

# Reckoning With Racism in Nursing

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We're addressing

racism in nursing

Not having enough curiosity

to try to understand who this person is

then we fall into that,

just judging a person based on the how they look outside.

So what happened last year?

Is tragic.

What happened to the many of black lives is tragic.

But I think it was also a good thing that people started

being aware

I read somewhere

describing nursing as an art and science

and that was really appealing.

Science sounds really exciting.

But art is also something I really adore.

So that is how I started.

I graduate and then I started

working as a nurse in Japan.

I started working in a big university hospital,

and it was not really what I was imagining.

I was really disappointed

and I was thinking that I did not want to graduate university

to be to do this kind of work.

So I quit nursing

and I came to the United States

because I always wanted to study abroad.

So I was thinking,

do I move to the graduate level of education?

And I realized that

first of all, I have a

disadvantage of not being the English first speaker.

All I know was about the nursing knowledge

So I decided to apply for the graduate school for nursing.

And surprisingly, they accepted me

then I have a interaction with

the American nurses

and the many of my classmates are very mature,

very experienced nurses. They have very strong opinions.

So hearing and interacting with them,

sharing their thoughts,

how to change the practice that was very inspiring to me.

And that experience brings me back to that, ok

nursing is not that handmaid job, but nursing is in Japan

and autonomous and really make a difference

for the people's lives.

That is how I came back to nursing.

I was in the program and

I took

to the licensure exam and

I failed a few times,

but finally I passed the other exam.

But before I graduate,

I get the license,

a nursing license,

and

back then that there was a program

and so if you are an international student

completing the program,

then you can stay there

like six months to

get some work experience related to your degree.

As naive

as I was I really did not know how

the United States is big.

I did not speak good English.

People do not understand me

and

being in the graduate course, it was difficult because

I did not speak much English.

Therefore I did not speak up

much or at all in the class,

people treated me

like the kindergarten kids, you know,

sitting in the college class or something.

I know that my English is not good enough

and I could not communicate what I was thinking.

I was getting the,

you know, maybe the % or %

of what was discussed in the classroom.

But my frustration was that I could not express

what I was thinking, my thought.

And people do not listen to me and do not think

that I have my opinion or the my thoughts.

Mostly the language barrier

was the main source of the struggle.

And that really make me feel like sometimes I

give up and okay, so it doesn't matter.

People do not understand me.

So I'm not going to say

I choose my middle name as Tenacious

My name is Seiko Tenacious Izumi

So tenacity is really my virtue

believing in myself

that it's worthwhile to other people to hear.

So I keep pushing myself to speak up.

Not everybody do not listen to me. There is.

I am fortunate enough.

To have a great friends and people,

the coworkers

who really try to understand and try to listen to me.

If I have those people who are willing to listen



and acknowledge

my thoughts as a person,

then the that give me energy to keep going and even

try to

keep trying to the

people who may not listen to me.

I was not really aware about the racism until last year.

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The I'm just coming from a different culture

so I really do not know what is the norm

but the since last year

I started learning about the how

structural racism could work, is working

I start to being aware of that and still learning.

I start to observe and start to thinking about

what is happening about me,

what is happening about the student who are

who are in,

person in color, student in color

or the coming from the different country.

Fortunately, I do not think that I have experienced

at the very obvious or the explicit racism against me

or against the Asian person.

But I think the language barrier

what a being

the immigrant first generation immigrant

and who does not speak the native English

as an American speaker,

the potential source of discrimination

Sometimes I feel like I am not

well heard, or the

my opinion does

not matter because I look different from

most of the people in the room.

I do not know if it is a good strategy or not,

but when they teach a class first day of the course

using myself that I am originally from Japan

and I tell them that I have a very sexy accent

and but you need to to you how to communicate with me

because with my accent and it is okay for me that

if you do not understand,

you know, ask me to repeat it again

and you go out,

you really have to communicate

in this, the you know, the people from the various places

as a colleagues and patients.

And you really need to learn

that how to communicate with people

who may not speak fluent English

In promotion,

the student evaluation matters

of the common themes I read from student evaluation is

like I can.

I do not explain the instruction clearly.

My communication is not really clear.

So those are the some of the

evaluation that I received from a student

My observation is some student

who are the student in color

and that there may be treated not well by other faculty.

And the faculty

is expecting the student to behave in certain way

if the person is coming from the different

the culture or the different country.

Whether this is of this is a first generation student

in their entire family, how do they know how to do this?

You know,

I believe that the all schools in these days

have the opportunity

to talk about the racism and discrimination.

I worry that maybe we are we may be talking a lot,

but we may not be working

To be honest with you, I am not comfortable to bring it up.

Try to convince myself that

to bring this up is important.

Unfortunately, I have not done enough of this.

And the reason is that the partly I am still afraid

I tried few times,

but that it was not a really great success.

It gonna be very long and lonely battle

if I have to keep

pushing the my opinion to the group of people

all by myself

and finding those people as many as possible.

And meeting more people and talking to those people

and let them understand me.

Let them know me. Who I am.

I really don't know how to define to allies, but the

the friend who may not

give me answer, who may not

help me immediately,

but just the people who are willing to listen

is very helpful.

If I know something is coming up

and I sometimes will work with some trusted colleagues

who may be sitting in the same at the meetings

and the kind of the

what in Japanese,

what we call the nemawashis. Prepare the other people to

agree with me or to support me somehow.

As I gain more the confidence

and as I gain

more experience as being in this particular institution

I think I am getting a little bit bold.



I have a very good colleagues and friends and colleagues

who I would call friends

and I try to understand and know them.

And just spreading

those individual connections is really valuable

That is the reason that I just keep

speaking up.

Keep showing up,

speaking up to let people know that I am here

and they know and I also see I see you, you are here.

And just, you know, again start

of connecting on the individual level

and the working on the individual level,

but just, you know,

if we can be connected more,

you know, larger group of people,

I think we can move the needle just a little bit.