There are 6 new nurses in my orientation group. Each one of us is paired with an experienced nurse preceptor.

She's a Hopkins grad.

And I'm in training myself to become a certified neuroscience registered nurse.

We often work with the sickest patients so that I can improve my clinical skills.

In the neuroscience unit, many of the patients have had strokes, spinal injuries, or are having uncontrolled seizures.

I'm assessing the patient's status every 1 to 4 hours and then documenting the results.

To test the third cranial nerve, you shine a light into the patient's eyes to see if the pupils are dilating.

To test the 8th cranial nerve, you rub your fingers together next to the patient's ear and ask them if they can hear it.

There's a lot to learn, but I'm enjoying life even more now.

I'm finding time for potlucks, game nights, and the other nurses and I have started a book club.

The only thing that I'm overwhelmed with now...

...is the trust and support of all the people who helped me get here.

To be continued...