. I worked there for about 2 years. The more experienced nurses taught me so many things. They taught me not only clinical skills but the skills necessary for team work and professionalism. I had an “old school” Director that exuded professionalism that believed, and insisted, a nurse should look and

act professionally. We wore white uniforms and shoes and she insisted we look as pristine and be prepared as possible every day. One of her statements was, “A good nurse is always prepared and has a stethoscope and scissors.” She followed up with the question, “Are you a good nurse?” I made sure I always had my stethoscope and scissors! My charge nurse was the picture of what I considered a great nurse. She looked and acted the part. She was smart, respected, and in control. I have tried to model myself to reflect the traits of both of these nurses. I am so thankful I had such great co-workers and role models during my early years in nursing.

I left the med-surg floor for the same day surgical department. I worked there for approximately three years. I was appointed as charge nurse on the 3 to 11 shift. The experience of being in charge taught me a lot about responsibility and how to delegate and interact with others while in a leadership position.

Next, I worked in the PACU part-time and in an outpatient procedure unit part time. I worked in these areas for two years. I learned how to read EKG strips, administer IV conscious sedation, the effects of anesthesia, how to care for all ages of surgical patients including those that were critically ill, and I gained confidence in my abilities.

I left the PACU and went to work full-time in the operating room. The operating room provided me with an upfront and center view of the inner body. I learned how procedures were performed in a variety of specialties with patients of all ages and comorbidities and further developed a team mentality. I worked in the operating room for 11 years. I did relief charge for three years and eventually, became the full-time charge nurse. I held this position for 5 years. I oversaw the operations of the entire OR. I collaborated and communicated with surgeons and anesthesiologists to ensure the cases were completed efficiently. I delegated to 40 employees daily, made and managed the staff schedule, dealt with staff and physician problems, and

completed and gave evaluations every year. I gained experience in management, collaboration with all levels of staff and other departments, and how to deal with staff with a variety of needs or issues on a daily basis. I also learned that respect is earned by maintaining honesty, integrity, hard work, and by never asking someone to do something I wouldn't do. I feel good leaders lead by example. I worked a total of 21 years at this hospital.

I began to grow restless. I wanted new challenges and to quench my curiosity about the environments, protocols and procedures at other facilities. I accepted a position at another facility in critical care and the emergency department. The transition from the OR to critical care was very challenging. I worked for three years in the CCU. I learned so much during those years. I cared for patients with a variety of health issues. I learned how to do end of life care for the patient and their family and I came to grips with my feelings about the process. I set and met the goal to obtain CCRN certification. I also worked in the emergency department when our unit was not busy. I gained knowledge about dealing with patients with minor to major life threatening injuries or illnesses, and mental health issues.

I left CCU and took a job on the neurosurgery team at a large teaching hospital. I saw and assisted with surgical procedures I had never seen before in neurosurgery and other surgical specialties. My favorite procedure was DBS (deep brain stimulation) for Parkinson patients. The effects of the procedure and the impact it would have on making their life better was evident immediately. I experienced working with residents in all levels of their residency. It was rewarding to help and watch them grow. I worked at the facility for about 2 ½ years.

Lastly, I took a position in the operating room at the hospital where I am currently employed. I have worked for three years at this facility. I have CNOR certification and I am the preceptor for our department. This experience has taught me a lot about teaching, orientation,

and educating novice and experienced staff. I achieved the highest level of RN IV in our career advancement program this year. The process involved to achieve this level requires a lot of dedication, time, and commitment.

I have learned culture is very hard to change. I have found by maintaining a professional demeanor, presenting evidence, and exhibiting passion, persistence and perseverance I have become a catalyst for change in our department.

Self-assessment

Nursing is my passion, especially perioperative nursing. I feel it is my duty to protect the patients in my care. They are in the most vulnerable state possible while in the operating room. They cannot speak for themselves and do not have family members to speak for them. I am their voice. I feel I must do everything possible to protect and care for them.

