

## Someone I Used to Know

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The first organ donation eligible person I cared for in my career was for a girl I graduated high school with. I took the EMS report, and I was surprised to get her demographics. I immediately remembered her dad giving me a ride home in his jeep once because it was raining and, though we weren't close friends, she was nice enough to ask her dad to give me a ride. She came into the ED where I worked as a post-resuscitation overdose code from EMS. This nice girl I had known 10 years before, had overdosed on drugs and was currently a GCS of a 3. Calling Versiti on someone that wasn't just my own age, but also someone I used to know, was an unexpected experience.

The second person who was eligible for donation, was the daughter of an old co-worker and a girl who actually had started working at the same hospital we worked at. This was a completely unexpected situation for everyone, and it was heart breaking as we heard about her situation moving from optimistic to dire. Her mom decided to make her an organ donor, and I was luckily enough to have her mom share about some of the people she helped save.

There have been more people that I have helped care for that have been heroes for donation and this has helped me to recognize the importance of this part of nursing. Organ and tissue donation has helped me to accept terrible situations as having some sort of positive outcome. Emergency nursing can be filled with negativity. We many times see the worst of the worst. Hearing about something good that happened because of something horrible helps to manage the emotions tied to the event.

Our job in the ED, when it comes to organ donation, is not actually to talk about it with patients' families, but rather allow for time for the Organ and Tissue Donation team to be able to learn about the patient and speak with the family. Being cognizant of that time crunch and how to manage those families appropriately is vital.

This is not always an easy role for the ED nurse. Sometimes families want things to move very quickly. Working with the family to meet their wants, while still managing the donation potential without discussing it with family can be hard to navigate. In my opinion, the biggest role that the nursing teams play is making sure that they are calling as early as possible to the organ and tissue teams. This is to make sure they have enough time to get the information they need and approach the family timely. That timeliness will reduce the occasional situations where family request immediate comfort care for their loved one and create difficult situations.

My early experiences with organ donation were difficult, but after hearing about the people who just *one* of those hero's helped, it really did open my eyes to what a benefit donation is really is. Of course, there will always be the grief of a father for his daughter and a mother for her daughter, but hearing how that mother talks about those her daughter helped through donation, makes me hope that everyone who is eligible donates. Death on its own does nothing to help anyone, but being able to donate organs or tissues to benefit someone else is a gift I don't understand why everyone isn't for. Please let me be the person a loved one or friend says, "someone I used to know saved someone else by donating."