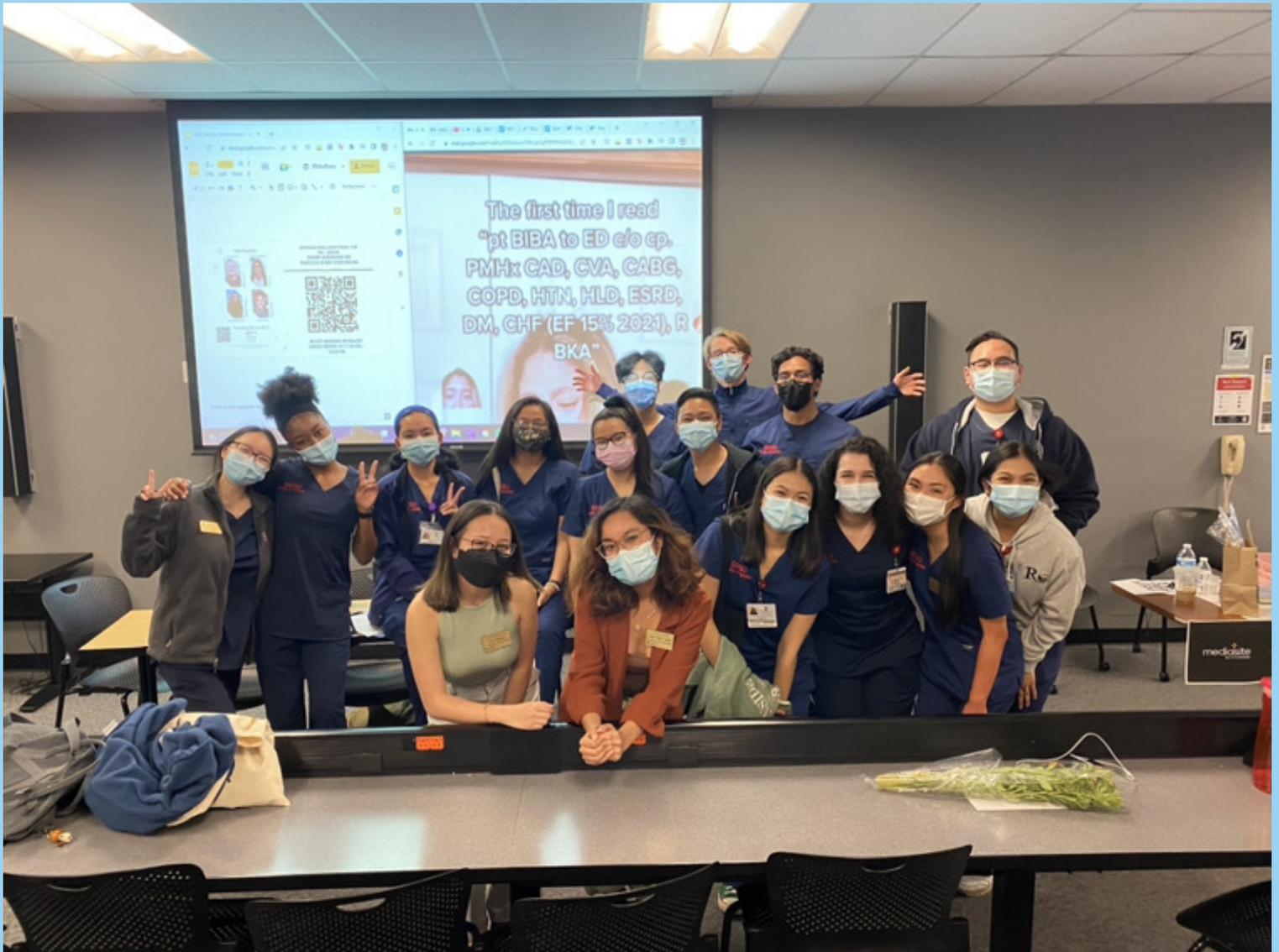


SPRING 2022  
VOLUME 10, ISSUE #1

# Vital Signs



**FEATURING:**

**DANCE MARATHON, NSNA CONVENTION,  
REFLECTIONS, AND MORE!**

# Table of Contents

## EDITOR'S NOTE

by *Nina Izabel Go*

page 4

## REFLECTIONS OF SDSU NURSING: THE FIRST 10 MONTHS

by *Dr. Karen Macauley*

page 5

## DANCE MARATHON 2022

by *Cheryl Shin*

page 7

## DANCING FOR THE KIDDOS

by *Katie Huynh*

page 10

## NEPHRON AND RENAL DISORDERS CROSSWORD PUZZLE

by *Sarah Street, Ashli Ginguitti, Lucas Garcia, Kiran Lackey, Tony Mathai, and Angeline Paquia*

page 14

## THE IMPLICATIONS OF THE RADONDA VAUGHT CASE

by *Cameron Harris*

page 21

## NURSING STUDENTS AND STRESS MANAGEMENT

by *Lyanne Abero*

page 23

## MY NURSING JOURNEY

by *Nina Veal*

page 28

# Table of Contents

## CRAZY LITTLE THING CALLED NURSING SCHOOL

by *Heather Willis*

page 30

## THE TIMELESS JOURNEY: HOW NURSING SCHOOL IS JUST THE BEGINNING

by *Jennifer Dao*

page 32

## YOU ARE MORE THAN WHAT IS IN YOUR SCRUBS

by *Kimberly Sanchez*

page 36

## MY VERY FIRST CONVENTION! HINT: IT WAS NOT COMIC-CON

by *Emily-Ann Pacio*

page 38

## FIVE REASONS YOU SHOULD GO TO THE NSNA CONVENTION

by *Alyssa Laske*

page 42

## 10 THINGS TO REMEMBER TO KEEP A HEALTHY MINDSET

by *Robelynn Manalansan*

page 45

## Editor's Note



**BY NINA IZABEL GO**

As my term as the 2021–2022 Communications Director comes to an end, I wanted to take a moment to thank everyone that has sent in submissions to the Fall 2021 and Spring 2022 Vital Signs Newsletters. Your words are what make our newsletter so amazing! For those that do not know, SDSU SNA recently won Outstanding Newsletter at the 2022 National Student Nurses' Association (NSNA) Convention in Salt Lake City, Utah. It truly is the diversity of your stories, advice, and reflections that make Vital Signs shine and is the reason why our newsletter came out on top out of hundreds of student nurses associations across the nation.

Additionally, I wanted to thank all of our readers! Thank you so much for taking the time to read and appreciate the submissions of your peers. I hope you all enjoyed the Fall 2021 issue and that you will enjoy this Spring 2022 issue as well.

While I am signing off as Communications Director, I am so excited to see the future of Vital Signs and to see what my successor, Kyla Gampol, accomplishes in this position!



