

reflections

...of a graduate registered nurse

By Rasa Kabaila

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The end of my graduate year of nursing is approaching. This year has been incredibly memorable and profound in so many ways and on so many levels. In what it has taught me both as a health care professional and as a person.

The first year in the workforce on completing a Bachelor of Nursing degree is a year of ups and downs. I'll never forget my first clinical rotation: it felt like I didn't know anything. I couldn't sleep with dreams of patients' buzzers and beeping cardiac monitors. Throughout the day I was juggling time management, from trying to manage a patient's blood pressure constantly dropping, while attending to other patients' requests.

As a graduate nurse, you can put a lot of pressure on yourself. Other people can put pressure on you too. Some graduates seem to have it 'all together' immediately. I had to remind myself everyone's progress is individual.

I have worked with many different people in my first year of nursing; most intelligent, caring, with a keen sense of humour and who can multi-task stressful scenarios looking effortless!

I have come to realise as nurses we can become very competent at caring for everyone else in the highest degree and sometimes forget about ourselves. I know now you have to find ways to look after yourself to avoid burn out.

An educator of an emergency department in my final rotation said: "find a hole in your workplace, whatever it is, and be the person to fill that gap. People who spend all their time complaining are generally the people who are not doing enough to change the problem." I adhere to this theory, not just in nursing but in many other life scenarios. The opportunities for which one person can change and improve their clinical setting are endless.

I consider graduate nurses do have an ability to teach others in the workplace. However, this is no easy thing to do. It is



Calvary Health Care ACT graduates Emma Field, Narelle Rixon and Rasa Kabaila

important to be courageous, listen to your intuition and speak up when you feel you need to make a decision against advice given to you. It is important to be a patient advocate.

One thing I take from my first year is the humour this profession brings you. Let's face it, you can be a professional, but you cannot deny that sometimes you just have to laugh.

I have valued the importance of striving to be empathetic and non-judgmental. It is human nature to judge. On occasion, I have heard handover reports of patients inaccurately told, biased and/or in subjective tones.

I am pleased to have now completed my graduate year and every experience it has provided me with. I thank every patient and colleague for the understanding, support and lessons taught to us graduate nurses. These lessons and experiences will help us to be your nurses of the future.

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