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BS IN CHILD & FAMILY STUDIES; MA IN CHILD LIFE
2 YEARS EXPERIENCE

THE FLOWER THAT BLOOMS IN ADVERSITY IS THE MOST RARE AND BEAUTIFUL OF THEM ALL" -MULAN

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

I currently work with our Vascular Access and PICC team at our base campus which, fun fact, is the largest team of their kind! Though we have many child life specialists, I am the only CCLS who covers this unit and primarily supports PICC lines, Midlines, IVs and blood draws.

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

In my role, there really is no typical day because it depends on how many PICCs are scheduled, which changes many times throughout the day. On average, I see about 5-8 patients a day due to lengthier procedures times.

What does your average day look like?

I work full-time, Monday-Friday, from 9am to 4:30pm. When I arrive, the first thing I do is check in with the PI RN (the nurse who schedules all the PICCs for the day) and compile a census list of those patients. Sometimes there are just a few patients listed for the morning and then more referrals come through later in the day. These referrals could be for PICC placements, PICC exchanges or Midlines. If the patient is inpatient I reach out to the unit child life specialist to relay all PICC line information and provide the patient prior preparation if needed. Because our PICC team is so large, sometimes two procedures can happen at once and I'm relying on the unit child life specialist for back-up support. I spend most of my morning/afternoon providing support for the procedures; PICC insertions take about 45 minutes while PICC exchanges and Midline placements about 20 minutes or so. In a perfect world I attempt to do my charting right after the procedure is finished to prevent being slammed at the end of the day; however this can be difficult if procedures are scheduled at every hour and are back-to-back. On slower days, when no PICCs are scheduled for a period of time, I'll then follow the Vascular Access Team all throughout the hospital (inpatient and outpatient) to help support IVs and blood draws. At the end of the day I finish my charting and check emails.

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

My favorite form of distraction is not an item at all but rather storytelling. I have a few stories I keep in my memory, mostly about my dog, and utilize them as a means of distraction. Other methods I like to utilize include singing songs, telling jokes, mindfulness meditation, deep breathing and card tricks.

What's the best part about your job?

The best part about my job is the honor of being present with a patient during their healthcare journey and teaching them coping skills they can utilize for the rest of their life. It's so rewarding to witness a patient gain mastery and control over procedures they didn't think they could get through.

What's the hardest part in doing your job?

The hardest part about my job is that no day is the same, which makes it difficult to plan things but it's also why I love it so much! Some days I'm covering PICC lines back-to-back in the IR room all day while other days I'm all over the hospital supporting a few inpatient bedside PICCs, some IVs in outpatient settings, maybe visiting NICU to support some blood draws and ending the day with a port access in IR. You never know what the day will bring until it comes, and I love a good surprise!

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

Who knew to build great rapport with my nursing staff would entail becoming a skilled cook/baker. In fact, our team is always celebrating something and what better way to do that than with delicious food!

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

That teamwork really does make the (procedure) work. In this role, I work with so many disciplines including nurses, PCAs, radiology techs and radiology physicians... usually all at the same time during the procedure and it's really important that everyone is on the same page and understands the plan to ensure a smooth and successful experience for the patient.

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

As a student, approach this journey with a humble heart and soak in everything your preceptor/mentor has to teach you. Be open-minded and challenge yourself. Refrain from comparison and focus on your unique journey and how you're growing as a professional throughout each season. Everyone's path is different so be patient and willing to learn from all experiences, even if they don't turn out the way you expect!