## Reflections of SDSU Nursing: The First 10 Months

**BY DR. KAREN MACAULEY**

As an SDSU Alumnus, I am incredibly proud to be the new School of Nursing (SON) Director and happy to share my reflections of my first 10 months. As I took over this new position last June, I knew and felt the weight of the pandemic and the impact it had on our profession. The pandemic brought on an intense sense of duty to protect, educate, vaccinate, and care for our patients, communities, and families. I came into this position with a sensitivity knowing our staff, students, and faculty had experienced unprecedented times in the classrooms, labs, clinical practicum sites, and personally. What I have learned is that SDSU nursing students, faculty and staff are incredible, flexible, and resilient. We have the finest nursing program with amazing minds, along with a deep spirit and passion to serve others. My first few months were spent orienting and learning the uniqueness of our SON and the College of Health and Human Services, understanding the CSU system, and meeting with numerous faculty, students, administrators and community members in San Diego and Imperial Valley (IV). My marching orders were formulated by multiple meetings with faculty, various

administrators, and students to understand the past and formulate a vision for the future. The SON continuing accreditation report was due within my first 6 months, we began to explore opportunities to launch a pre-licensure BSN program at the SDSU IV campus, wrote 3 grants to support our nursing programs and started a conversation about growing our simulation program. Now as we look forward to the summer, I can say we are all breathing a sigh of relief as we are in person, grants and reports are submitted, the BSN in IV is becoming a reality, and I am finally feeling settled into my new SDSU home. I am grateful for all the staff, faculty, students and SDSU community who have contributed to my orientation and welcomed me to SDSU. Please stop by my office AH 3141 as I'm eager to meet you. . .



# Dance Marathon 2022

## BY CHERYL SHIN

Every year, San Diego State University puts on a fundraising event for the kids at Rady Children's Hospital known as Dance Marathon. It is a movement that consists of teams and participants working towards fundraising as much money as possible until the day of the event. This year, Dance Marathon was on my 20th birthday, which was something I was super excited to be a part of. I have been on our Student Nurses Association's team since my freshman year and our impact has only been getting larger each time.

Going into this fundraising year knowing that the main event landed on my birthday, I made a birthday fund to celebrate even more birthdays with the kiddos. This meant that in addition to the funds I raised throughout the school year, all birthday gifts were donated to my fund! I was inspired by the stories the families and kids shared about their experiences at Rady's. In addition, as a future nurse, I felt so closely connected to the movement as it related to the experiences that I will eventually be a part of.

Our SNA team started off strong. With our team captains, Katie Huynh and Jizelle Picones, we began fundraising from the very beginning. Our team was one of few to have an official Dance Marathon team instagram, highlighting our team members and their accomplishments. I had the pleasure of making our very own SNA fundraising templates and posts for push days as well as reaching out to participants to boost their donor drives. I even got an anatomical heart tattoo in celebration of heart week! At the event itself, our team rocked our scrubs for the "When I Grow Up" theme and shared many fun memories like John Melevo's participation as a contestant in the Dance Marathon Bachelorette. At midnight, I was awarded the Madison Taylor Award, which was truly one of the greatest moments I've had this entire school year. Katie and Jizelle won best team captains and SNA



won a lifetime achievement award!

Overall, this Dance Marathon was one to remember. Every hour, a new kiddo's story was shared. The kiddos and their families were able to share how Rady's made such a large impact on their lives. The event was filled with fun dances, push hours, giveaways, and thankfully, lots of Red Bull. The kiddos were so excited to meet us that they even helped sell merchandise, learned the morale dance, and even gave autographs to us! The impact that we make on the kiddos is everlasting and it is so important that we keep this movement going. I can confidently say that Dance Marathon has also made a positive impact on my life and my experiences here at SDSU. I encourage anyone who has ever thought about joining Dance Marathon to do so. Next year, SNA will come out even stronger than before and I cannot wait to see what our team does in the future!

# Dancing for the Kiddos



**BY KATIE HUYNH**

Pediatrics has always sparked an interest in me as these children face more adversity than I have encountered in my lifespan, yet they are so resilient in how they fight for another opportunity in life. It's humbling to see children cope with such a magnitude of diseases. Our childhood is something that we all look back on and reminisce about as happy memories. Children at Rady Children's Hospital don't have that opportunity to be kids as their sickness has another journey for them to endure. It is heartbreaking knowing that there are children who can't enjoy their childhood because of their condition. Many of these families feel helpless with the heavy weight of their ill child. I currently work at the NICU at Sharp Mary Birch and one of my roles is to transport the neonates to Rady Children's hospital. In the waiting area, I see parents with their slumped composure, coffee in hand, and dark eye bags. I stare into their eyes knowing that deep down, all they want is to create a somewhat normal life for their loved ones.

When I heard of Dance Marathon, I was so moved and wanted to jump right

into the largest philanthropic organization on campus that supports my field of interest, pediatrics. Dance Marathon at SDSU raises funds that go to life-saving research, vital equipment, charitable care and so much more. Every cent we raised lifted my spirits knowing that it was the least we can do to put a smile on their faces. It's a yearlong fundraiser and one of the notable push days was Miracle Week in October 2021. As an SNA team, we were able to raise over \$3,000 in a couple of days. I clearly remember receiving nonstop notifications that gave me updates about our team surpassing our initial goal of \$2,000. Fast forward to the end of February 2022, where we had an 18-hour dance party where we celebrated with everyone who raised money for the kiddos, and of course, where we met the amazing children at Rady's! As an SDSU nursing student, I am so grateful that I have the opportunity to attend my pediatric clinical at Rady Children's next semester. It is the largest children's hospital in California and in the top 10 best pediatric hospitals in the nation.

This year, I had the honor of being SNA team captain with my co-captain Jizelle. We raised a total of \$8,970 with a team of 40 members and placed 7th overall out of 74 teams for the most raised money. SDSU as a whole raised a grand total of \$400,170.22 by the end of the event. At the Dance Marathon event, there were so many opportunities for celebrating the children and getting to know families that were personally impacted by our movement. My first experience in person was unforgettable. I literally danced the night away. The energy that everyone brought was refreshing and created unity throughout the dance floor. Each hour there were theme outfits that we had to change into which was really fun to do. Although we aimed to support and celebrate the children who are being treated every day, the 18-hour event in February was a bow that tied everything together: the grand finale. Words cannot describe how incredibly proud I am of

kids can't wait.



**SDSU Student Nurses Association**

Dance Marathon at San Diego State University 2022

\$8,970 Raised

Goal \$8,000



my team. Thank you to my lovely SNA Dance Marathon Team for making an impact with me for the kids!!

### 2022 SNA Dance Marathon Awards:

Madison Georgine Taylor Award: Cheryl Shin

Team Captains of the Year: Katie Huynh and Jizelle Picones

Lifetime Achievement Award: SNA was recognized for cumulatively raising over \$25,000 for Dance Marathon at SDSU since 2015!



