

Educational and Professional Goals

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From the time I was a young child, I was intrigued by the medical field. When I was in high school, I knew I wanted to either be a nurse or a teacher. My first time in college I wanted to be a special education teacher. I was in my senior year of college toward my degree in elementary education when my mom was diagnosed with stage 4 invasive squamous cell carcinoma of the supraglottic larynx. From that point it was a long two-year journey for our family. I learned a lot about myself, and this experience is why I took the leap to try nursing school. I was also a caregiver for about ten years, before and after my mom's illness. I worked in group homes for adults with developmental disabilities. I continued this work part time as I began to take the science prerequisites for nursing school that I had previously avoided. Also, during this time, I took the classes needed to become a certified birth doula. I absolutely love everything about childbirth. I graduated from John Tyler Community College's nursing program in December 2018. I passed my NCLEX in January 2019 and I began training at Chippenham-Johnston-Willis Medical Center in February 2019. For the last eight months I have worked on a neuro medical unit. I have learned more than I thought possible and I am still learning every day.

Examination of Journey

Currently, I am participating in the American Nurses Association (ANA) mentorship program. The ANA has helped me understand that obtaining my BSN will help me to be better able to advocate for and serve my patients. I also am a certified birth doula through DONA International. I use this training in my local Mothers of Preschoolers (MOPS) group as the service project coordinator. We are a ministry that provides a safe place for moms from pregnancy through kindergarten, to support and encourage each other. I've learned that I will be able to use my BSN in this setting to better serve and support new mothers. Because of the nurse

residency program I participate in at work, I have a fonder appreciation for research and APA formatting. Working towards my BSN is simultaneously helping me with my evidence-based project at work, as my residency is also helping me with my BSN courses. Before I was accepted into a nursing program, I remember telling my husband that I plan to be a student until I have the education to teach nursing students. Seeing as I was once in school to be a teacher, I already knew that I still wanted to be an educator. I had several friends and family members that were already in the nursing field who encouraged me and explained that I could be a nurse and also be a teacher. Once in nursing school, I learned that nurses are educators. We continuously teach our patients.

Educational and professional goals are identified

Through the BSN program at Old Dominion University, I've developed several goals. Educationally, I would like to learn to be more comfortable with APA formatting. It's a timely process, but it is important. I hope that through time and practice I will become more fluent with the steps and rules to correctly and precisely cite my sources. I am currently in my first semester at ODU. By the time I graduate, I believe I will be quicker and more confident in the APA process. Secondly, I would like to improve at interpreting and translating data. When writing research papers, it can be challenging to determine how to make the writing your own and not just copy/plagiarize what someone else has written. I understand that this is the reason citing sources is crucial. However, when citing multiple sources and trying to make the content flow, I may not always achieve my desired written effect. I believe by the end of this program my papers will be a lot stronger and easier to read when compared to my work from the beginning of the program. Professionally, I hope to learn the leadership skills needed to climb the ladder in nursing. In my last semester at ODU I plan to take a business class in management called

Contemporary Organizations and Management. I believe that this class, in combination with having my BSN will help me gain the position of Clinical Coordinator. In this position, the nurse acts as charge nurse, in addition to completing a checklist of other tasks required to make the unit run efficiently. I believe that in this position I will be able to help and teach other nurses, which is my hope. By continuing my education, and working towards my BSN at ODU, my ultimate goal is to get my MSN in Nursing Education. I know that ODU is a great steppingstone for these goals.

Self-assessment: strengths and weaknesses.

My strengths include patience and perseverance. I utilize patience while working in group projects. This helps me to work with a variety of personalities, including difficult personalities. Patience also helps me adapt to change. At times, schedules and agendas change. This can be upsetting and frustrating to students. I personally utilize patience in my academic goals. When I began taking prerequisites for nursing school, I had a 3-year-old, 5-month-old, and my husband was in the Army. Ideally, I'd have gone back to school full time and graduated years ago. But with patience, I was able to maintain a healthy school/family balance. It took me five years, but I patiently took two classes at a time (as I am now), and it paid off! In the professional setting, patience is a huge asset. From dealing with patients, coworkers, policy makers, to dealing with staffing issues, stressful events, and everchanging operations, patience is crucial. Patience is how I survive the day, though, I would have to say that perseverance is my upper hand. After I started taking prerequisites for nursing school, my family and I moved across the country, we had another baby, I got a part time job, we bought a house, and the house flooded. Nonetheless, I persevered and graduated from nursing school. Currently I am working full time, I'm still married, raising three kids, maintaining a house, a dog, and a cat, and I'm in school for

my BSN. Perseverance is how I am currently taking classes towards my BSN. Professionally, I use perseverance every minute of every shift. From the time I walk in the door I am moving nonstop. I set goals for myself for the day. When these goals are not met, I carry on and continue to do the best that I can, despite the outcome. I persevere, I do the best that I can. I keep coming back.

One of my biggest weakness goes back to when I was a kid. I am honest to a fault. For example, if it's the truth, I say it, even when I don't need to, or shouldn't. I've spent a long time working on this, but I still have a long way to go. At times, I don't realize what I had said was offensive until well after the fact. Sometimes I notice as the words are pouring out that I should have said what I was saying, which creates a very awkward moment. I do, however, apologize. I am intentionally accountable. I also lack confidence. Many say this comes with time in nursing, and I'm sure to a degree it does. However, my lack of confidence is not limited to the clinical setting. I believe if confidence weren't one of my weakness, I would have become a nurse a long time ago.

It took me a long time to gain the confidence I believed I needed to be a nurse. Through life experience I realized that I had the patience and perseverance I needed to be a good nurse. I realize that I am in a field where I will always be learning, be it a formal education or everchanging medical practices. When evaluating my strengths and weaknesses, I realize both how far I've come and how far I have left to go. In nursing it is very important to self-assess. Knowing my strengths and weaknesses help me to be more aware of how I react in certain situations, which will impact the experience my patients have in the hospital.

Honor Code

I pledge to support the Honor System of Old Dominion University. I will refrain from any form of academic dishonesty or deception, such as cheating or plagiarism. I am aware that as a member of the academic community it is my responsibility to turn in all suspected violations of the Honor Code. I will report to a hearing if summoned.

Signature 