

## **Educational and Professional Goals**

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I started my career this year as a licensed Registered Nurse (RN) in April. I have now been working independently for about 3 months out of Orientation. I remember distinctly sitting in the Operating Room (OR) about four years ago when I was a Clinical Technician (CT) and thinking “I could be a nurse”. My career after graduating from Virginia Tech with a BSN in Biochemistry led to a job as a CT or Autotransfusion Technician (AT). The colloquial term for AT was called “cellsaver” in the OR. I basically used a machine that would clean and separate PRBCs (Packed Red Blood Cells) collected during the procedure and then would give it to Anesthesia to return to the patient. The surgeries I was in were usually high blood loss cases. This job did not require a degree, just a couple months of training and confidence to speak up to physicians when you needed to. I realized a few months in that I could not do that forever and I thought that nursing would utilize my knowledge from Biochemistry and also allow me to critically think and never get bored.

That is when I began my nursing career. I set a goal to become a nurse and it took a lot of perseverance and hard work to become one. Now as a new nurse it is just as difficult to continue being a nurse and keeping up with all the requirements I need to grow in my role. Instructors, nurse colleagues, and nurse preceptors always told me that you will never stop learning, and they were right! Besides my education that lead me down this road it was also my desire to help people. I always wanted to make a positive impact on the world and do something that where I could grow and also care for and encourage others. Sometimes I still struggle with what to say to families when they are going through a hard time, but just to be there and do everything I can to help someone is a great experience. This further led me to get my BSN, I think that some of the information I will learn in the next year will solidify some things I have already learned and will also teach me to be better at everyday conversations with my patients and colleagues and help me grow as a nurse.

Two goals that I hope to develop in my pursuit of a BSN program are: resilience and motivation. I just want to complete this program successfully, and in order to do that I need to have both motivation

and resilience to keep going. It is very difficult to work and go to school, especially when you have been doing it for a long time like me. For me these are the two things that I need to finish this program and at the moment I am finding it difficult to keep going because I am feeling burnt out. The last few weeks at work have been difficult and when I come the last thing I want to do is use my brain to think. At work recently I have been struggling with anxiety. It has only been a few months since being on my own as a brand new nurse and I never realized how difficult it would be to be the center of care for multiple people. I realized when I got into this profession that it would be hard but it has been more challenging than I ever expected.

My professional goals are pretty similar. For some reason, this has been a difficult and challenging time for me. It is hard to think about future goals a few years from now because I feel like I am just struggling to keep my head above water at the moment. In my life right now it is sink or swim. Am I cut out for Nursing? Am I carrying too much burden from my patients that I am having a hard time disconnecting to get my job done? Am I going to survive this role and succeed? The professional goals I have are just the same as my education, and maybe things will get better in a few months or a year. I am not sure, maybe somebody could give me some advice. I unfortunately, cannot give you a beautiful definitive essay on what my goals are in Nursing and getting my BSN because I have a mental struggle going on right now, so sadly this paper became a diary type essay.

I honestly believe that some of my weaknesses are the things that are making nursing so difficult right now. I am very stubborn and I do not like to ask for help. Consequently, some of these flaws are the reasons that I am struggling, and I know there is a way to change that. It requires giving up some of that "I can do it on my own" attitude and just admitting I need help. One of my strengths is that I can critically think and analyze, which is good at helping my patients and advocating to the doctor. My unit requires this ability and I have a lot more to learn but I can grow in this area. I also used to think that I was resilient but it has become very difficult.

My hopes are to be successful as a Nurse and to be successful in obtaining my BSN, but I need to have resilience and motivation to do it. I am challenged more than I have ever been in my entire life both mentally and physically. I do not want to quit or give up because I worked so hard to get here. However, if you want me to tell you things are great and exciting and that I have bright aspirations and a beautiful future in Nursing to look forward to, I would just be lying. I am just going to focus on the present and make goals when I can see the future clearly. I hope that I can again find the strength and resilience to get through whatever this rut is. I think I have been overwhelmed and anxious because of the burden that comes with nursing. I will try to find a way to keep picking my head up and get through this, I just cannot see the future right now or think about moving ahead when I feel like I am struggling to continue moving forward.