I feel my strengths lie in my desire for patient safety and advocacy and my drive and persistence. Another strength I have is the courage to speak up and risk the disapproval of my peers. It is not easy to do this as it can be at the expense of fitting in with some of my co-workers.

A weakness I have is dealing with upset and disharmony in my environment. I do not like confrontation. I try to relay information in a tactful and professional manner. I find it difficult to deal with people that don't want to communicate in this fashion. Another trait I have discovered is I am self-critical. Although this is a weakness, it is one of the driving forces behind my desire to stay current and up to date with evidence based practice, recommendations and standards, and facility policy to provide the best patient care.

Professional or Community Activities

I volunteer at the local free clinic when time permits. I really enjoy helping the patients that in are in need. It gives me a real appreciation for my good health and financial situation. It feels good to using my nursing skills to help, not out of obligation or for pay but, because I want too. I am always amazed at how much need there is in my small community. I was hopeful everyone would have access to affordable medical insurance and care with the Affordable Care Act. It has been an eye opening experience to see firsthand the people that still cannot get insured due to the cost.

Educational Path

I began the path to obtain my BSN for my own personal satisfaction, professional validation, and opportunity. I feel it is my path to lead change and improve the quality of patient care. Having my BSN will allow me more opportunity to be involved in, and eligible for, positions necessary to make lasting contributions and changes. I want to exhibit and model the image of a professional. I hope to encourage and inspire other nurses to become change agents to improve their practice and patient care. I want support an environment of collaboration, learning, and change based on evidence based practice.

Educational and Professional Goals

Before beginning the RN-BSN program I did not do much writing. I would like to feel much more comfortable with writing and expression of my thoughts. I would like to become knowledgeable and comfortable with APA format rules. I also hope to learn how to use researching resources to aid in gathering information about topics I am interested in, or topics I need quality evidence based information for, to support necessary changes in practice or protocol.

One of the professional goals I would like to achieve would be promotion to a higher-level position within my department. A higher-level position would allow me the opportunity to encourage an environment of active learning and change. My second goal is to be on the Joint Commission planning committee. I like to know the latest regulations to ensure our unit and practice is compliant.

Plan for Goal Achievement

By enrolling in the RN-BSN program I have started my path toward a higher-level leadership role. I have had conversations with my director as to my desire to advance my career. I would like to manage our OR. I have talked with her about being my mentor. She has conveyed her willingness to support me in my endeavor to become a manager. In the meantime, I will continue to be involved in quality committees and the CAP (career advance placement) program. I will voice my interest to my manager and the chair of the Joint Commission preparedness committee and follow through and complete any assignments. I will continue to investigate other nursing roles such as quality management, case management and educator roles.

I work full-time and I am enrolled full-time in the RN-BSN program. It is very challenging and basically is the only thing I do on my days off. I work 12-14 hour shifts plus call. By working three days a week I have the other four days to work on assignments. I plan my time carefully and try to work ahead as much as possible. My family understands my commitment and is very supportive. My husband does most of the laundry, shopping and household duties while I am working toward my goal. I make time to spend at least one weekend evening with my husband. I put my son to bed at night when I am not at work. I set aside time to play with my son with specific time limits. I know I need to find time for physical activity but I am still working that out. I think I may try yoga. We all know our sacrifices are

necessary for me to achieve my goal to graduate in August 2015. After graduation, we are going to take a family vacation and celebrate the completion of the program to obtain my BSN.

Conclusion

In conclusion, I realized the areas I need to work on in my personality to become more comfortable with confrontation. I am also very proud of my career and accomplishments. It was fun to recollect my early experiences and the nurses that were so influential to me and my career. It has brought to my attention how fortunate I am to have a great support system. I know I have the drive and persistence to obtain my BSN. I never put my goals for the future of my career in writing. By writing this paper, I recognize my goals and aspirations seem more viable and achievable.