PATIENT VIEW

‘At our lowest points Emma was always there to comfort us’

Charmaine Kember recalls the support of nurse Emma Standing when her four-year-old daughter was rushed to hospital

Our daughter Annabelle was rushed to Evelina Children’s Hospital in London. She was seriously ill with acute disseminated encephalomyelitis, a rare disease marked by a sudden, widespread attack of inflammation in the brain and spinal cord.

Just days before, I had given birth to our fourth child by caesarean section, and had developed an infection in my scar. Annabelle was taken straight to PICU and placed on life support. I was admitted to the postnatal ward with our baby Ted. Lee, my partner, was going from one end of the hospital to the other, doing his best to look after us both.

Days later, Annabelle came off life support and was transferred to the Savannah Ward, where we met staff nurse Emma Standing.

Care for all

Emma introduced herself and explained what was happening to our daughter, making sure we understood everything.

She recognised the vulnerable situation our family was in, having a seriously ill child and a newborn baby at the same time.

Emma was always checking if we needed anything. She provided us with bottles of milk and clothing for Ted. She listened and offered a shoulder to cry on.

As time went on and Annabelle started to improve, Emma would often be seen chatting with her, encouraging her to talk. She looked after us too, arranging counselling.

She was there for every step of Annabelle’s recovery. She discovered Annabelle’s love for all things arty and was soon presenting her with lots of stickers – for taking her medicines well, for talking well, for all manner of things.

At low points, when Annabelle was having focal seizures and hallucinating, Emma was there with comforting words. She gave us her time, even when we bombarded her with the same questions over and over. She never tired of hearing them and never failed to answer them in a way that kept us positive and yet also kept us grounded.

Emma had a lovely demeanour and was a truly fantastic listener. The hours spent sitting round our daughter’s bedside were better with Emma there, and I am sure her presence aided Annabelle’s recovery.

We feel truly blessed to still have our beautiful little girl here with us, and we owe that to the wonderful care she received.

Malgorzata Zdzioch is a staff nurse at Brownlands Nursing Home, Daventry

How is this relevant to the Code?

Select one or more themes: Prioritise people, Practise effectively, Preserve safety, Promote professionalism and trust

One of the themes of the Code is to practise effectively, which includes working cooperatively. The CPD article emphasised the importance of effective teamwork in preventing pressure ulcers and improving care.

Another important aspect of this theme is for nurses to keep their knowledge and skills up-to-date. Reading the article has improved my knowledge of how to prevent pressure ulcers, and I have greater awareness of their effects on patients.

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