### 2022 SNA Dance Marathon Team Members:

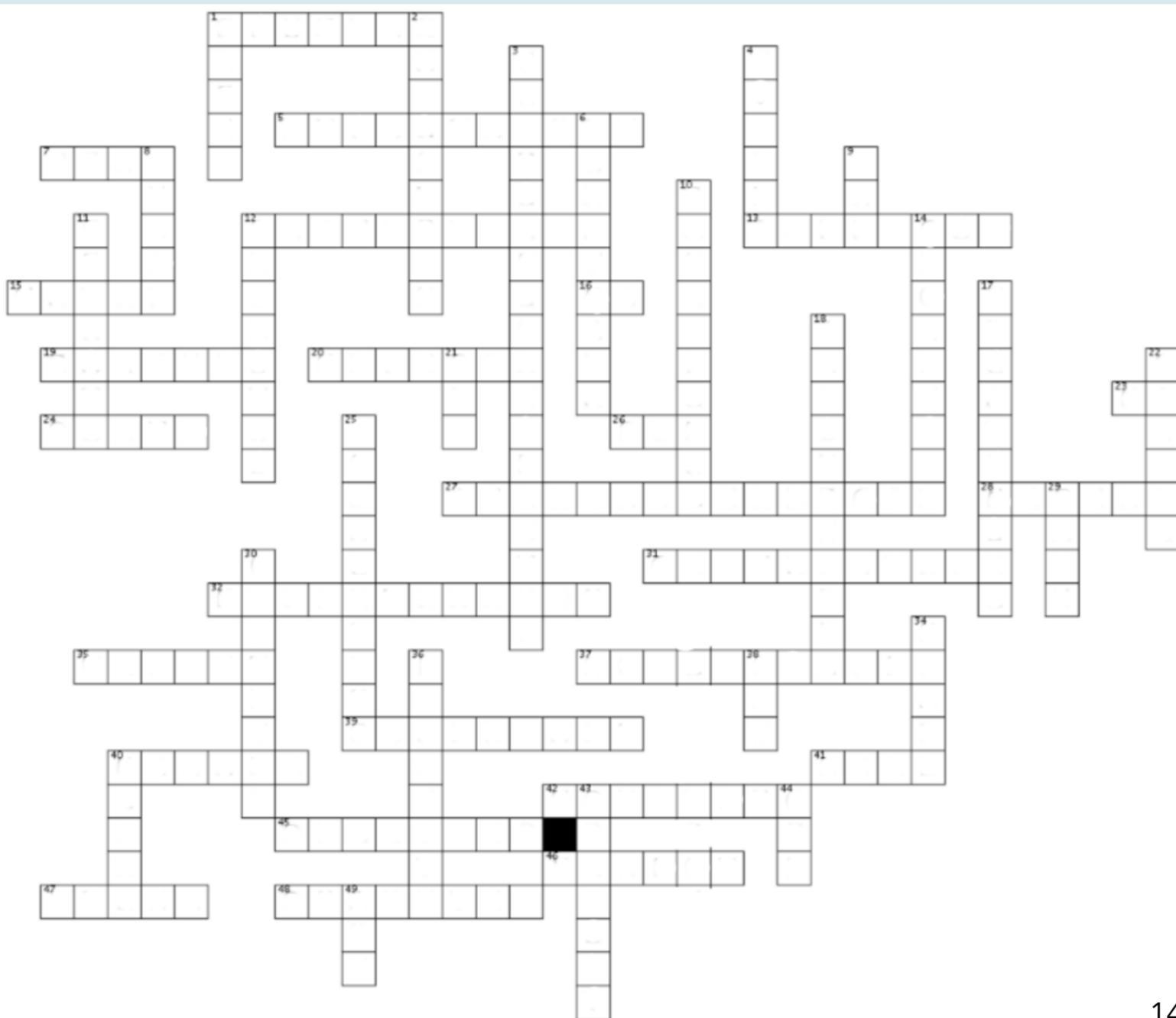
Katie Huynh, Jizelle Picones, Aleena James, Alyssa Laske, Amy Do, Andrew Hsiao, Anna Callaway, Ariel Kass, Brandon Huynh, Brianna Hall, Caitlin Oljol, Cameron Harris, Celine Fung, Cheryl Shin, Jason Tang, Elisabeth Thurber, Elise Bartolome, Emily-Ann Pacio, Erin Abille, Fion Lee, Gamiel Ortigoza, Genevieve Cunanan, Genie Schlichtmann, Heather Willis, Janelle Singson, Jennifer Dao, John Caaway, John Melevo, Kayla Yu, Kaylee Chirgwin, Kevin Do, Lara Napasa, Maxine Tuazon, Minyi Tan, Tathyaa Patel, Taylor Sorensen, Teresa Tran, Vanessa Chamorro, Xueyi Tan, and Ysabelle Siazon



# Nephron and Renal Disorders Crossword Puzzle

BY SARAH STREET, ASHLI GINQUITTI,  
LUCAS GARCIA, KIRAN LACKEY,  
TONY MATHAI, AND ANGELINE PAGUIA

Please enjoy this crossword puzzle about nephron and renal disorders that was made by a group of students currently in Pathophysiology! Scan the QR code below or click [HERE](#) to view the answers and the students' references for their hints!



## *Across:*

1. A consequence of severe accumulation of urea in CKD, involving abnormal CNS activity and convulsions (Sorenson et al., 2018, p. 1150).
5. Diabetic nephropathy begins with glomeruli entering (and winning!) a bodybuilding contest (Sorenson et al., 2018, p. 1123).
7. Take a rest! This involuntary nervous system promotes renal perfusion and happier kidneys; acronym (Adams et al., 2018, p. 145).
12. The incidence of proteins such as albumin, which the kidney should not filter from blood. Indicative of glomerular damage; monitor glucose and BP (Sorenson et al., 2018, p. 1152).
13. When the kidneys fail, acid prevails! A metabolic consequence of impaired hydronium excretion (Sorenson et al., 2018, p. 223).
15. The ideal beverage for flushing the GU system and preventing kidney stone formation (Sorenson et al., 2018, p. 1127).

16. Look into the pee and you will see. . .a common and cost effective diagnostic tool to monitor kidney health! Medical abbr. (Sorenson et al., 2018, p. 1143).

19. Ouch! for two; a common renal obstructive ailment found in renal disease (Sorenson et al., 2018, p. 1127).

20. When lead enters your body it can be a fatal hazard to the, \_\_\_\_\_, which is a vital filtering unit in the kidney (Sorenson et al., 2018, p. 253).

23. Pass it to me at the dinner table; too much can facilitate water retention, HTN and CKD! Abbr. (Sorenson et al., 2018, p. 1124).

24. According to a hit "Train" song, there are 50 ways to do this, and one of them could be ESRD. This is why the kidneys are life-savers (Sorenson et al., 2018, p. 1143).

26. \_\_\_ in the oven; an important lab for the nurse to watch to indicate kidney injury (Sorenson et al., 2018, p. 1143).

27. The race that is most at risk of developing chronic kidney disease from hypertension (Sorenson et al., 2018, p. 1124).

28. Referring to the kidneys, for Greeks; prefix (Sorenson et al., 2018, p. 927).

31. Postrenal AKI can present as partial or complete \_\_\_\_\_, a traffic jam (Sorenson et al., 2018, p. 1144)!

32. A common cardiovascular condition associated with impaired perfusion. The associated class of medications will make you LOL (Sorenson et al., 2018, p. 1147).

35. A patient assessment that is often used daily to determine fluid volume status or retention from impaired filtering. What goes in should come out! (Sorenson et al., 2018, p. 1138).

37. Via urine production and elimination as well as numerous endocrine functions the kidneys are important for keeping what type of "balance" in our body (Sorenson et al., 2018, p. 1117)?

39. Not to be confused with a type of rock, a concerning behavior associated with adults with chronic kidney disease (Hannan et al., 2021).

40. "Ur" lucky if "ur" patient with ESRD avoids a build-up of waste products that can develop into this condition (Sorenson et al., 2021, p. 1150).

41. You will see this diagnosis for a patient whose kidneys can no longer filter waste products; they have reached the end of their healthy time on Earth; acronym (Sorenson et al., 2018, p. 1117).

