

Job Satisfaction

By Anna Abaya

I'M AN EMERGENCY ROOM NURSE AT ROYAL COLUMBIAN HOSPITAL AND I'M FORTUNATE TO HAVE A JOB WHERE I CAN HELP SAVE LIVES.

About five years ago I had a patient in his mid-50s in full cardiac arrest; his heart had stopped. I was the nurse in charge, but I was still caring for patients and I was helping direct things. We were doing CPR, we got him into the trauma room, where we treat the most serious illnesses and injuries. He was this grey-blue colour, but we got him back.

Three days later, I passed this gentleman walking in the hall. I thought, 'That's him, alive.' My mouth must have dropped open because he said, 'Do you know me?' I explained what he'd looked like in the ER. He asked if he could give me a hug. 'I'm so thankful you saved me,' he said. He had children. His dad had died young. He told me he had a lot of responsibilities and it wasn't his time to go yet. It was amazing. I asked him to come back to the ER so the staff could meet him – we don't often get to see what happens after we save a life.

Those are the moments when you know you've done your job. It's the satisfaction of being able to help somebody. Almost all patients who come into the ER don't know what's wrong with them. They just need help. It's my job to help them and advocate for them.

I once wanted to be a doctor, and I thought I'd start in nursing to make money while I studied. I graduated from Douglas College with a nursing degree in 1996 and went to work in Royal Columbian Hospital's general medicine department. I discovered I really liked nursing, I liked the patient contact. So I earned an Emergency Nursing Specialty Advanced Certificate from the British Columbia Institute of Technology.

It's a great job for a nurse who's looking for a dynamic place to work. ER nurses have a lot of autonomy. You have to be calm, quick on your feet and able to take control of a situation. Because the ER is ever-changing, you've got to be able to change just as quickly.

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When we're really busy and people are waiting for beds, it can be difficult. Sometimes all you can do is show compassion. Give the little things in life: a bed instead of a stretcher, a warm blanket or fresh sheets, some dignity and respect.

The ER is my second family. I've been there since 2000 and we spend 12 hours a day together. It's a challenging job, but the people you work with make it easier. If I ever got sick, these are the people I'd want to save me.

Anna Abaya is an Emergency nurse at Royal Columbian Hospital. She told her story to Elaine O'Connor.

► How to become an ER Nurse

- ☑ Obtain a Bachelor of Science in Nursing
- ☑ Write the Canadian Registered Nurse exams
- ☑ Obtain an Advanced Certificate in Emergency Nursing (BCIT offers an Advanced Certificate in Emergency nursing for Registered Nurses with a variety of part-time and online course options as well as a Combined Critical Care/Emergency Nursing Advanced Certificate)
- ☑ Learn more about qualifications from the College of Registered Nurses of BC at www.crnbc.ca

► More resources:

- Anna Abaya: What makes a good ER Nurse <http://ow.ly/WbCII>
- Anna Abaya: My most memorable patient <http://ow.ly/WbCoP>
- Fraser Health is currently hiring nurses for our Emergency Departments. To learn more about joining our team visit careers.fraserhealth.ca, call (604) 953-5115, or email recruitment@fraserhealth.ca.

