



Crack in Time

**Story by: Jessica Havenor, R.N.
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Wow, where to begin?! It's been a learning experience; that is for sure. My heart goes out to staff new to the nursing profession in the last year.

I have had many takeaways, but a few of the most impactful to me are the following:

1. Never assume you understand how someone is feeling. While we have all been "in this together," we each have a unique set of circumstances, prior experiences and different levels of resiliency. I have staff at both ends of the spectrum, and I was surprised at some of the conflict that bubbled up as a result. Some staff is very anxious and worried, while others are not concerned at all. It's been eye-opening to watch the ways different people cope, and it's been nice to help many of them have a more empathic lens when looking at and interacting with each other.

2. Teamwork has been phenomenal. Staff has been great at keeping up with constant change. I've been so impressed with the readiness they've demonstrated for these challenges, and I'm confident that with or without a surge, they are equal to the task of supporting each other, our community and our patients.

3. I have been humbled by my staff's support. I've ensured them I'm having frequent contact with all the staff and honing in on what their concerns, worries and frustrations are throughout this. It's been great hearing how confident they are in our department and local leadership, as well as our ability to meet the demands this has imposed upon us. I believe our team is exceptionally strong, and I'm glad that the staff's perception is the same. It's comforting to know we have that level of trust within our team—it feels like the glue that keeps us together at a time like this.

It's so hard to summarize so many feelings, lessons and thoughts! A follow-up reflection of what I can say after re-reading my earlier reflections from June 2020:

This summer I noted the great disparity in staff's degree of concern over the pandemic—some who were not worried and others who were very anxious and worried. I can confidently say the pandemic surge was the great level-setter. In our hospital, it felt as if we went from having a couple COVID patients to having nearly all COVID patients overnight. This was surreal. Every room was on isolation. Staff looked shell-shocked. Every subsequent admission was COVID positive, and we were reeling. While patient loads were hard, staff absences were harder. As our census increased and our staff numbers dwindled, I legitimately began to worry how we would continue to press on. I began to have this internal mantra, telling myself that this wouldn't last forever; it just couldn't. Every day we would see our county's numbers climbing and heard hospitalization and positivity rates in the region increasing. It was like you could literally and physically feel the defeat mounting.

I dare say there has been a break in the clouds, and as we're pulling out of this we're cautiously optimistic, guarded but hopeful that things will continue to improve. The team has remained strong, but they are clearly tired and wounded. You can see it in everyone's faces. While I believe this experience has made us stronger and helped me recognize and value my personal resiliency, I know that some will have a long recovery. I try to believe that everything happens for a reason, and while I feel we've all learned a lot, I hope this experience is the only one of its kind in my career. I felt tears well up when the vaccine

announcement was made. As many have referred to it, this was a much-needed light at the end of this dark tunnel. All we can hope for now is continued strength to see this through and a brighter, healthier new year ahead.

Artist Mitchell Spencer
Eau Claire, WI

Mitchell Spencer was introduced to photography in a required course for an undergraduate architectural degree. He discovered the excitement of capturing and developing an image when developing film and printing his first black and white photographs. During military service and after graduate school, Mitchell studied architecture and took photographs while traveling throughout Asia and Europe.

Mitchell drifted away from photography for about 25 years while working. When he took a sabbatical to travel and study in 2002-2003, he rediscovered the excitement of capturing and developing images. Mitchell transitioned from film to digital media while still using the principles of photography he learned from film and the darkroom.

One of the major influences of my work has been the cinematography of Sergei Eisenstein, Leni Reifenstahl, Orson Wells, and others during the 1920s, 1930s, and 1940s. The use of camera angle, lighting, and composition in films of this period are an influence in my photography and videography. In my work I look to take a familiar or unfamiliar image and capture part or the whole view for an artistic image. Using Lightroom and ON1, I develop and compose a single image from multi-images. Presently, my work is evolving from the "naturalistic and realistic images" to a more creative vision of the image using digital software for both photography and video.

View all the pieces in the *Healing Reflections* [online gallery](#).