42. Patients with renal calculi often present with \_\_\_\_\_. Good thing I don't have emetophobia (Sorenson et al., 2018, p. 1127)!

45. "Dial in" to this treatment to survive acute kidney injury (Sorenson et al., 2018, p. 1142).

46. Skin assessment finding indicative of uremia which is the accumulation of waste products such as urea. Follow the \_\_\_\_\_ brick road (Sorenson et al., 2018, p. 1150).

47. Harry Potter uses the inflating charm on his aunt to induce a condition with a similar appearance. Related to altered albumin levels and is indicative of renal dysfunction (Sorenson et al., 2018, p. 1147).

48. A bedside poke will help determine if there is an increased risk for CKD (Samsu, 2021).

## **Down:**

1. Catching Zs after all-nighter is cost-effective antihypertensive therapy; may ward off renal disease or reduce risk of progression of CKD to ESRD (Maung et al., 2016).
2. If you don't use it, you lose it! The nephron matters for its function in \_\_\_\_\_ of bodily wastes via urine (Sorenson et al., 2018, p. 1150).
3. The suffix of this word means inflammation and when the glomeruli and capillaries are inflamed it affects the kidneys and can harm the ability to filtrate (Sorenson et al., 2018, p. 1119).
4. A symptom of acute nephritis that results from a bacterial infection, Marie Calendar's would not be proud (Sorenson et al., 2018, p. 1119).
6. We like to keep this hemoglobin-rich, life-sustaining liquid IN the body and OUT of the potty! If not, it is a symptom of GU cancer (Sorenson et al., 2018, p. 1130).
8. Primary American dietary addiction, facilitates cancer cell proliferation (Yeluri et al., 2009).
9. What abbreviation has a 3b stage of a moderate GFR and affects your lifestyle and is a common renal disorder (Takaaki et al., 2021, p. 1)?
10. A musculoskeletal consequence of chronic kidney disease. May cause patients to take on a weak and spindly appearance (Sorenson et al., 2018, p. 1147).
11. An orange a day keeps the kidney stones away (Sorenson et al., 2018, p. 1127)!
12. In "Spongebob Squarepants", Sandy the squirrel brings an infestation of fleas, causing all the citizens of Bikini Bottom to have this, another symptom of uremic syndrome (Sorenson et al., 2018, p. 1150).

14. The nephrons process blood and make urine through the process of filtration, reabsorption, and \_\_\_\_\_ (Sorenson et al., 2018, p. 1117).
17. Not to be confused with the supplement that makes you look swole, the level of this substance in the blood is proportional to the level of kidney injury/failure (Sorenson et al., 2018, p. 1138).
18. The earliest indicator of diabetic nephropathy and where you keep all of your photos (Sorenson et al., 2018, p. 1123).
21. The kidneys play role in producing this oxygen carrying substance (Sorenson et al., 2018, p. 1117).
22. You're not seeing a ghost! The kidneys control and stimulate the production of hemoglobin. Anemia induced by renal impairment may cause your patient to look like Casper the ghost (Sorenson et al., 2018, p. 1149).
25. The \_\_\_\_\_ filters the blood within the nephron but can leak blood into the urine during renal disorders causing toxic buildup (Sorenson et al., 2018, pp. 1145-1147).
29. When a kidney stone begins to move or if it is large enough, your patient will experience nociceptive stimulation. No \_\_\_\_\_, no gain (Sorenson et al., 2018, p. 1127).
30. The most common bacterial infection and what you say when you want your sister to help you with your shoelaces (Sorenson et al., 2018, p. 1126).
34. Painkiller, for one; compromises renal protection (Adams et al., 2018, p. 726).
36. The kidney's unique specialized epithelial cell, for one (Sorenson et al., 2018, p. 1121).
38. Chill out! Snakes on a plane stimulate RAAS and glomerular stress; acronym

(Sorenson et al., 2018, p. 1124).

40. When you have to use the restroom you go number 1, the kidneys make this liquid by filtering wastes and extra water from our blood (Sorenson et al., 2018, p. 1117).

43. Malnutrition that seems contradictory; may directly lead to kidney disease (McCarthy, 2017)!

44. A reduction in this renal measurement over time indicates impaired kidney function. Blood pressure and blood toxicity increase as this measurement decreases; medical abbr. (Sorenson et al., 2018, p. 1145).

49. What did the dog say when he was diagnosed with an abrupt reduction in kidney function that had progressed to advanced injury (Sorenson et al., 2018, p. 1138)?

# The Implications of the RaDonda Vaught Case

BY CAMERON HARRIS

If you are unaware, RaDonda Vaught, a former nurse at Vanderbilt University Medical Center, was just convicted of two felony charges for the accidental death of a patient following a medication error. While there are many factors that led up to this fatal medication error, including a complete systemic failure that forced nurses to work in extremely unsafe conditions, you may be asking what this nurse in Tennessee has to do with us as nursing students?

RaDonda is not a single nurse, she represents us all. This case has severe implications on the entire profession as it sets a precedent for perfection from our nurses. We can not be expected to be perfect. We are human, we make mistakes, and we hopefully own up to these mistakes. However, with this case looming over our heads, nurses are not going to feel like they can report mistakes. How could we when we are in constant fear of receiving criminal charges and jail time for an honest mistake? This case is going to cause a major shift in our nursing culture and create a dangerous environment for our patients.

As future nursing professionals, it is our duty to seek out hospitals who support their nurses and provide a culture that allows for honest reporting of mistakes without severe consequences. With every mistake we make, we learn. And while I hope a patient will never die due to a mistake any nurse makes, mistakes are inevitable.

I encourage everyone to not let this case loom over your head or change your practice. Report your mistakes, learn from them, and do everything you can to practice with true heart and intention for the entirety of your career.

# Nursing Students and Stress Management

BY LYANNE ABERO

Nursing students experience a high level of stress (Kumar et al., 2020). This is due to the hours spent studying for exams, in the clinical setting, and the vast amount of knowledge that is expected to be mastered. Prevalence rates of moderate stress in nursing students has been found to be as high as 60% (Kumar et al., 2020). On top of the pressure to excel on assignments and exams, students are also facing challenges in the real-life clinical setting. They are often faced with feelings of inadequacy, fear of failure, unfamiliarity with patients, and lack of clinical skill (Abdelhafez, Elcokany, Ghaly, & Akhter, 2020). This topic is important because there are many students who are experiencing this significant amount of stress and may not have the proper knowledge to know how to manage it. By comparing different coping mechanisms, it will reveal the most effective strategies that students can use in their everyday life. The purpose of this review is to explore what tools are most effective for nursing students to use to manage their stress and in turn prepare them to become better equipped working professionals.

The most important terms that were investigated to begin this search were "nursing students," "stress management," "therapy," and "coping mechanisms." The databases used to find these studies were primarily CINAHL and PubMed. These key terms gave about 80 results after discarding any articles that were

more than five years old. The studies covered topics varying from stress management strategies to studies testing the efficacy of a specific intervention. Those that were rejected were ones that were too broad and lacked the experimental aspect that was desired for analysis. The studies that were selected had a main intervention that was being tested.

