Survival tips for your next shift

Build a few useful habits, ask for support, and notice your progress. Use these reminders alongside your own orientation plan.

- [ ] **Prepare one learning goal**
  Choose one skill or workflow habit to practice with your preceptor. Review the relevant unit policy and ask what supervision you need.
- [ ] **Start with priorities**
  Review the assignment and time-sensitive care with your preceptor. Ask what needs attention first and what would change the plan.
- [ ] **Use your checklist, then reset**
  Track completed work using unit-approved tools. Revisit priorities after interruptions or changes in patient condition. Avoid rushing to finish a list.
- [ ] **Speak up early**
  Ask for help when you are unsure or competing demands exceed what you can safely manage. Use your unit's urgent escalation process when needed.
- [ ] **Communicate clearly**
  Use your unit's handoff or SBAR framework. State the concern, relevant facts, what you assessed, and what you need. Listen to patients and families.
- [ ] **Document accurately**
  Use the approved record and local documentation standards. Ask when you are uncertain. Personal reminders never replace required charting.
- [ ] **Ask for specific feedback**
  Try: "What should I keep doing, and what is one thing to adjust?" Agree on a practical next step instead of trying to improve everything at once.
- [ ] **Protect recovery & connection**
  Plan food, hydration, rest, and breaks with appropriate coverage. Connect with a peer, preceptor, mentor, or counselor when you need support.

> **A sentence to keep ready**
>
> "I am concerned about this change and need help assessing it."
> You do not need every answer before asking for support.

Learning aid only. Your organization's policies, competency process, scope of practice, and supervision guide care. Keep patient identifiers and clinical details off this worksheet.

My shift support & reflection form

Print and complete by hand. Use general learning notes only, with no patient identifiers or patient-specific care details.

Date: _____ Shift: _____

Before: choose one focus

One skill or habit I want to practice, and how my preceptor will support me:

Know who can help

Preceptor / charge nurse / educator:

Know where to look

Approved policy or reference to review:

Mid-shift: pause & ask

One workflow question, support need, or feedback point to discuss:

After: recognize a win

One thing I did well:

Choose a next step

One adjustment to try next shift:

Close the loop with my preceptor

Practice or support agreed on, and when we will review it:

Between shifts: make room to recover

My practical plan for rest, meals, hydration, and connection:

Do not wait for a reflection session to raise a safety concern. Follow your unit's escalation process promptly. Adapted from "Thriving as a New Graduate Nurse: New Nurse Survival Tips" at RN Transition to Practice.