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BS IN CHILD DEVELOPMENT AND FAMILY STUDIES WITH CONCENTRATION IN CHILD HEALTH
13 YEARS EXPERIENCE

AND THE DAY CAME WHEN THE RISK TO REMAIN TIGHT IN A BUD, WAS MORE
PAINFUL THAN THE RISK IT TOOK TO BLOSSOM" ~ ANAIS NIN

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

I have worked in the same children's hospital within an adult hospital for the last thirteen years. For the first six years of my career I worked in Peds/PICU covering evenings and weekends. In 2013, I was asked to pilot a child life position in our pediatric hematology/oncology outpatient clinic and I have been serving this population ever since!

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

My days vary greatly, but generally I will see between 10 and 20 patients in a single day. Sometimes more, sometimes less, depending on the day and the needs of the patients and their families.

What does your average day look like?

Our clinic sees oncology patients in the mornings. Most of our OR times happen in the mornings as well. Our hospital has its own CCLS in surgery, but if I am able, I follow my clinic patients when they go to surgery. Afternoons consist of new patient referrals, sickle cell clinic and office work/projects. As time permits, I will also check in on the oncology patients who are hospitalized, but this doesn't always happen.

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

Bubbles! They are so versatile. I often blow the bubbles and ask patients to pop them with their free arm while in their comfort position. I will also "eat" or "chomp" the bubbles with my hands, which USUALLY makes my young patients giggle the type of giggle that comes straight from their belly- it's the BEST sound. I also enjoy encouraging patients to blow bubbles as they are able. "I Spy" and "Would You Rather" are also ways that I can get the patients to usually engage easily.

What's the best part about your job?

I feel like I have SO many best parts of my job. Seeing the same children daily, weekly, monthly brings so much joy. Getting to know the patients and their families and building a working relationship to support them through diagnosis/ treatment is amazing. Watching my patients grow, develop and gain coping skills and resiliency on their healthcare journey is unbelievable at times. Furthermore, have the most OUTSTANDING team that I get to work with every day. It is so fun to come to a place where you get to work with your friends. Our clinic is small with a team of 16 professionals. Also, our CCLS team is small, with 7 professionals. I guess you can say I love the intimacy of our close-knit groups. Who could ask for more?

What's the hardest part in doing your job?

Feeling under-appreciated and devalued, mostly by those who are unfamiliar with my role as a CCLS.

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

People always say to me "I could never do your job" and "I don't know how you do it". To those folks, I invite you to come sit in our waiting room and see how much love and happiness emits from our patients, their families and our staff. It is NOT one of the saddest places to work. Our clinic flourishes with hope and happiness on a daily basis.

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

You are ALWAYS making a difference, even if you feel like you are failing. You are impacting patients and families in a positive way- especially while doing "the little things".

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

Something that I wish my younger self would have figured out sooner- surround yourself with positive people and kindly remove those that bring you down. Toxic personal and professional relationships will bring so much negativity and our job as a CCLS is hard enough. Focus on the positives. Laugh daily. A smile goes a long way. Be patient and kind, and always be yourself.

