

Clinical Reasoning Questions to Develop Nurse Thinking

(Formulate and reflect before and after report, but **BEFORE** seeing patient the first time)

1. *Concisely summarize your patient's course of stay. What is the day of admission/post-op day?*
2. *What is the primary problem that brought your patient to this care setting? Briefly summarize pathophysiology of this problem in your OWN WORDS.*
3. *What vital signs/nursing assessments/lab-diagnostic test results are RELEVANT and need to be monitored and trended? Why are they relevant?*
4. *What body system(s) needs to be assessed most thoroughly because of the primary problem? What specific nursing assessments are most important? Why?*
5. *What is the current nursing PRIORITY?*
6. *What independent nursing interventions (interventions that do not require an order/based on nursing judgment of patient needs) will you initiate based on this priority and what are the desired outcomes?*
7. *What is the worst possible/most likely complication(s) to anticipate based on the primary problem?*
8. *What will you do to PREVENT this complication from developing?*
9. *What nursing assessments will identify this complication EARLY if it develops?*
10. *What nursing interventions will you implement if this complication develops?*

While Providing Care (Review and note after initial patient assessment)

1. *What current clinical assessment data is relevant and needs to be TRENDED? Based on your interpretation of current clinical data, what is your judgment regarding this patient's current status?*
2. *Does your nursing PRIORITY or plan of care need to be modified after assessing your patient?*
3. *After reviewing the primary care provider's note, what is the rationale for any new orders or changes made?*
4. *How can you build rapport and trust with your patient and show that he/she matters to you as a person?*
5. *What educational, emotional, psychosocial, spiritual, or cultural care PRIORITIES have you identified and how will you address them?*

AFTER Patient Care... reflect on thinking

1. *What nursing interventions did or could you have delegated today?*
2. *What specific decisions or judgments did you make based on recognition and interpretation of relevant clinical data?*
3. *What would you do differently (if applicable)?*
4. *What did you learn as a result of making these judgments?*
5. *How will you apply what you learned making these judgments to patients you care for in the future?*