



Navigating Nursing Clinical Experiences during the Covid-19 Pandemic

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The traditional clinical in the hospital has been turned upside down since the start of the Covid-19 pandemic. At the start of the pandemic, hospitals closed its doors to nursing students abruptly interrupting Spring 2020 hospital nursing clinical experiences. As a result, many schools of nursing made creative virtual simulation experiences for nursing students to obtain their clinical experience. As student nurses return to clinical practice in their Fall 2020 semester in the hospital, schools of nursing, instructors, and hospitals must ensure the safety of students and patients.

Hospitals are ensuring the safety of their patients by having instructors and nursing students tested at multiple intervals for Covid-19 before being allowed to engage in patient care. Some are also requiring that schools of nursing provide personal protective equipment for their students and instructors for all patient encounters.

Schools of nursing and instructors are ensuring the safety of students by having the minimal amount of students on a unit at a time. Many clinical groups are being cut in half so as to reduce crowding and maintain the minimal amount of people on units. Clinical groups are being prohibited from taking care of patients with Covid-19 as well as those who are receiving aerosolized treatments. Pre-and post-conferences are no longer being held on the unit or in the hospital which could potentially violate social dis-

tancing recommendations. Therefore, pre-and post-conferences are being held in virtual meeting settings like Zoom or Webex. Some schools of nursing have also implemented at least half of the clinical hours required for a course be completed in online virtual simulation settings.

Nurse educators must be creative during this trying time of a worldwide pandemic so that we can protect the lives of our patients, our students, and yes- even ourselves!

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