The first study by Ulrik Terp focuses on the experiences of nursing students after taking a preventive cognitive behavioral therapy-based intervention (CBT) (Terp, Bisholt, & Hjarthag, 2019). They were enrolled into a 10 week program and after its completion, all 14 participants were then interviewed about their experiences. The analyzed data showed an increase in coping mechanisms and stress management skills (Terp et al, 2019). The second study by Heather Beanlands (2019) had a similar approach with eight weeks of a Dialectical Behavioral Therapy-Skills group intervention. They also proceeded with a pre-posttest design and overall results were positive with an increase in the ability to manage stress in all aspects of their life (Beanlands et al, 2019). Both of these studies were very similar in that they were testing a therapy-based intervention and involved senior nursing students, however one study is based in Sweden and the other in Canada. They used similar methods and reeled in similar results, with the students gaining an overall increased awareness and skill over managing stress. Other forms of therapy were also tested and compared, such as laughter therapy and mediation therapy. The third study by Laishram Devi (2019), included 90 nursing students from India who were included in a true experimental, pre-posttest pilot study (Devi & Mangaiyarkkarasi, 2019). A third of them were exposed to laughter therapy, the other to mediation, and the last group of 30 being the control group. It was revealed that the students responded better to meditation therapy than laughter therapy (Devi & Mangaiyarkkarasi, 2019).

A fourth study that took place in Spain also took an experimental approach by dividing 59 nursing students into three groups (Ortega, Pascual, & Araque, 2021). One group received only Phase I of cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT) and progressive muscle relaxation (PMR), the second group received the same Phase I plus a Phase II reinforcement and PMR, and the last group served as a control group. They determined the efficacy of these interventions by administering questionnaires four separate times throughout the one year study, including directly before and after the intervention. Results showed a significant decrease in anxiety and stress after Phase I but not much more of a difference after a Phase II reinforcement (Ortega et al, 2021). Both of these studies used an experimental method with control groups and a pre-posttest design. Lastly, the Patterson study (2016) took place in the southeastern region of the United States and was a pilot study of a new energy type therapy called emotional freedom technique (EFT). In this one group pre-posttest design, 39 nursing students were exposed to EFT once a week for four weeks and took a questionnaire before and after this intervention. Results showed that there was a decrease in feelings of stress and anxiety, including somatic symptoms (Patterson, 2016). Overall, all five of these studies showed the necessity of stress management skills amongst nursing students. There were some differences in their method, ranging from one group studies to true experimental studies with a control group. A majority of the studies featured a pre-posttest design that included a variety of evaluations including interviews, surveys, and questionnaires. In terms of demographics, four out of five studies included nursing students from baccalaureate programs and one featured students from an associate degree nursing program. Most of the students were female and were under or around 30 years old.

After analyzing the results and conclusions of all five of these studies, it is

**evident that interventions geared toward reducing stress and anxiety are beneficial for all nursing students. The diversity of locations shows the universal problem that is high stress rates among this population and furthermore the importance of addressing this issue before it takes a detrimental toll on these students' mental and physical health. The variety of interventions shows that there are multiple options for different kinds of therapies that can be used. It is concluded that nursing programs would benefit from the inclusion of programs that are geared toward prioritizing stress management and mental well-being. It is recommended that this become a priority in the curriculum.**

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# My Nursing Journey



**BY NINA VEAL**

Coming to America from Sweden and going into my second career in nursing as a mother, wife, and one of the older students in the class, I wanted to give some advice to everyone who thinks that they are not enough, too old to start over, scared to make mistakes, or simply scared because they don't speak English fluently. Immigrating here from another country has not been easy, but it is possible to start over. If you have children, be their role model and show them it is possible if you work hard to achieve goals and become a good student. They will see you as someone who never gave up. And they will also see how, no matter where life puts you, it is possible to start over.

Some learning lessons from being a new nurse in the ICU is to allow yourself to learn and don't apologize for yourself. Always think about patient's safety. And if you don't feel comfortable, don't take on an extra assignment or ask

for help. There have been many times where I have been placed in situations where I wasn't ready and the hospital personnel was expecting me to have more duties than I was ready for due to the nursing shortage. Stand up for yourself and the patients on the floor. You are not the reason for the shortage and you are not a failure for saying no and not being ready. You might actually be saving the patients by standing up for yourself and them. Stand up for your educational needs because after graduating, we are still not even close to knowing what we are doing as new nurses. Don't apologize for not knowing all the terms of the items in the pyxis. Instead, ask to be shown. Medical items have strange names and it takes getting used to no matter if you have English as your first, second, or third language. Hospitals are currently overwhelmed with nursing shortages, so I wanted to prepare you for going out into the real world and from the experiences I have had so far. I am hoping that this will help you along the way if you end up being in situations similar to these. Good luck in your nursing journey! I know you will do amazing!

Love,

Nina Veal, RN-BSN Student

# Crazy Little Thing Called Nursing School



**BY HEATHER WILLIS**

An old proverb states three certainties in life: birth, death, and change. However, there is also a fourth and precious certainty: dreams. Whether they be lifelong goals or childhood fantasies, dreams are an essential part of our human lives that give us hope and inspire us. At first glance, nursing school can appear stressful, full of late, sleepless nights and large textbooks in the passenger seat causing the seatbelt alarm to go off. Yet, as I get ready to graduate and reflect on my last four years, I realize nursing became something I could never have dreamed of. In the midst of turbulent return demonstrations, early-morning clinicals, and a 12-hour night shift externship, I found myself with a stronger resolve than ever before. The friendships I have formed with my peers, the trust I have built with my patients and the laughs I have shared with my professors have all made me who I am today. As I step out into the nursing world, I advise all my peers to take each day with a grain of salt and on your darkest and most unsure nights, to look toward the stars in your life. Nursing school is only a part of your

journey as a nurse, but it will help you form lifelong friendships and connections that will bolster your growth in the field of nursing and be a source of wisdom and love in your life. Take this time to find your strengths, to connect with those around you, and to dream big! Thank you for listening to my story and I hope someday I will be able to sit down with you and hear yours as well.

Love, your friend,  
Heather Willis

“She believed she could, so she did.” –R.S. Grey



# The Timeless Journey: How Nursing School is Just the Beginning



BY JENNIFER DAO

Tick, tick, tick, tick.

Do you ever feel like time keeps passing you by? Like you're running a race that never seems to end? Or maybe it's the opposite, where you keep running and running but the scenery around you never changes. Sometimes, that's what nursing school feels like: an infinite vacuum of empty coffee cups, 11:59 PM deadlines, and dark morning drives to clinical rotation. In the moment, mundane times like these can feel exhausting, stressful, futile, difficult, you name the adjective. But looking back, these memories are now just another blip on my radar. Miraculously, I made it past the endless assignments, the all-nighters, the "oh my god I did NOT know this was going to be on the test" freak out moments, and everything in between. And you can too. From the wise words of Dory, just keep swimming! Sometimes nursing school feels like a blur, and other times, an eternity. Regardless, our efforts will be worth it when we finally receive that

sweet, sweet diploma. In the meantime, here are some tips that helped me survive nursing school!

## 1. Study Smarter, Not Harder

No one told me nursing classes would be completely different than high school classes, or even general education classes. I had to completely shift the way I processed information, especially with test-taking. Over the course of many classes, I've narrowed down a handful of approaches that have helped me through my exams. First, always emphasize safety. On exams, eliminate options that place the patient's safety at risk since the NCLEX covers foundational nursing knowledge and practice. Second, if the answer seems right, it most likely is. As someone who is a chronic overthinker, I can often go down the rabbit hole of "what-ifs" and "maybe there's a SLIGHT off-chance, one in a thousand possibility that..." and so on. Don't over-read the question and instead choose the one that makes the most logical sense. Lastly, go beyond memorization. I find that memorizing random facts and tidbits of information didn't help me during exams (often, the questions had NOTHING to do with what I memorized!). Personally, understanding pathophysiology has helped me build a solid foundation to base my nursing knowledge from. Don't sweat the minute details and focus on the overall picture of the patient.

