

Reflective Journal

For my HSNS376 clinical placement I was allocated Coffs Harbour emergency Department. Being my final placement, I had a mix of emotions prior to commencing. I was both excited and nervous to be placed in ED and knew that by utilising a reflective journal throughout my time spent there would allow me to have an active engagement in my work ethic and progression into a registered nurse.

Reflective practice has a wide range of benefits in increasing self-awareness, which is a key component of emotional intelligence and in developing a better understanding of others. By engaging in reflective practice it enables me to manage the professional and personal impact of addressing my patients fundamental health and wellbeing needs on a daily basis.

As I have never done a clinical placement in ED before, I felt very overwhelmed at the fast pace environment I was going to be working in. For the first few days I felt like I had been stripped back to basics as I learnt the routine of the emergency department. By applying my clinical foundation nursing skills and working alongside RN's I quickly got the hang of how ED ran and the general structure it follows.

I became familiar with a patient presenting to ED, being triaged and then in a zone depending on the severity of their condition. Once allocated to a zone, our patient care began. All new admissions had a set of observations performed on them and a note documented stating they had arrived and the condition they are in. If the patient had chest pain, an ECG was conducted as well as being set up to cardiac monitoring. Bloods are usually then taken and then the patient is seen by a doctor for a plan to be made. I learnt whilst in ED that patients are often commenced on a pathway plan of care i.e. stroke, sepsis or chest pain pathways.

After each shift in ED I have been writing down the things I learnt that day, the things I am proud of or thought I did well in and the things that I believe I need to practice more. This helps me guide my progression into professional practice as a registered nurse and allows me to identify my strengths and weaknesses. Evaluating my experience has helped me cope with some situations I have never dealt with before and adapt to the everchanging environment of ED.

Some self-care practices I engage in whilst on placement include regular exercise and spending time outdoors. This helps me focus my mind and de-stress from the day. I also ensure I follow a good diet filled with lots of fruits and vegetables as well as getting a decent night's sleep. Ways in which I could improve on my self-care whilst on placement include managing my stress and anxiety levels and making sure I do not over work myself – which I tend to do.

I have also reflected upon the importance of resilience and being able to bounce back as this allows better patient care and outcomes. Resilience has influenced me as a person and a nurse by learning the importance of being alert, staying positive and practicing clear communication, even when I am feeling stressed out and overwhelmed.