MERITUS HEALTH

Shirlisa Snowden Carroll Interview Transcript

Forensic Nurse, Meritus Medical Center

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Shirlisa Snowden Carroll

Okay. Right now. Okay. My name is Shirlisa Snowden Carroll, I.

My name is Shirlisa Snowden Carroll, I'm a forensic nurse, and I also work in the emergency department sometimes, but mostly I do forensics.

Interviewer

Excellent. How were you?

Shirlisa Snowden Carroll

On the forensic side, we do a lot with the community because we're involved with partnerships with different agencies around town, like CASA, the safe place at Children's Advocacy Center, a lot of law enforcement. We have a good relationship with states attorney's office. So we work with them together to get kind of take care of the patients that we have.

So we are nurses. We are registered nurses that are, sorry. You're going to end that. Great news. We are registered nurses who are trained. We have special training to care for victims of violence. So here, like different programs do different things. Here at Meritus, we see everything like child sexual abuse, child abuse, adults, sexual assaults, domestic violence.

We see the gunshot wounds, stabbings. So we're pretty busy here.

Forensic nursing is a specially trained registered nurse to care for victims of violence.

Interviewer

Thank you.

Busy all the time. Can you talk about how. Okay. Imagine that. You talk about the importance that you do.

Shirlisa Snowden Carroll

So with the with teamwork. We, our forensic nurses work together with the E.D. nurses as well, because we rely on them to also to let us know what patients need to be seen. And sometimes collecting evidence, if we're not there, they'll help us with that. Also like when we have specific patients that come in, I feel like teamwork is like the whole hospital because we might have a pediatric like an infant that comes in and we might need to have come down and help us out or, you know, like with the E.R., if they have a STEMI, even though that's not us, but if they have a STEMI, then the lab will come down.

So I feel like the whole hospital works together here at Meritus to get things done. And we definitely rely on a lot of people to help us do our job as well.

Interviewer

It feels great. Can you speak to community?

Shirlisa Snowden Carroll

I think this is very important because there are we we say we stay very busy.

Interviewer

Okay. Can you speak to the like this?

Shirlisa Snowden Carroll

So we have been very, very busy with a lot of cases. I feel like because we do see a large variety of victims of violence, that I think the patients appreciate the time that we get to spend with them. Because being an ER nurse, I have that's my background. We don't get to spend a lot of time with our patients, but with the forensic patients that we see, we have time to sit with them.

Sometimes they just want to talk to somebody. And assure them that they're going to be okay and help them with the different resources that they might need. Like, if it's domestic violence, maybe some shelter that night or a protective order for the kids. It's like getting a safety plan, working with CPS to get a safety plan. So I think it's it's very important because of the community that we live in that many things happen on the streets, unfortunately.

Interviewer

What brought you into this work?

Shirlisa Snowden Carroll

Well, when I was growing up as a nurse, I met a forensic nurse, but she did stuff like, take, take pictures at, like, accident scene. So I thought that was really interesting. And when I came here to Meritus eight years ago, I heard they had a forensic team. So I interviewed for it, and I was excited about it.

It wasn't. This is not what I thought it was going to be. But I still enjoy what I do because I, I feel like every day I'm helping somebody because some people come down and really need help, but these patients really need help. I can see there. I can see they mentally distraught and they need somebody to talk to.

So it's it's a rewarding job.

Interviewer

So just in case we haven't heard, the forensic nurse contextualization. Just introduced that again in your answer, if you don't mind.

Okay. Say the question. Say the.

Shirlisa Snowden Carroll

Question again.

So for forensic nursing, as a nurse in general, as a person in general, when I take care of my patients, I put like either myself or like my loved ones as that person. So it makes me feel really good to be able to give the care that they the special care that they need. Like, again, they might just want to talk about what happened and they don't always want to report or whatever, but sometimes just talking to them, maybe it's multiple times they eventually they'll get the help that they need.

And they're always really thankful at the end because somebody took the time to listen to them and maybe take the pictures or whatever. So it just it means a lot.

I find joy because my team, our forensic team is really good. Like, we don't have that many here right now, but we're very close, so I can bounce things off of them. And we tend to have, like, I think like nurses, especially E.R. nurses and critical care nurses have weird senses of humor. So we kind of make light of certain situations.

Not not always, but we kind of get off topic and we find joy at work by just being with each other and talking about what happens. And then we hang out sometimes afterwards and talk about things. So, yeah.

Interviewer

Find a way to laugh.

Shirlisa Snowden Carroll

By the way. Yeah. Humor is like, that's like my, my go to is humor. So yeah. And also it makes me, at the end of the day, what I'm doing for that patient is really going to help them. Like if a child it was a child as abused I can make sure that they're safe. So what I do I know is going to be helpful and that that kind of makes me it takes it away a little bit.

Or if they were hurt really bad, then I know in my heart I'm going to help put that person away that did this to them. So that kind of balances out a little bit.

So I know they, they, stress like higher education. So there's a lot of education that happens here. They offer like reimbursement if you want to get different degrees and stuff like that. I think the other way that you've helped us a lot recently, we got like a Code Lavender team, which helps with the situations here so that people don't get so burnt out all the time with what they're doing.

You can call it. And you, this little cart comes around with lavender stuff and fun stuff and good food and skis and stuff. So, they stress to, like, take care of yourself and, you know, educate yourself and so you can be a better person, a better nurse.

Interviewer

What makes.

Shirlisa Snowden Carroll

I think, because it's such a big organization that they offer a lot more for the patients. Like you can come here and get different. Your patient can come here and get multiple referrals. They don't have to go different places to get a referral. And I think that's a that that helps a lot to. And we have a lot of entities in here to help one patient get everything taken care of.

Yeah, I think also because it's like the only hospital I can tri-state area. So it's so it's a trauma hospital. So we're pretty busy in that instance. And I think people, even though they talk about about Meritus and every other institution, I think it's a good place to to get care. We have good doctors here and good resources.

Interviewer

Great.

Shirlisa Snowden Carroll

I live in Frederick County, so now.

I did happen to see one of my patients at a health fair that I did, and that was interesting to see them because they recognized me and like said hi and stuff.

Interviewer

So talk a little bit about that.

Shirlisa Snowden Carroll

I go and put out informational brochures for people, and some people don't even know that we have a program here, forensics program. So I can educate them on that or educate them on like getting a protective order or domestic violence, sexual assault. So just educational stuff.

Interviewer

Yeah. No, I was just as we wrap up again, this organization, from what we hear, is constantly evolving and is constantly looking to improve. What a what about that excites you as you think about the work that you do or this organization or the community, what excites you as you look towards the future?

Shirlisa Snowden Carroll

Hoping to build our program up? We have a lot of things for our program, but just to get more nurses in and get more education about it so we can help our patients more. And then I think more, more with the community organizations, will help our program a lot too. So and I think Meritus is open to that.

Interviewer

One bonus. You're probably going to hate it, but I'm going to make you do it anyway.

Shirlisa Snowden Carroll

Okay, give me.

A second.

Meritus is.

Oh, I don't know how to answer that. Very well.

I mean, I could say Meritus is a one stop shop for patient care. You can kind of get everything here.

Interviewer

You can do that.

Shirlisa Snowden Carroll

I'll pass.

Interviewer

Okay.