



# FIU Anesthesiology Nursing Program Class of 2014 Health and Wellness Newsletter Summer 2013

## Succeeding in Clinical

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### WELCOME TO SEMESTER III

Semester two finals are over! We have successfully completed a very academically challenging semester. We all have our sights on the ultimate goal of graduating school and passing boards, but if you haven't yet taken a moment to personally congratulate yourself on this significant achievement, please do so. You deserve it. After having had a couple of weeks to recuperate, we must now take on the challenges of the third semester.

Our academic load has decreased significantly, yet our clinical expectations have increased. We have grown quite a bit since the beginning of first semester. Gone

are the days when we had to take out our hand-made user guides to do the machine check. We no longer need pictures to remind us of what our set-up needs to look like, and set-up time has decreased. We can turnover a room quickly between cases and have grown accustomed to the workflow. We have been exposed to many different types of cases, patients, and scenarios. And, we have already started inserting artlines, spinals, and have gained some independence.

Now it's time to embrace the honor of having a greater level of independence. We have to think deeper and put more pieces

### REMEMBER: ONE DAY AT A TIME

together. Our preceptors have been there to guide us, but we have now gained two semesters of valuable knowledge that gives our preceptors enough confidence to push us closer to flying on our own. As you journey through semester three, remember some tips that may make your journey towards success a little easier.

#### **Be Prepared**

**Care plan; check!** The most important aspect when it comes to surviving clinical is to come prepared. Make sure you have a care plan every single day. Anesthesia is still quite new to us, and not having a care plan is like driving to a new place without a map.

Thoroughly research your case the night before. Write each care plan as if you will be taking care of that patient completely on your own. This may motivate you to more intently research interventions related to possible surgical and anesthetic complications.

**Clinical bag; check!** Make sure you have all of the equipment you need. How inconvenient is it to have forgotten your stethoscope on a day all of your patients decide to desat in the middle of a case? What a pain to have to go around hunting for a pen, or to find someone to badge you in and out of every door. Packing your clinical bag the night before and putting it in your car or on your door handle may prevent the forgetfulness your brain can experience when you are rushing out of the door at 5am.

**Brain; check!** Be mentally prepared for clinical. Getting your mind in clinical mode will make for a better day. Know your med doses, side effects, receptors, and implications. Be particularly vigilant about mastering medications and diseases that are common to your facility. Know disease processes, and the anesthetic process. And last but not least- know your role!

### **Make Every Experience Valuable**

*“Some days you learn how to do anesthesia, and some days you learn how not to do anesthesia, but every day you learn something,”* says Junior SRNA Nicole Valencia. Every experience is valuable. Most people would agree that being in a case is at least a little bit more exciting than spending a day doing pre-ops. The role of completing pre-ops, however, is extremely important. Not only does



Junior SRNA's S. Maldonado (left) and L. Oninku

it ease workflow and assist with turnover time, it is an opportunity to master the art of extracting valuable information from patients. As we all know, the patient's history is the most important consideration when it comes to planning anesthetic management. The omission of even one thing can result in sub-optimal or even harmful care. Pre-op isn't just about asking questions, it's about asking the right questions. Some patients believe that taking a medication for a certain condition means they no longer have that condition. This is why it may be more judicious to say, “Do you take any medications for high blood pressure?” as opposed to “Do you have a history of high blood pressure?” Stating simply to a patient that the anesthetic plan is carefully tailored based on their history may encourage embarrassed or dismissive patients to share valuable information. Building a good rapport early during the pre-op process and gaining the patient's trust may also help to facilitate a more efficient pre-op experience. Junior SRNA Emily Wade was able to ascertain a

significant and abnormal lab value from a patient who had not had labs done and who didn't think that it was significant enough to mention. Emily's excellent assessment skills helped to ensure that the patient received optimal care. Using the pre-op experience as an opportunity to go home and research unfamiliar medications and disease processes can certainly make the pre-op experience quite valuable. This semester, some of us will be experiencing two weeks of observing obstetrical anesthesia. Though learning is strongly associated with performing the task at hand, there is great value in observing the task as well. Be intentional about gathering information with your eyes and ears. Assessing the set-ups, studying how different medications are tailored to different patients, and listening to the communication between the anesthetist, patients, and staff can be very valuable. Observing from a panoramic view can often reveal more than the observing we often do through the first person perspective of managing a case. So, intentionally thinking through implications and interventions during an observation day can help train your brain to anticipate events and to be a more attentive anesthetist. This is also another way to “make every experience valuable.”

### **Study, Study, Study!!!**

Pharmacology is arguably the most important class we will take in anesthesia school. Since we won't be taking a pharmacology course this semester, the task of continuing to master pharmacology must be a self-guided and individually motivated process. Building a solid foundation of

knowledge will not only help you to customize your anesthetic plan, but it may also prevent or even get you out of a jam.