## 2. Learn to Prioritize

Prioritizing doesn't just apply to nursing practice! I have found value in prioritizing my goals, obligations, and plans. Which tasks are urgent, and which can wait? By separating my plans into categories, I tackle the biggest tasks first while leaving some time to wrap up my other obligations. By doing this, I've learned to filter out the things I don't need to stress about. Think of it as a mental file cabinet. Our brains only have so much real estate, and I want to make the

most of my limited mental space! Of course, your priorities are completely personal to you. But I've found that prioritizing the things in my life has led to increased organization and productivity.

### 3. *Don't be Afraid to Put Yourself First*

Unfortunately, nursing school is not for the faint of heart. Fortunately, it's not your whole identity. Sitting in one place for eight hours, just to finish a clinical worksheet or research essay, is enough to make anyone slightly delirious. I used to overwork myself during my first two years of nursing school, only to feel so deeply exhausted by the end of the semester that breaks didn't rejuvenate me like they should have. Somehow along the way, I internalized my worth with my grades and success in school. It took a whole pandemic to realize that nursing school is not my everything! Now, when I need a break, I take it. Personally, I love walks and music. Journaling helps me release my emotions. I'm a sucker for happy endings. I like pineapple on my pizza. I'm creative, introspective, and a dreamer. Who are you outside of academics? How can you put yourself first?

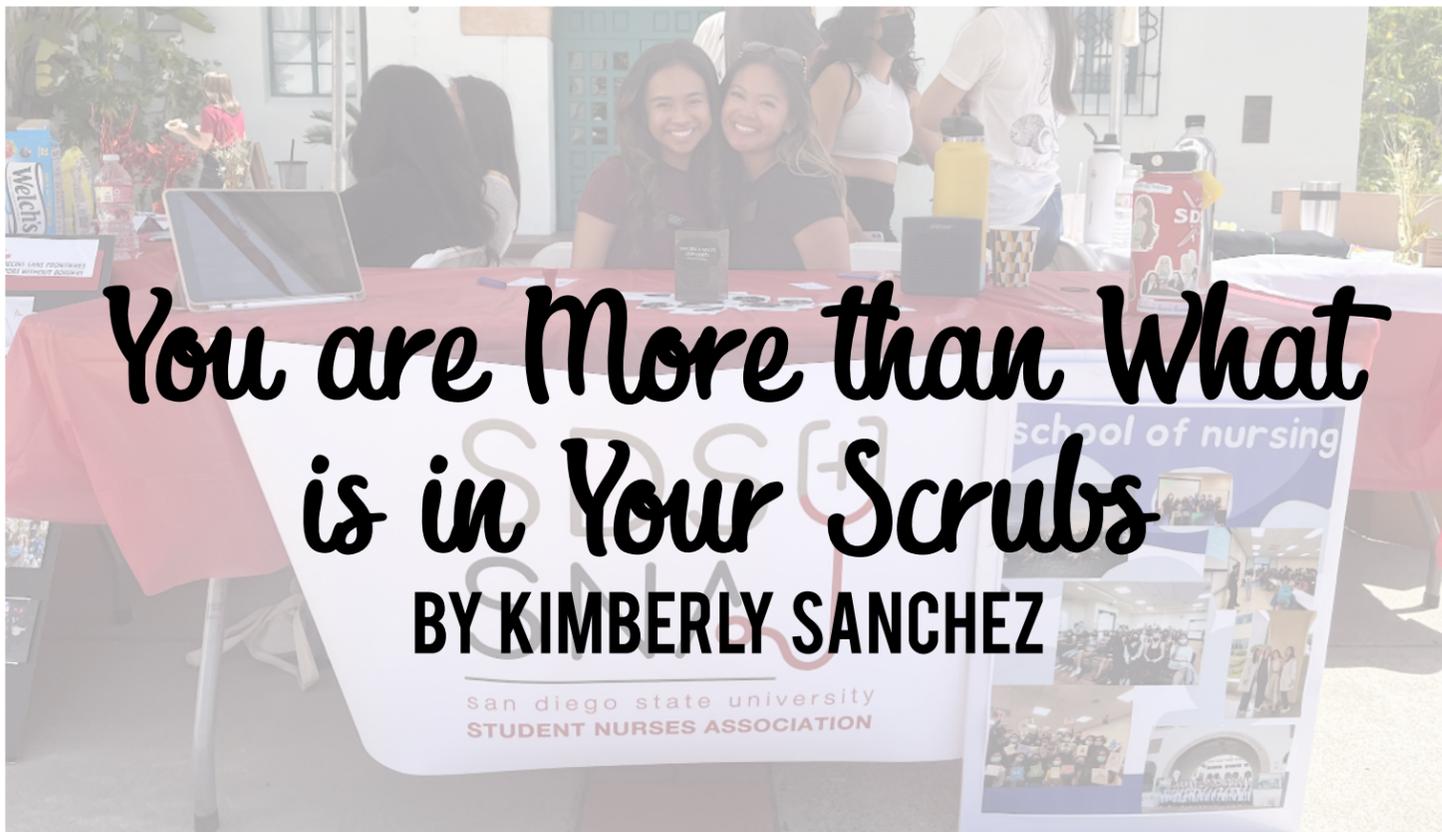


As a senior in my last semester of nursing school, a new pressure has emerged: the tick, tick, tick of graduating on time, getting my license, and applying for new graduate jobs. I feel like I'm starting all over again. Regardless, I'm grateful for the person I've shaped into these past four years and how I'll continue to grow as I begin yet another exciting journey. And to you, my fellow nursing student: You'll reach the finish line soon enough!

# Congratulations Class of 2022!

Welcome to the wonderful world  
of nursing. We are proud to call  
you colleagues.

- SDSU School of Nursing Faculty



# You are More than What is in Your Scrubs

BY KIMBERLY SANCHEZ

san diego state university  
STUDENT NURSES ASSOCIATION

This year's Explore SDSU occurred on April 9th, and was packed full of hopeful-eyed with a glimmer of fear in next year's freshmen and transfers. These same emotions ran through us all-- the excitement coupled with the intimidation of being a nursing major.

"What's the biggest thing you learned?" students and parents alike asked.

Time and time again, I spat out the same answer: you are more than what is in those scrubs. Though I'll be the first to say that being a nurse is an occupation, and not just a job, it is important to remember that we will struggle to find joy in our career if we do not integrate caring for ourselves in between our studying. All of us were gifted and hardworking enough to earn a spot in our program, which only shows that we deserve to be here, but it's time to stop breaking our backs living, laughing, loving, and breathing nursing.

My intention is not to take away your passion for nursing, but instead inspire a passion for caring for yourself. We care for others all day, but we need to be able to care for ourselves in order to best open our heart for our lovely patients. Find your

hobby that helps you step back from the stress of making every day a beautiful day to save lives. We only get to be this young once and burning out at our age would only leave us miserable. Fuel your fire for nursing by nourishing yourself first.

