



Your orientee, Sally, is a new graduate nurse who has been working on your unit for the past 4 weeks. She is quiet and hesitant to offer suggestions. You and your co-workers are becoming increasingly frustrated with her because she requires frequent instructions and constant direction.

Sally recently asked you to perform a drug calculation for her. She states “I wasn’t any good at that in school.” She becomes defensive when you encourage her to think for herself and problem solve before coming to you for the answers.


Scenario 1



Questions/Discussion

- Describe the specific conflict(s)/issue(s) in this scenario.
- What questions will you ask in order to help Sally critically think through the situation?
- What conflict management technique would you use to address your concerns with this preceptee?
- What emotional factors may be influencing her behavior in this situation?
- Evaluate the preceptee’s performance in dealing with conflict or patient care. Be specific.

Scenario 1



Sarah is an experienced Med/Surg nurse orienting on your unit for the last 4 weeks. She is feeling fairly confident with her skills. Sarah receives a new patient, who has a PICC line in place for long-term antibiotic therapy, provided at home over the past 3 months. The catheter is dressed with 2X2 gauze taped over the insertion site.

Sarah attempts to infuse the next dose of antibiotics but finds that the fluid will not flow. Sarah attempts to flush the catheter with normal saline, but encounters resistance, so she notifies the physician. The physician tells her to send the patient to the special procedures lab to have a new PICC placed.

Sarah informs her preceptor of the situation. The patient is sent to the special procedures lab where the nurse removes the dressing and finds the line kinked. She unkinks the catheter, and the line flushes easily. She redresses the line and sends the patient back to the unit. She then notifies the patient's physician. The physician phones the unit and expresses his displeasure to the charge nurse because the patient received insufficient nursing assessment.

Sarah believes her preceptor let her down by not checking the PICC herself and feels angry and embarrassed by the situation.


Scenario 2



Questions/Discussion

- Describe the specific conflict(s)/issue(s) in this scenario.
- What questions will you ask in order to help Sarah critically think through the situation?
- What conflict management technique would you use to address your concerns with this preceptee?
- What emotional factors may be influencing her behavior in this situation?
- Evaluate the preceptee's performance in dealing with conflict or patient care. Be specific.

Scenario 2



A new graduate nurse, Daniel, has been shuffled from one preceptor to another over the past 8 weeks. His attitude has been positive, and he has sought experiences on his unit, despite the lack of consistency in his orientation.

He was unsuccessful in managing a full patient load on his busy Medical/Surgical unit and had to request that you take over on one of his patients. His orientation checklist is not complete. The nurse manager, although somewhat sympathetic, has decided to take him off of orientation so she won't have to use agency staff. She states "He's had 8 weeks. It's either sink or swim."

You sit down with Daniel and discuss his orientation with him. He expresses frustration and feelings of not being ready to "be on his own." He is angry and upset and states he is ready to "find a job somewhere else."

Scenario 3



Questions/Discussion

- Describe the specific conflict(s)/issue(s) in this scenario.
- What questions will you ask in order to help Daniel critically think through the situation?
- What conflict management technique would you use to address your concerns with this preceptee?
- What emotional factors may be influencing his behavior in this situation?
- Evaluate the preceptee's performance in dealing with conflict or patient care. Be specific.

Scenario 3



You and your orientee, Julie, are working in a busy Emergency Department. Julie is an experienced Med/Surg nurse who recently transferred from another city. She and her husband have just moved into a new home and have settled 4 children into daycare and school. Julie has been orienting with you for the past 6 weeks.

Your ER shift has been very hectic and at the very end of your day you are preparing to admit a frail, 78-year-old woman with a diagnosis of pneumonia. Her temp is 102 F, heart rate 110 and respiratory rate is 24. Her SaO₂ is 94% on O₂ at 2 liters per nasal cannula.

You ask Julie if she has looked at the patient's orders. She tells you that the ER doctor has ordered Tylenol for fever, and IV antibiotics, but that she feels she is too busy to start an IV and initiate these orders. She states "The floor nurses can do it. The ER used to do this to me all the time when I worked on Med/Surg. I really need to get out of here on time tonight."

Scenario 4



Questions/Discussion

- Describe the specific conflict(s)/issue(s) in this scenario.
- What questions will you ask in order to help Julie critically think through the situation?
- What conflict management technique would you use to address your concerns with this preceptee?
- What emotional factors may be influencing her behavior in this situation?
- Evaluate the preceptee's performance in dealing with conflict or patient care. Be specific.

Scenario 4



Your preceptee is John, a new graduate, who has been orienting for the past 2 weeks. You are busy on the phone, so he is making initial rounds on your group of patients without you. Mrs. Smith, one day post op for a hip replacement, received IV analgesia 30 minutes ago for a pain level of 9. Mr. James, with a dx of pneumonia, has been restless and agitated, which is unusual for him. Mrs. Scott, two days post op cholecystectomy, had a temperature of 101.4 F at 0400. She was medicated but her temperature has not been re-checked by the night nurse.

As soon as John finishes his rounds, you ask John about his patient assessments and his plan for this morning. He has seen only 2 of his patients. He saw Mrs. Smith to assess whether her pain level was decreasing. Then he obtained Mrs. Scott's temperature. The CNA suddenly appears to tell you that Mr. James has severe dyspnea and is pale and diaphoretic. The two of you work through a respiratory crisis with Mr. James and manage to stabilize him.

You discuss prioritization with John. Given the information provided in the report, you think John should have checked on Mr. James first. John is frustrated and said he feels he did the right thing in checking on Mrs. Smith and Mrs. Scott first because the night nurse did not tell him that Mr. James was having any extreme respiratory difficulty.

Scenario 5



Questions/Discussion

- Describe the specific conflict(s)/issue(s) in this scenario.
- What questions will you ask in order to help John critically think through the situation?
- What conflict management technique would you use to address your concerns with this preceptee?
- What emotional factors may be influencing his behavior in this situation?
- Evaluate the preceptee's performance in dealing with conflict or patient care. Be specific.

Scenario 5



Critical Thinking Skills

Ask questions that require the nurse to think through a cause and effect or premise and conclusion of the situation. This obliges them to reason from data or information they possess. Use open-ended questions.

Use critical thinking questions to critique nursing interventions.

- Tell me why.
- What are other possible reasons for . . . ?
- What would you do if?
- What are other possibilities or alternatives?
- How might the patient view this situation?
- What are other ways of approaching this situation?
- What would be the effect of your intervention for this patient?
- Describe the consequences of your patient care decisions.
- What are your patient care priorities?
- Evaluate patient responses to your care.
- What is the most important patient problem?