

When Sh*t Hits the Fan: A Quick Guide for Correctional Nurses

Practical, No-BS Tips for the Moments You Hope Never Happen ... But Probably Will

Welcome to the Chaos

Working behind the walls is a different world. One minute you're handing out Tylenol, the next you're watching a fight break out over a Honey Bun. This guide is your no-BS pocket reference for when things go sideways, because in corrections, it's not a matter of if, but when. Read it, save it, and keep it handy in your locker or on your phone so you can protect your license and get home safe.

What To Do If... An Inmate Threatens You

Action Steps:

- Stay calm. Do not engage in arguing.
- Request backup or security immediately.
- Document the threat verbatim, including witness names if possible.
- Notify your supervisor and follow reporting policy.
- Trust your instincts; your safety matters.

⚠ Pro Pod Tip:

"Threats are often about control, not you personally. Don't take it home, but don't brush it off either."

What To Do If... An Inmate Codes on the Tier

Action Steps:

- Call the emergency code using your facility's protocol.
- Ensure the scene is secure before entering.
- Begin CPR or use the AED once security clears the scene.
- Document times, actions, and responders.
- Complete an incident report and debrief with your team.

⚠ Pro Pod Tip:

"If it's not safe, you can't help anyone. No hero moves."

What To Do If... You Make a Documentation Error

Action Steps:

- Follow policy: draw a single line, initial, date/time, and correct it.

- Never use white-out or scribble out entries.
- For EMR, use the correction/amendment function per policy.
- Notify your supervisor if the error is significant.
- Learn from it and move on.

⚠ Pro Pod Tip:

"If it's not documented correctly, it didn't happen, or worse, it looks shady."

What To Do If... An Inmate Discloses Suicidal Thoughts

Action Steps:

- Take it seriously, regardless of presentation.
- Stay calm and listen without judgment.
- Notify mental health or place on suicide watch per facility policy.
- Document verbatim statements and your actions.
- Ensure the inmate is not left alone if actively suicidal.

⚠ Pro Pod Tip:

"Your documentation can save a life and protect your license."

What To Do If... A Fight Breaks Out

Action Steps:

- Do not enter until security clears the area.
- Call for help and give your exact location.
- Observe and remember details for your report.
- Once secured, provide care as needed.
- Complete documentation promptly.

⚠ Pro Pod Tip:

"You're a nurse, not a corrections officer. Let them do their job first."

What To Do If... An Inmate Confesses to an Institutional Crime

Action Steps:

- Do not promise confidentiality.
- Listen without judgment.
- Document the disclosure factually.
- Notify your supervisor per facility policy.
- Avoid providing legal advice or opinions.

⚠ Pro Pod Tip:

"You're not Judge Judy. Document and report, then move on."

What To Do If... You Feel Unsafe

Action Steps:

- Trust your gut and request an escort or security presence.
- Avoid being alone with the inmate if you feel threatened.
- Notify your charge nurse or supervisor immediately.
- Document the situation.
- Debrief with your team for ongoing safety planning.

⚠ Pro Pod Tip:

"If your gut says something is off, it is. Safety over pride, every time."

Get Home Safe

Correctional nursing is intense, gritty, and unlike any job you've had before. Your priority is to protect your safety, your license, and your peace so you can continue to serve a population that needs you while still getting home to your family at the end of your shift.

Save this guide. Share it with your coworkers. Review it after a tough day. And remember: your safety matters, your license matters, and *you* matter.

Want More?

Grab your copy of ***Straight to Jail: A Nurse's Guide to Correctional Nursing*** for deeper stories, real-world strategies, and practical wisdom from inside the walls. Available now on Amazon and at theprisonnurse.com.

Get more free resources and updates at theprisonnurse.com.

Follow on Instagram and TikTok **@DaileyMagic** for daily insights, dark humor, and community you won't find anywhere else.

Stay safe, Nurse. You've got this.