Reflection of Assisted Experiences

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This semester has definitely challenged my abilities. There have been four areas in which I have seen great progression including the adaptation of a new practice, my communication skills, my prenatal assessments and lastly HIPAA confidentiality. The most challenging thing at first was learning how things are done in the new practice I am with. Most of what I know of birth is from my experiences assisting CNMs in a birth center. Going to an LM homebirth practice has made me step back to learn not only the personal preferences of my preceptor but also learning the new limitations and requirements that are different from the nurse world. It definitely slowed my intended progress but I am grateful because I have learned so many new things.

In my observation phase(which lasted at least half the semester) I learned ways to navigate communication in ways that engage the client instead of sounding like reading from a script. I have learned some many of the right questions to ask that lead the conversation along in answering all the needs of the visit without directly asking. I have also witnessed communication for difficult situations like SABs and although I still do not feel prepared for it, I at least know how to begin verbally supporting someone through it.

I have improved tremendously in assessing fundal height and fetal position. I have also started to become familiar with heart rates without timing which is something I always wondered how midwives do but is clearly from experience of listening. The rest of my assisting skills in birth have been just the same as my job as a birth assistant so I haven’t had much progression in that but anticipate that in the very near future I will have advanced opportunities.

The thing I have been trying to work on the most is maintaining client confidentiality. In my life(as I am sure is the case with many) I have talked to my closest people about everything and this transition has been difficult because I have to keep it all to myself. I have made a conscious effort to used non-identifying language when speaking and learning the things that are appropriate to talk about and those that aren’t. I have been really critical about my accountability and integrity as a student, knowing that this work put in will roll over easily when I become licensed. These challenges have presented to me early in the semester but have been targets of my attention in efforts to bring on success. I have not deterred from responsibility or accountability, instead taken it head on to get past it.

Right now, my clinical strategy is to continue absorbing the tremendous amounts of knowledge my preceptor has to offer me. I have one phase two clinical class remaining which will complete those requirements prior to the end of my commitment in this practice, however I will continue to be present and learn and gather more experience. I am excited to be engaging as a choice because the weight of deadlines will be lifted and I can just be in the environment, absorbing. My initial plan for clinic was to do the normal one clinic a semester track, but I have invested so many hours I added the second class to get credit which puts me at a faster clinical track than originally anticipated. I do know that I will not be able to continue taking the current amount of credits while being in clinic, so my plan is to lower my work load so that I can manage it all well. This semester stressed me out on the didactic side of school in conjunction with clinic and has also shown me how to prioritize and organize everything.

I am still very unsure of how I plan to practice as a midwife. Every day brings new observations and “ah ha” moments for me. I have learned very early on that I am very good at adapting and so that is the most prominent pattern I have noticed about myself. I have been extremely grateful for this semester, the rigor presented and the small but important achievements I have accomplished.