

# A Telling Transition: New Graduate Nursing in the Oncology and Bone Marrow Transplantation Setting

Kirby DiBerardino, RN, BSN

The University of Colorado Hospital's Post-Baccalaureate Nurse Residency Program is a Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education-accredited program structured to provide critical elements important for a successful transition into professional nursing practice. As part of the program, graduate nurse residents receive a year of education that includes 12–24 weeks of precepted orientation on the clinical unit, paid specialty courses, and monthly seminars that provide additional curriculum and mentoring support. At the completion of the program, the residents complete an evidence-based practice project and a clinical narrative summarizing their residency experience. The following is an example of one resident's exemplar.

Kirby DiBerardino, RN, BSN, is a clinical RN in oncology and bone marrow transplantation at the University of Colorado Hospital in Denver. The author takes full responsibility for the content of the article. The author did not receive honoraria for this work. No financial relationships relevant to the content of this article have been disclosed by the author or editorial staff. DiBerardino can be reached at kirby.diberardino@uchealth.org, with copy to editor at CJONEditor@ons.org.

Key words: new graduate nurse; nurse residency program; oncology; bone marrow transplantation

Digital Object Identifier: 10.1188/14.CJON.369-370

One of the most important lessons we must learn as individuals is the ability to grow—to change and be willing to confront life's numerous obstacles. Nursing is no different. I started as a timid and anxious new graduate RN at a large teaching hospital in oncology and bone and marrow transplantation (BMT). The support of my fellow nurses and the new graduate residency program is what carried me through this difficult transition. At the culmination of our residency program, we were encouraged to write a reflection that comprised our first year as new nurses. When presented with this endeavor, I went straight to the source: my journal. How did I truly feel as an RN at three months, six months, and at a year? For the most part this was captured in my journal, which probably affords the most insight into my progression as a competent nurse. I compiled entries at a rapid pace in the beginning when my transition was hardest and then

the entries slowly dissipated as my competency grew. This is my growth, this is my reflection, and these are my words as a new oncology/BMT RN.

## March 28, 2012

As I sit here at Sloan's Lake, I am in awe of how "present" I am. . . . I just looked at my feet for at least five minutes—perhaps 10! I just watched my tibial pulses for a minute, yet I could not palpate them . . . weird. . . . Okay, I can now with the slightest compression of my thumb. In short, I am alive! As I grapple with my new job and the enormous pressure I put on myself, I need to remember this presence. Often, I become overwhelmed at work and lose sight and focus. Complete one task and move to the next. I feel I work best with a linear equation:  $y = mx + b$ . Once one knows the values, the problem makes sense. It has an answer. My life as a nurse does not afford such a luxury.

## April 25, 2012

Well, I am back to work tomorrow for two days. My job has been a series of trials and tribulations since I started. In all honesty, nothing could have prepared me for this job. Nothing. I watched a young man—someone's brother, father, and husband—lay lifeless for 22 minutes while we did chest compressions. Eventually, we found a faint femoral pulse. He is now in our ICU with limited to no brain activity and now his family will most likely make the decision to end his life.

## April 25, 2012

"My Work Days"  
The empty mornings of  
still  
ness.  
I awake  
to embark  
on a journey—  
One that might take me  
far from here.  
Will I make it  
or will I fear?  
My ears are open  
to the sounds of mourning,  
I am here.

## May 24, 2012

I had my review yesterday, which went great, but I still feel so inept. I just don't feel like I am a good nurse yet—so much I just do not know! A part of me feels I will never be good enough. Every day I get through I become more empowered, and this is what I must hold onto each and every day. . . . Happy Nurses Month!

## June 17, 2012

After an absolutely horrendous three days at work last week, topped off with