Facing bipolar disorder

I appreciated the article “Managing the Ups and Downs of Bipolar Disorder” (October 2006), which covered important information and treatments concisely and scientifically. But I didn’t appreciate the subjective, Picasso-like representation of the “face” of bipolar disorder on the cover of the issue. Ironically, this illustration presents a nonscientific visual that attaches a stigma to the illness.

I’m sure that your intent was to show the emotion of the disorder and not to be derogatory, but we must treat illness—particularly mental illness—with the most subtle respect. Perhaps the “face” of any mental illness would best be represented by photographs of real people. Your face, my face—anyone’s face would qualify. Those with bipolar disorder, more often than not, look just like us.

—SANDRA BISHOP EBNER, RN
Litchfield, Conn.

Nurse-pilot speaks out for safety

As a pilot with a BS in aviation safety management, I was excited to read “View from the Cockpit: What the Airline Industry Can Teach Us about Patient Safety” (November 2006). The article provided a good basic understanding of crew resource management (CRM) and barriers to its effectiveness. I believe it should be implemented throughout the health care field.

I’d like to mention one other barrier to implementing CRM in the hospital setting. When I’m piloting an aircraft, I use CRM religiously because my life is on the line if I make a mistake. The same level of seriousness isn’t present in the hospital setting. Until every nurse commits to meeting this high standard, CRM won’t have maximal impact.

—JOE MORROW, RN, BS
Noblesville, Ind.

Clinical exemplar blues

With the deadline for applications to the clinical ladder just around the corner, I need to write a clinical exemplar, a narrative documenting the performance of acts requiring substantial specialized knowledge, judgment, and nursing skill.

As I face this task I dread, two questions come to mind. First, why is it so difficult for nurses to articulate their accomplishments? And second, what other profession requires its members to write a show-and-tell narrative of their accomplishments and contributions to prove their worth?

I challenge anyone from the corporate world to walk 4 miles every day on the job (as I’ve logged on a pedometer), at sometimes-dizzying speed, sometimes despite missing lunch. Isn’t it time to give nurses the recognition we deserve without making us provide the proof?

—BETTY KOTELES, RN, BScN
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