This upcoming finals week, remember to care for yourself. We are more than a 4.0 GPA, and when we finish school, all we are left with is our health--both physical and mental. That being said, nurture yourself the same way you do your patients.

# My Very First Convention! Hint: It Was not Comic-Con



**BY EMILY-ANN PACIO**

Hi everyone! I just came back from Salt Lake City, Utah. You may be wondering, "Why were you in Utah?" Well... it's because I was there for the 70th National Student Nurses' Association (NSNA) Convention. The NSNA convention offers a variety of panels, exhibits, and National Council Licensure Examination (NCLEX) mini reviews for nursing students. Here is a little bit about my first day at the convention:

## 7:00am-8:45am NCLEX Mini Review

The NCLEX is the nursing exam that must be taken and passed to become a licensed nurse. I am taking the NCLEX in January and attending the review was very beneficial. The speaker gave tips on how to answer questions, how to memorize information, and what was most important for the test. Since there are

a lot of concepts within the NCLEX, the review was split into three days. Today was the second day and we reviewed pharmacology, identifying risks, and caring for newborns. At the end of each section there are practice questions. To be honest, I did not do too well answering the practice questions but I know being exposed to it will help me for the future.

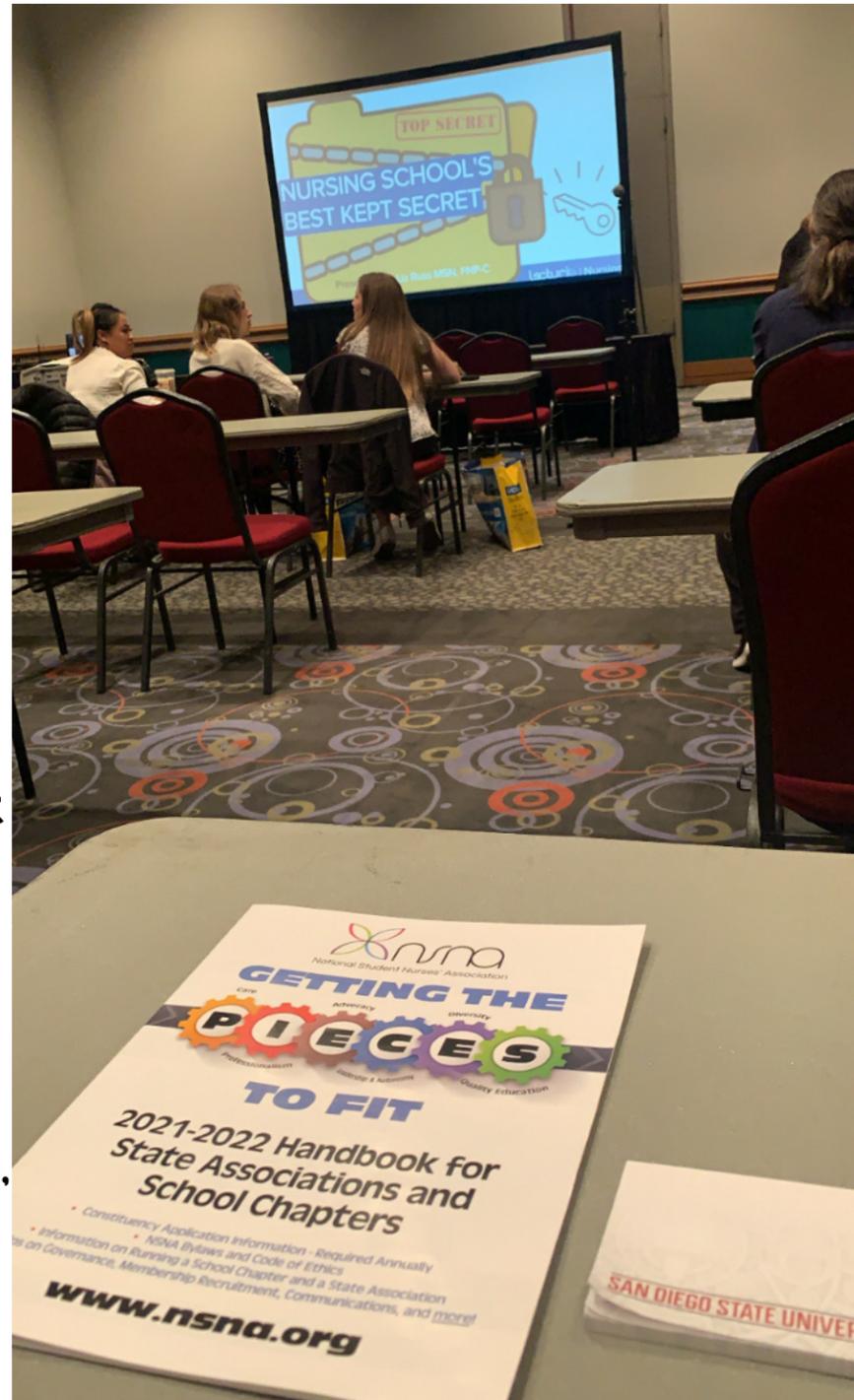
## 11:30am-2:00pm Career Development Exhibit

At this event there were over 100 booths offering information about advancing our nursing career, NCLEX study materials, giveaways, and lots of free swag! My favorite part was meeting the founder of Simple Nursing, Nurse Mike. I was able to express to him how much his videos have helped me learn difficult concepts. My favorite swag items were a canvas tote bag that says "Future Nurse" and a teddy bear that I won from a free claw machine. Overall, it was really helpful seeing the amount of support and options student nurses have after nursing school!



## 3:15pm-4:15pm Focus Session: Do You Know Nursing Schools' Best Kept Secret?

The focus session gave insight on how to best tackle nursing school. The speaker touched on subjects such as imposter syndrome and being a competent nurse after nursing school. The speaker's advice can be applied to a lot of other careers as well. They stated that in order to battle imposter syndrome we should speak more positively about ourselves and realize the amount of accomplishments we have done to get to this point in our lives. As for being a competent nurse after graduating, they said that you can't expect that. There will be a lot of learning after graduating, but becoming a better nurse (or whichever profession you are entering) comes with time and experience. Changing the expectations for yourself will help improve the mindset you have for the future. Although this information seems cliché, I think being reminded of this information helped me realign my own mindset.



## 4:30pm-5:30pm Focus Session: The Art and Science of Marketing Yourself

The focus session gave information about how to improve your resume and interviewing skills. When I was listening to this presentation, I noticed that I should revise my resume to make it stronger and more memorable. One example is to add my Dean's List to my accomplishments. It is also important to emphasize everything that makes you different in your resume. This is the same thing for interviewing. You don't want to sound like every other person, and instead describe what makes you unique. Out of the two focus sessions, this was my favorite! (I hope to receive a copy of the slides and share it!)

I had a lot of fun on the first day! Overall, I had an amazing time at the NSNA convention! I was able to meet so many amazing people, create a stronger bond with classmates, and learn more about nursing. A bonus is that the whole trip was paid for by SDSU. I feel more prepared and confident than ever as a future nurse. If you have the opportunity to attend a nursing convention, I highly suggest it!

# Five Reasons you Should Go to the NSNA Convention



**BY ALYSSA LASKE**

Attending the 2022 NSNA Annual Convention was the highlight of my nursing school career. I want to share some of my favorite times, and hopefully inspire you to attend the next state or national conference!

