



What nursing means to me...

WHEN SOMEONE ASKS ME “WHAT IS A NURSE?” OR “WHAT DO NURSES DO exactly?” I often stumble over my words. I give some vague answer that does not do my profession justice. In my head, I think, “How can words describe the complexity of this beloved and trusted profession?” If only they could experience what my day at work is like. If only they could see how my job is more than following doctor’s orders, giving medications, or changing beds. If only they could hear what goes through my head when I’m recording a child’s high temperature or analyzing blood work. If only they could see that the health of an individual is so much

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more than treating a disease. If only they could understand the difference taking the time to sit with a patient can make.

On my second day of work as a new grad I had a one-year-old patient whose diagnosis

was uncertain. This dear child had been poked and prodded time after time and the doctors were still trying to understand what was going on. It was obvious that the mother was concerned and cared deeply for her child, but each time I went in to check on the

newborn, she was by herself sitting in her crib. The health-care team had been in and out all day taking blood, doing assessments, taking a swab for this and a swab for that. Each time the baby saw one of us approach in our yellow gowns and masks she would get restless and fussy.

During that afternoon when I went in to do my hourly check she was alone again, sitting in her crib looking around. I approached the crib and smiled through the mask and started rubbing her back. She looked at me with her big brown eyes and raised her arms. To my astonishment, I realized this dear child likely had not been cuddled or hugged much at all that day. I picked her up and she clung to me with a fierce little grip, and laid her head on my shoulder. She would not let go. I will never forget the feeling of this little one hugging me so.

I was humbled that I was able to be there for her in this way. At that moment, I realized that this is what nursing means. These precious, comforting moments flicker by us so quickly, and often go unnoticed, but they are the foundation of everything nurses do. **RN**

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