



The Candy Corn Lesson

Situation: Candy corn can become a health hazard if used improperly.

Background: My friend offered me some candy corn. I hadn't had any in a long time and I felt it was a great chance to cheat on my diet. I eagerly popped one in my mouth, almost cracking my tooth. My friend had neglected to tell me the age of the candy corn. A normal person might stop and learn their lesson, but I had the brilliant idea to put them in the microwave to soften them up. Twenty seconds later one candy corn tip was soft enough to eat so I decided twenty more seconds was in order. Unfortunately, this only created a bubbling mass of sugar that burned through the supposedly microwavable safe bowl and ended up on my hands. (Good thing I know basic burn care from nursing class!)

Assessment: Even though creativity and resourcefulness are good for problem solving, not all problems need to be solved. Hard candy corn is one such problem.

Recommendation: Don't put candy corn in the microwave and critically assess all objects taken out of the microwave *before* you move them.

After sharing my candy corn fiasco I'm slightly embarrassed. This situation does not highlight one of my best moments; however, I believe we all have times like these when common sense does not catch up with our actions. The best thing to do is to admit we were foolish, learn the lesson, and build on it. In this case I can turn it into an amusing story, and practice using SBAR as recom-

mended by the Institute for Healthcare Improvement for information exchange in the healthcare system!

The true underlying purpose of telling you this story is to give you a lesson about lessons. If we learn from the mistakes of others and from the wisdom they've gained then we can avoid being "burned." Karen Sherman, Donna Cardillo and Kathleen LaSala are our lesson givers as they cover many aspects of personal professionalism in this issue of *Imprint*. Also, the Diana Mason Q&A provides an invaluable glimpse into lessons learned as an icon in the nursing world. Finally, the excerpt from *The Nurse's Etiquette Advantage* by Kathleen Pagana provides detailed instructions on how to outwardly present a positive image of nursing and dress appropriately.

Dress up isn't just for little kids anymore, and it's not imaginary either. But instead of seeing guidelines as restrictive I hope you can see professionalism as empowering. You, as an individual, represent the collective nursing whole. In today's media frenzied world and in your everyday life, you have the power to influence and sharpen that image. It all starts with being willing to learn even if the lesson comes from a little yellow, orange and white piece of candy!

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Lauren Brewer".

Lauren Brewer, *Imprint* Editor