## 1. Meeting Nursing Students from Across the Country

I met countless students from everywhere! I got Starbucks with students from Ohio, spent hours getting to know the California students and even met a girl from New York who happened to be on the NSNA board – and we found out I lived on the same floor as her ex-boyfriend freshman year! These connections are irreplaceable, and I've found that the connections last as I am already making plans with students when CNSA Midyear Convention happens in San Diego this summer.

## 2. Participating in the House of Delegates

I had the opportunity to serve as a delegate in the House of Delegates. There, I witnessed parliamentary action with Robert's Rules of Order and debates. Additionally, I got to watch the passing and amending of the Code of Ethics and resolutions – including our very own resolution passing unanimously! I was able to speak to the floor and make motions, which was a great public speaking opportunity.

## 3. Attending Lots of Focus Sessions

There were six to eight options every day for different focus sessions to attend. I attended sessions on everything from breastfeeding as a public health crisis to an emergency nursing panel to the opioid crisis and narcan administration. These were great opportunities to learn concepts we don't always have time to focus on in the classroom.

## 4. Representing SDSU as We Win Lots of Awards

SDSU won so many awards at the convention – Stellar School, Instagram, Newsletter, BTN October and senior Lisa Phan won the essay contest! It was such a great experience for so many students to get to go onstage to accept awards. With 22 students, SDSU had one of the biggest student representations and was so loud and supportive during awards that the NSNA president commented on it – and loved it! It was great to be in such an uplifting environment.

## 5. Exploring Salt Lake City with the Greatest People!

I had so much fun spending a whole week with all of my friends and I got so much closer with everyone. We spent every minute of the day together. From going out to eat, to playing card games, to supporting each other through homework and interviews, to exploring the city. We saw a planetarium, the Great

Salt Lake, the high school where they filmed "High School Musical", a bar with a drag show and silent disco, the Capitol, and so much more.

At the end of the week, I wasn't ready to leave. It was probably the best experience of my college years, and I wish it could've lasted another week. To those of you who get the opportunity to attend a convention or any similar opportunity, say yes! Make it happen, because these are the best years of your life and you don't want to miss them.



# 10 Things to Remember to Keep a Healthy Mindset

BY ROBELYNN MANALANSAN

## 1. Grades are Not Everything

As many of us know, getting accepted into nursing school wasn't easy. We nearly had to have perfect grades and perfect SAT / ACT to even stand a chance to be considered for such a selective program. We may carry that "perfection" mindset throughout our nursing school journey but it is important to remember that "perfection" doesn't exist. We then put overbearing stress on ourselves in order to ace exams, ace quizzes, get full points on care plans, or patient care worksheets. At the end of the day, are we studying to get that 4.0 or to truly learn the material? Prioritize learning the material to set up a solid foundation for lifelong learning to come. A few B's and C's won't kill you!

## 2. It is Okay to Fail

I remember the first time I failed in nursing school. I was in fundamentals and we had our first return demonstration performing a room check and foley catheter insertion. I practiced countless times, attended skills lab regularly, filmed myself SO MUCH to the point where I ran out of phone storage. I felt so prepared for my return demo but ended up failing my first time. I felt so incompetent and was ready to give up. How was I going to succeed in nursing school if I already failed my FIRST return demo? It is important to realize that failing allows us to humble ourselves and fix our mistakes. If we were to succeed every single time, we didn't

do life right. Life is all about making mistakes, fixing them, and ultimately learning.

### *3. You Know More than You Know*

One of my preceptors during my externship told me this piece of advice I will never forget, "You know more than you know." It's common to feel like we don't know anything. Let's be honest. Having the lives of patients in our hands is stressful. I recall asking the same questions time and time again to the nurse to make sure I'm doing things right. He assured me that I knew the answer and he was right. I did. This is where we have to trust ourselves and believe that we are capable of being great nurses. I constantly doubted myself and my practice, but slowly began to build confidence and began to trust that I knew what I was doing.

### *4. Do Not Compare Yourself*

It's so easy to compare yourself to your peers in nursing school. As Theodore Roosevelt said, "Comparison is the thief of joy." There will always be someone who is smarter than you or more experienced than you. Some work healthcare jobs right away or some study all day everyday. At the end of the day, this causes self-judgment and makes us feel like we're behind or not doing enough. This is far from true. The only person we should be comparing ourselves to is ourselves. We should strive to be better versions of ourselves instead of trying to live up to unrealistic standards. We are only competing with our past self. It's important to set realistic expectations and to realize that we are all different and that is okay. We will all be successful in the end, so we should ultimately focus on our own individual journeys. Work on YOU, for YOU, and not for others.

### *5. You are Doing the Best that You Can*

There are times when we feel down and think that we could've done better. Maybe we missed a couple points on our quiz or got a lower exam grade than

usual. Maybe we missed a clinical day because we were sick or had a family emergency. We have to remember that life happens and we are tackling each day the best that we can. Each day may not pan out like we had hoped, but how we move forward from that is what matters. Give yourself more credit, nursing school is hard! First and foremost, support yourself. We have to be our own biggest supporter because if we don't believe and support our own self, who will?

### *6. Rest Days are Okay*

Society forces us to think that living productive lives is the only way to succeed. Many of us work jobs, are nursing students, have extracurriculars, volunteer, spend time with family and friends, etc. It seems that the days continue to pass and we just can't catch up. Tasks build up, exams creep up, and stress increases each and every day. We have to remember that it is okay to rest. Time to decompress, recharge, and relax is crucial in maintaining a healthy mind. How are we meant to take care of patients, when we cannot take care of ourselves? In order to offer our best selves to those that need us, we need to offer our best self to ourselves FIRST. Take a break, take a walk, take a nap. Do what you need to do to rest and feel whole again.

### *7. You do Not Need to do Everything by Yourself*

You are not alone. Although it may feel like it at times, there are so many other nursing students that are going through similar struggles and challenges as you. Remember to connect with your peers and share your struggles with each other. This even refers to studying. Form study groups with peers and complete this nursing school journey with people you care about and trust.

### *8. Surround Yourself with Positive People*

We all need a support system. Whether it be our friends, our family, our

coworkers, or acquaintances, we have to assert control in how we want our environment to be. Surrounding ourselves with positivity can help us stay motivated and focused on attaining our goals. We all need some encouragement and confidence boosts and these people can provide just that. We have control about who we surround ourselves with, so choose wisely!

### 9. Take Time to Reflect

Reflecting allows us to pause our busy lives and examine ourselves and our experiences. Amidst the busy days and chaos, we tend to forget about the things we have done to get to this point. We spend days studying and going to clinical just to do it again tomorrow. Taking a moment to look back on what you did well or what you could do to improve allows us to move forward in the right way. We can also reflect to give ourselves credit where credit is due. Reflection includes rewarding ourselves for the work that we have done..

### 10. It is Worth it

Yes, that is right, nursing school is worth it. It may not seem like it now, but all the hard work, studying, tiring clinical days will pay off. Nursing is such a rewarding, valuable, and unique profession. As future nurses, we will be right by the sides of patients when they are going through one of the hardest times in their lives. We are not merely treating patients but going through their struggles with them. We watch them grow, get better, and become themselves again. Everything we are doing right now to get us to that point will be worth it.



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