







Looking back on my experience of being a nurse during a pandemic and reflecting on *still* being a nurse during a pandemic, I wish that I had sought professional help sooner. I think that my mentality of ignoring uncomfortable things, especially death, took a large toll on me. I frequently tell coworkers to go to the counseling office at work if I feel they have experienced something traumatic. Whether they actually go and seek help is up to them, but I think the culture of having someone encourage you to get help is sometimes the first step that many people are unwilling to take on their own. I often wonder if I should switch to a different profession, or if maybe leaving the ICU would be beneficial for me. I know that in some ways it would be a great step for my mental health, but in other ways, I know that I would find myself missing the ICU and sharing some great moments of recovery with patients, their families, and my coworkers.

Whenever I was previously met with a “thank you,” I used to respond by saying “no problem” or “no worries.” Now, after months of ignoring my own feelings, and spending even more time working to regain those feelings, I reply with “you’re welcome.” I say that not because I feel the need to be thanked, but because of all the personal work I’ve had to do so that I can better care for others, regardless of the circumstance. I cherish the “thank you” that I may hear once a week or once a month and tend to become emotional when hearing it because I know how much I’ve had to grow in order to say “you’re welcome” in return.

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