

10 Things You Should Know About the First Semester of Nursing School

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A tongue-in-cheek synopsis of the trials and tribulations of a first semester nursing student. This article covers just a few of the many changes I've been through in four months. My transformation at graduation should be nothing short of amazing!

1) Family Understands; Not!

Even if your family says they understand, they really don't. You may as well tell them, and your friends too, that you are being deployed for 2-4 years, depending on your program. Because you will be MIA every. single. weekend. And most nights too.



2) Buy Stock In Paper

Buy stock in Georgia Pacific. Because as much copy paper as you will use, you may as well own part of the company.

3) Buy Stock In A Printer

While you are at it, buy stock in Canon or whatever inkjet or laser printer you use. You now own Canon and Georgia Pacific.

4) Don't Forget About Your Pets!

Come to terms now with the guilt you will inevitably feel from neglecting cuddle time with your pets. They have an even harder time understanding your absence than your family. Make them homemade treats. It will temporarily assuage your guilt.

5) Say Goodbye To Your Beautiful Nails

If you have nice artificial (or even natural) nails, mourn them now. They aren't allowed in clinical. Only short, stubby, unpolished nails are allowed in clinical. It's an infection control thing that you will soon understand. Besides, even with PPE, you will be glad for less nooks and crannies that you have to scrub out after being in the hospital all day, especially if you have a patient who..... oh, never mind..... You'll see.

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6) No More Haircuts - STUDY!

On that same note, figure out how to get by without a haircut for months at a time. You won't have the time for such inconsequential things as keeping up your appearance. And if you did have the time, you wouldn't have the energy. Because you would be sleeping. And if you aren't sleeping, you will be studying. And if you aren't studying, you will be feeling guilty about not studying..... so you may as well study and save yourself the guilt.

7) Failing is BAD!

If you are an A student, get over it. Your As may well become Bs, and that's ok. I haven't cried even one time over a B. And I'm a previous A student. It's not that you are trying less, or that the material is harder (it is), it's that a 90 isn't an A anymore and a 79 isn't even a C. It's now failing. Failing is bad. Bs are not bad.

8) You Are Now Boring. Be Proud!

Tell your friends and family that on the rare occasions you see them that you will bore the crap out of them with all the things you've learned. And be proud of it.

9) Donuts And Coffee Your Best Friends

10) Accept that donuts and a coffee from 7/11 is a food group in and of itself.

Don't Miss Class! Make Plans.

The world doesn't stop turning now that you are in nursing. Unfortunately, things still happen to throw obstacles in your way. Make a plan now for what you will do when Junior barfs all over his teacher's shoes and he needs to be picked up from school. Because you can't miss class, or clinical. Especially not clinical.

So, now that first semester is wrapping up, I would also add that it has been a huge, life-changing learning experience. I have learned how to study, how not to study, how dirty my car can get and still run, how many ginormous textbooks I can fit into one scrap of zippered nylon, how to tell when the neurons have just totally stopped firing and it's time to stop studying because no more info is being retained anyway..... And now, after exams, a nice, long, well-deserved break is almost here. Happy Hanukkah, Merry Christmas, whatever you celebrate!!!

More information on "My First Semester in Nursing School..."

