

Mental Retardation, Aspergers, and Autism. Diagnoses that challenge the best of a psychiatric nurse.

Picture Patient: K.H., an 18 year old African American girl, violent behavior, out of control, with a court order to be admitted to our Psychiatric Unit, which includes patients with a wide variety of diagnoses. Her first 3 days included seclusions and injections to maintain control of her dangerous behaviors. Enter Nurse Beth Keyte- Nurse Beth sits on the floor with K.H. and they discuss her feelings of hopelessness and her wish to die. A history of abuse and a belief that no one cares. Nurse Beth allows K.H. to vent and even pick up a small object and proceed to dig at her skin. While this is happening, Nurse Beth discusses coping skills until K.H. calms herself. Nurse Beth then gets a book titled, "Midwife's Apprentice"- a recommended story for such a patient (this book, plus multiple other supplies which have been used for just such diagnosed patients have been purchased by Nurse Beth from her own finances). As time went on with the nursing care of Nurse Beth, K.H. proceeded to verbalize and exhibit improved coping skills and we were surprised by her verbal skills and comprehensive abilities.

Thanks to the time spent by Nurse Beth, K.H. no longer needed seclusion or injections to control her behavior and keep her safe. Slowly, K.H. was able to show that she could live with others without violent outbursts or self harm. This enabled her to be accepted into a group home, where she could be active, learn, and begin to trust and believe in herself. Nurse Beth (using Evidenced Based Practice, research, self purchased tools, and her love of specialty nursing) gave K.H. a chance for a new beginning.

This is just one example where Nurse Beth has gone above and beyond a Standard of Nursing Practice. For this reason, I nominate Beth Keyte for the DAISY Award.

Submitted by: Beth Mutchler, RN -Adult Mental Health Unit, Broadlawns Medical Center