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Letters to the Editor

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Austin, Texas

I just read your article "Nursing with Prisoners: The Practice of Caring, Forensic Nursing or Penal Harm Nursing?" (ANS 24:2) and was blown away. I am an RN in a county juvenile detention facility in Austin, Texas. I do tons of reading on the health risk behaviors of incarcerated kids but have never delved into the literature specifically discussing correctional/forensic nursing. The graduate advisor at the University of Texas, Dr. Lynn Rew, gave me the article because we had recently discussed the issue. Naively, I thought I was the only one experiencing many of the things discussed in your article, and it makes me sad in some ways and glad in others to hear that I am not the only one. I just thought we had really low morale in our nurses, and that if they got a raise, a nursing supervisor, etc., it would get better. I am constantly having to advocate for the kids, both to the nurses, the physicians, and the probation officers. They laugh and say I am easily manipulated and that's why the kids always want to talk to me/the sick call is so long when I'm there. I wasn't born last night, and I'm pretty sure I can pick out the kids who are manipulating/drug-seeking. The other kids just like to talk to me because I actively listen and at least attempt to help them solve their health-related problems, of which there are way too many.

I could go on and on, but won't. I just wanted to tell you thank you for a wonderful article and keep up the great work.

—Lorie Smith, RN

Austin, Texas

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