There are days when you will be doing “bread and butter” cases, and there are other days when you will be doing rare cases or cases full of unanticipated events. You may encounter a new medication, surgical technique, or anesthetic technique beyond the research you have done for your care plan. To learn how to manage certain cases, one must solidify their experience. One way to solidify knowledge is by repeated experience, but you are not always in control of which cases you get; so a good way to help solidify an experience (especially that of a rare or challenging case) is to go home and study the case. *“Integrate what you do clinically with your reading that night because it will make clinical more interesting and educational; it is the best way to remember and reinforce the information,”* states anesthesiologist H. Goldman, MD. The brain remembers strong



*Junior SRNA Ingrid Garcia solidifies her knowledge by making the most of Sim Lab*

experiences, particularly if it was a really good experience, or a really bad experience. We often choose our actions or inactions according to those experiences. We intentionally do things to prevent the recurrence of a bad experience or to repeat the rewards of a good experience. We are motivated by our biggest mistakes as much as we are our greatest victories; those are easy to remember. But for all of those things in the middle that our brains may easily lapse on, the best way to succeed is to go home and study, study, study!

## Be Professional

**Choose your attitude.** Your attitude is often a reflection of your mentality. Your attitude (facial expressions, demeanor, behavior, and work ethic) contributes to your presentation. The way you present yourself can significantly impact the way you do your job, your professional relationships, and patient care. We work in a highly stressful environment, and the stress can negatively impact our attitudes. It can be easy to forget that our attitude is a choice. Knowing how to control the id inside of us that wants to react impulsively to difficult situations is an invaluable professional tool.

**Choose your words wisely.** Words are extremely powerful. They have the power to heal and they have the power to hurt. Be mindful of how you speak to and treat others. The OR is an environment where assertiveness is necessary; yet don't let a stressful situation override professionalism.



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~ H. Goldman, MD



Don't take everything to heart, as the stress of holding the lives of others in our hands can cause people to direct stress towards those who are uninvolved. "I try not to take anything personally," says Junior SRNA Cole Asay. Also, words may not always be received the way they are intended, so sometimes the best thing to do is just to bite your tongue. Speaking of biting your tongue, don't forget that anesthesia is a small community, so be careful saying anything you would mind everyone knowing.

Pre-Op for helping you between cases, and show your gratitude to someone who set up the room for



Professor D. Glymph, CRNA, shows Junior SRNA Crystal Miller the art of intubation.

At times, our preceptors may ask us to do something differently. It may not be that we are doing something wrong, but it may just be a personal preference. Just keep in mind that this is our time to learn. Make the most of this opportunity to learn from those who have been in our shoes by being flexible. Remember that you will be continually learning throughout the length of your career, so be teachable. Be willing to listen and to learn. Ask appropriate questions at the right time. Being a student may not always be fun or easy, but embrace it; you will never experience this time again, so make the most of this learning opportunity.

## BE PROFESSIONAL

Professionalism is just as important as knowledge and even as valuable as skill. It is a quality that makes the difference between one who does his or her job and one who does it with character.

Also, there is great value in listening. People may often tell you things you know already, but take the time to listen for something that you don't already know. There are many people who have a lot of experience and a wealth of knowledge to pass on to us, and humbly accepting their wisdom will in turn make us better practitioners.

**Show your gratitude.** Showing your gratitude for others on the multidisciplinary team will help build rapport and improve professional relations. Thank your classmate in

your next case while you were busy. Even shooting a smile to the pharmacist or support associates can go a long way. Show your support for the seniors, who have eagerly and graciously taken us under their wings and have passed their knowledge, experiences, and helpful advice to us. Oh, and don't forget your preceptor!

**Be a team player.** If you see work that needs to be done- do it. If you see someone who needs help- help them. There is always work to be done (i.e. inpatient pre-ops), so being proactive in seeking those opportunities may not only serve to help others, but it may even offer you a valuable learning opportunity.

**Be flexible and teachable.** We all have learned by now that anesthesia can be done so many different ways. Each preceptor has a different way of doing things. As students, we pick up a little from each preceptor and incorporate it into our own practice.

## And last but not least...

### Do Your Best!

Do your best. Your best may not always be as you desire, but one day it will be, so long as you continually seek to put forth your best effort. Remember that mastering anything takes practice. It is easy for us to be hard on ourselves, but remember that anesthesia is new to us; give yourself a break sometimes. Thankfully, we have another year and a half to continue building a solid foundation. Recognize your weaker areas and work through them. Set a small goal for yourself each day or even each case and try to achieve it. Also, celebrate your victories- got a tough intubation? Smile under that mask. Performed a smooth emergence? Pat yourself on the back. Cheering yourself on will do wonders not only for your mental health, but also for your performance. And if you ever get discouraged- just remember that many have gone before us... and succeeded!