

Being the Diversity

Nursing is not something that has always been a part of my life. It hadn't been on my radar as a possible profession until I really decided what I wanted with my life. I was only able to do this through my experience with diversity. Diversity, however, has been a part of my life for about as far back as I can remember. Coming from a racial background that differed from the vast majority of the people around me and having a mixed-race family presented many unique experiences, sometimes pleasant and other times quite the opposite. My unique relationship and experience with diversity caused me to realize how formative it was on me and how I can use that to better myself and those around me. Once I realized this, my future became intertwined with nursing.

When I picture diversity in my head the way that its presented in society and taught in schools, I imagine a group of people with different cultural backgrounds that reflect the great metaphor that is America: a melting pot. My actual experience with it tends to reflect a different situation. I am one of very few who is the diversity. This was the same story in grade school that carried into high school and spilled into college. For a long time growing up, this felt like a disadvantage, to walk into a room and be the only person of color. The jokes and comments had nowhere else to land but directly on me and they certainly never felt like advantages at the time. They just felt inevitable and almost normal and this really bothered me.

There was a point at which I decided it was better to let go of the frustration and anger that accompanied certain unpleasant interactions. Rather than hanging onto someone else's hate and arrogance letting it take up my time and my emotion when it is worth neither. This has helped me learn to be patient and poised when faced with situations that are uncomfortable or frustrating. I know that this will benefit me moving forward in my profession and will help

facilitate my ability to foster positive and valuable therapeutic relationships. A separate yet equally important lesson I learned was to maintain focus and dedication to my own health and wellbeing. Choosing to no longer worry about the things I cannot control, particularly other's words and actions, gave fruition to my dedication of self. As my time in nursing school has reinforced, it is vital to take care of yourself so you can take care of others. That is what I decided was what I wanted to get out of life: helping others.

Growing up as diversity has imparted me with the interpersonal skills to place my patients in the center of their care. I feel fully equipped to work with patients from all different backgrounds racially, religiously, and politically because I know what it means to not be part of the crowd. I understand that all too often vulnerable populations such as POC or those of lower socioeconomic status can be pushed to the side, neglected in the margins of society. Armed with the personal experience and knowledge of how different society can be for you when you don't look like society, I will be the advocate and I will be the voice for my patients. Knowing how it feels to be out of place or not heard charges me with both a moral and ethical obligation to do everything in my power, everything within my control, to ensure that my patients always know that I hear them, I value them as individuals, and I will fight for their best interest.

Holistic care, a concept I was introduced to first semester, really took hold in me. I love the concept of caring for the whole individual. Aristotle's famous quote, "The whole is greater than the sum of its parts." This makes me think of holistic care because we must look at every part to know the whole. We must look at every aspect of what makes us human, what makes us feel good or bad, and how we can apply ourselves and our holistic care to those in need of assistance to become whole. I will always be thankful for the course my life has taken and what I

have learned during it, as it has led me to where I am now, connected to nursing as if it had always been a part of my life.

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