Deb's Page

Any Questions?

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DEB GAULDIN is a childbirth educator who performs songs and humorous tales ("Hormone Affirming Music and Humor for Women") about pregnancy, childbirth, and the adjustments to parenthood. She lives outside Chicago, Illinois.

Abstract

In spite of their best efforts, nurses still get asked some of the most bizarre questions.

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"I need someone to add the Pitocin," I would call from the delivery room door. At that time, as an LPN, I was not licensed to administer IV meds or do venipunctures of any kind. So, many nursing shifts were spent giving myself the message, "I can't start IVs. I can't start IVs."

As you might guess, when I became a registered nurse and was finally expected to start IVs, I was dreadful at it. My subconscious didn't know the difference between "I can't, because I am not allowed" and "I can't, because I am *unable*." If I was having trouble starting IVs on healthy pregnant women with garden hose-sized veins, what hope did I have? I was determined to master this skill. By night I affirmed, "I start IVs with skill and ease." By day, I practiced over and over on the arm and hand models that were lent to our unit just for my benefit.

It was during this time that our hospital was cited for improperly disposing of small tissue specimens removed during surgical procedures. The local press picked up on this, and a simple matter of revising a disposal procedure had become the buzz in our tiny town.

One evening, starting my usual pretend IVs in the utility room, I was assigned to do some teaching for a somewhat backward couple whose premature delivery was inevitable. With all the zeal of a new grad, I spent nearly an hour with them, showed them pictures of ba-

bies of varying gestations and probable interventions, and even wheeled them through the NICU. My efforts were exemplary, right out of a textbook. What a fine nurse I had become!

"Now," I invited them. "Is there anything at all you would like to ask?"

After all that, the father of the baby finally spoke. "Is this here the hospital with body parts in the dumpster?"

Aghast, I explained that of course there were no body parts out there in the dumpster. I sulked back to the lounge. "With everything this couple was facing, how could this be his only question? Had nothing I'd done reached them?" I lamented.

A few words of encouragement from the other nurses propelled me back to the patient's bedside, this time to fill out routine paperwork. Just then, I chanced to look up. Out of the couple's view, but well within my sightline, one of my coworkers briskly walked past the door. There

she was, with the fake IV arm prominently sticking out of a trash can. Immediately following her, a nurse whisked by carrying a garbage bag stuffed with a "rescued-Annie"! Back and forth they traversed, transporting every teaching model they could gather! I thought I would die!

I will never forget how those colleagues put some much needed humor into that evening! Or how hard I prayed the young man dare not turn and witness yet another trip to the infamous dumpster!

Note: Information on *Deb Gauldin Productions: Hormone Affirming Music and Humor for Women* can be obtained by calling 1-800-682-2347. Deb would love to hear and write about funny things that have happened to you. Please send them to her at ON251 Robbins, Winfield, IL 60190, or e-mail Deb at Debgauldin@aol.com.

Kay's Perinatal Crossword Puzzle JPE 9, 1

(See "Kay's Perinatal Crossword Puzzle" on page 51.)