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BACHELORS IN CHILDREN'S STUDIES WITH A EMPHASIS IN CHILD LIFE
1 YEAR EXPERIENCE

REMEMBER WHEN YOU WANTED WHAT YOU CURRENTLY HAVE?

Can you tell me a little bit about your hospital and the units you cover?

I work in an adult hospital, but specifically on the 16-bed, inpatient pediatric floor. We also receive consults to Mother Baby, NICU, Labor and Delivery, ED, ICU, Surgery, and Radiology. Our Child Life program is fairly new, but we have three CCLS ranging from new (hi, me!) to very experienced.

What's your typical unit census and about how many patients do you see per day?

My typical census is about 12 patients, and I stay primarily on the inpatient pediatric floor. I see about 5-8 patients per day.

What does your average day look like?

I work a full-time job, (Sun-Thurs) in medical sales, and I work on Saturdays, as a CCLS. My typical day is waking up at 4:30am, drive 1.5 hours to the hospital, work a 10-hour shift, and drive 1.5 hours home. However, while at the hospital, I will read the handoff report (from the previous CCLS), go through my census for the day, and prioritize patients based off of the census. Once patients start to wake up for the day, I will introduce myself to those on my priority list and assess their needs. Throughout the day, I will receive EPIC consults or verbal consults from RNs or CNAs to see certain patients, or to help with procedures. I am also someone who needs to chart after each patient that I see; I cannot wait until the end of the day to wrap up my charting or else I will forget details. So charting between each patient is important to me, and helps me feel balanced.

What is your favorite distraction item and how do you use it?

OOH! This is tough because it totally depends on the age group, but I'll just name my two favorites! My favorite with infants are bubbles because they can be both engaging and distracting. Sometimes I get stuck blowing bubbles for longer than the duration of the procedure because it can be so relaxing for the little ones. For toddlers, I really like light spinners because of the different colors and the vibration. I'll ask about the colors they are seeing, or ask to put the vibrations on their cheek, nose, or belly for redirection.

What's the best part about your job?

I love having the honor and privilege to serve patients and families when they come to us; vulnerable and unsure of the future of their hospitalization.

What's the hardest part in doing your job?

Some people might say death is the hardest part of their job, but for me, the hardest part about my job is since I only work once a week, I don't have the ability to check back on patients (the following day) who might've had a particularly rough day when I was supporting them. I don't have enough hours in the day to revisit all of the patients who I would, ideally, like to see.

What's a facet of your job that people wouldn't expect?

I think people get surprised with all the notches on our tool belt. We don't just help to normalize the hospital experience, advocate, and provide procedural support.

What's something you wish you knew when you started on this unit?

After I started this job, I realized that while I may be slow to warm up to people in general, the reality is - I can't be. Especially with being a new CCLS, in a new CL program, with new faces to learn. I have to introduce myself and role to everyone and anyone that I can.

Do you have anything else you'd like to share about your job, tips for students, or thoughts?

Do NOT give up. I searched cross country for a CCLS position for TWO YEARS before I got this job. I had people tell me that I needed another internship before I would even be ready to be on my own. I have shed many tears throughout my CL journey, but I wouldn't trade it for the world. This is my passion, and I have the right team to back me up and support me through my first year as a CCLS. They have never shamed me, if I didn't have all the answers, and I consistently feel so uplifted by my them. So, wherever you are in your journey, don't give up on your passion. Everything happens for a reason, and I feel like every denial email I received throughout navigating the practicum/internship/and job search has led me to the exact place where I need to be and more importantly, where I am meant to be.

