

It Matters

The question of why it matters depends upon what “it” is. It, in nursing, is a myriad of things, or reasons why it matters. Let’s assume it could be knowledge, skill, compassion, collaboration, touch, communication or presence.

Nursing is both a science and an art, and each of these things fall into one or both categories, which also comprises professionalism. Knowledge, both academic and experiential, is vital to expert care of increasingly critically ill patients. Learning does not end with graduation of school, rather is just the beginning of real learning, and of even more complex concepts. The beginning of knowledge is science, yet what experience teaches can be part of art, for example, how to tactfully deal with angry and hurt people, turning that anger into a positive experience. The practice of successfully assisting people in anguish may begin as the science of crucial conversations, yet with continued practice becomes a definite skill, which is an art in itself.

Task based skills, such as starting an IV begins as a science. Experience with all variety of situations helps that become a real art, greatly appreciated by patients who feel like a science experiments due to multiple attempts.

Compassionate care given in families’ darkest times is an art never to be forgotten by those who experience it. The collaboration between what the patient and family needs and what the nurse administers heal, even if the broken body will not. The touch appears to most to be nothing more than the job, yet carries mercy, comfort and presence. More is communicated with a simple gesture of compassion through touch conveying more than words can say.

Presence, merely being by the patient or family’s side, potentially without a word spoken, contains respect, acknowledgment and caring. To be comfortable with the silence while “speaking” with the heart by presence is both knowledge of the situation, and the art of presence.

Communicating new knowledge to nurses on Evidence Based Practice, encouraging them to refine said skills, perpetually seeking knowledge and skills promotes professionalism. Leading by example, demonstrating what professionalism looks like, creates an environment for experiential learning. Attendance at NTI demonstrates my commitment to lifelong learning. Sharing communicates caring for others, allowing them to provide evidence (science) based professional care to their patients.

Why are these traits important? Why do these things matter? Each of these components matter because nursing is a profession. These components demonstrate being professional. Professionalism matters.

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