



Shirley L. L...

Bedside Manner

Story by: Anonymous
Mayo Clinic Health System

I work on the inpatient Medical Surgical floor – the one deemed “The COVID Unit.” When Mayo started preparing for an influx of COVID patients, our unit changed drastically. The south tower was transformed into the hospital’s COVID Unit so the negative pressure air rooms could be utilized. The first week this happened, there was an eerie kind of calm on the floor. We as nurses sat and waited for patients to be admitted, not knowing what to expect of a patient with COVID.

The admissions started slowly and remained steady but hectic throughout the pandemic. My first weekend working, I was assigned two confirmed positive patients. One was younger and managing COVID symptoms well. He discharged to quarantine at home with his family. The other patient was older. He was so shocked that he even had the virus. What stood out to me was how he was so calm throughout his stay. I would observe him struggle to breathe. His respiratory status continued to decline, and he ended up needing to be intubated and transferred to CCU. As I tried my best to explain what was going to happen, he just had this look of fear, yet calm, in his eyes. I think he was starting to realize how sick he was.

I sit and reflect on that situation and will never forget the look he gave me. At the time, it was hard to explain to him what was going on because truthfully, as healthcare professionals we didn’t even know. Every day there were updates and changes to COVID, and none of us really knew what the future would hold. But words can’t describe the look he had, trying to comprehend his situation and this rapidly changing virus. It was all so sudden for him. Honestly, this whole pandemic was so sudden for us as staff! It seemed like we went from a normal inpatient floor to preparing for the worst and the fear of an unknown future for our patients and role as healthcare professionals.

Another thing to note is that the dedication from all the doctors, physician assistants, nurse practitioners, RNs, personal care attendants, health unit coordinators, and housekeepers and dietary staff was so admirable. Honestly, I think everyone at times was afraid of the unknown but showed up to work and take care of our patients. The profound sense of unity, teamwork, and dedication to our patients and organization was illustrated by every single staff member in one way or another. This terrifying yet humbling experience has united us as a unit, as staff, as a hospital, and as an organization. This unity demonstrates that we as staff continue to follow Mayo’s mission statement “to inspire hope and contribute to health and well-being by providing the best care to every patient.” And honestly, my hope is that we all continue to strive to inspire hope for our patients, families, friends, and staff members during this pandemic.

Artist Shelby Wille
Eau Claire, WI

Shelby Wille is a junior at Memorial High School who started acrylic painting during her freshman year. She was first introduced to watercolor in her first painting class this year with Ms. Ruder, and she has been challenging herself to grow in the medium. Shelby enjoys using art to spread messages about issues that matter to her, primarily climate change and equality.

I was so excited to be given this opportunity to celebrate the frontline workers and remember all the important lives lost throughout this pandemic. The goal of this artwork was to portray the patient's thoughts while incorporating the uncomfortable and unknown feeling as he made a call to his loved one while the dedicated staff was by his side in his time of need. "Bedside Manner" is the title of the piece to reiterate the compassion of the healthcare workers through patients excruciatingly painful times.

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