Welcome to sharing everyday experiences as a clinical librarian. The EBM Express course

is designed to build your understanding of evidence-based practice in short manageable

blocks of content. In this section, we'll review the experiences of clinical librarians and

provide some practical advice for librarians interested in pursuing clinical librarianship.

The clinical librarian often has to adjust to a new environment. This is one of the reasons

clinical librarianship can be challenging but it also comes with many rewards. Lyons, Kuntz, Edwards, Butson and Auten conducted a survey, focus groups and interviews with clinical librarians. They concluded that there was a rich phenomenological experience among clinical librarians with strong emotional reactions illustrating both the joys and the challenges of integration into bedside medical care. The most common sentiment that they found: clinical librarianship was an extremely memorable experience. The adjectives exhilarating, terrifying, fantastic, shocking, very satisfying, intimidating, humbling, upsetting and exciting were all used by their participants.

Let's look at a few reasons why clinical librarianship elicits such strong emotional responses. Morning Report can be like a puzzle for those who like puzzles or mysteries. It can be extremely enjoyable to see the thinking and deductive process that is used to solve a medical case and when your contributions help solve the case it is even more rewarding.

Walking on rounds and standing in one place for a long time is tiring and physically taxing. Clinical librarians recommend that you dress professionally but comfortably especially when it comes to shoes. Hospitals do require additional vaccinations for attending residents and other staff it is helpful for the librarian to consider these additional immunizations.

Some physicians may object to a non-medical person being on the floor and in patient rooms. Prepared answers such as I am working here instead of in the library, or I have been invited to accompany Dr X, or possibilities and can prevent awkward moments. However, as you earn the respect of the team you will find a collegiality you work through cases together. This level of interprofessional respect is extremely satisfying many clinical librarians also find opportunities to be a compassionate outsider or a patient advocate. As a non-medical professional, the librarian can often help the medical team see the situation from the family or patient's perspective. As a member of the team, you may also have opportunities to participate in research and scholarship. You may even be asked to co-author a journal article.

A clinical librarian needs to be able to think fast on their feet. Searches are performed under pressure and scrutiny and need to be performed quickly some searches involving comorbidity are complex. Many clinical librarians have reported that they had increased confidence and respect for medical professionals. Experiencing doctors at work in the moment can give insight into the time spent, mental effort and emotional constraints they face.

Clinical librarians may experience different atmospheres in different areas of the hospital. Some areas like the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit can be quite intense as one clinical librarian put it, rounding on the NICU is much different from rounding on the Pediatric floor, the patients are severely ill everything is fast-paced and emergencies are either just emerging or around the corner. Rounding on the NICU is intense but deeply gratifying.

Clinical librarians may be exposed to terminal patients. Viewing catastrophic illness first hand and regularly can be overwhelming and even depressing so it is helpful to have a safe way to debrief while maintaining patient confidentiality. First and foremost, though it is vitally important that you never share any personal information about any patient or case. Although you may need to debrief this must be done in a way that protects the patients using statements that convey only general information like: we saw a late-stage cancer patient today and it was pretty rough to see. Any searching or notes that could possibly reveal a patient or their medical status also need to be destroyed immediately after use.

And one last point, challenging work is rewarding and it can increase your professional confidence. To summarize, clinical librarianship can be both rewarding and challenging. Specific challenges can include the physical demands of being on your feet for long hours and the mental demands of a high stress environment. Specific rewards can include being a part of an interprofessional team, making a difference in people's lives, as well personal growth in your professional capabilities.