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Caregiver Superstition

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Jane Doe
North Logan, Utah
November 12, 2017

Caregiver Superstition Superstition/Folk Belief

Informant: The informant has been a caregiver since 2010 and started working in Logan Regional Hospital in November of 2014. She lives in North Logan, Utah, with her family.

Context: I interviewed the informant at her home in North Logan on the weekend. We did the interview in the living room on the couches sometime later in the morning. This superstition is specific to the personnel in the informant's department, so it is not typically shared outside of the group. Nurses in the department aren't told about this superstition until the situation comes up.

Text:

Me: Are there any superstitions at your work?

Informant: Yes. I'm a nurse and when I first started working as a nurse I didn't know...but, if you – if you said something like “it sure is quiet”, you'd get a whole bunch of other people that worked with you looking at you like why did you say that...Because it was believed that if you said “it sure is quiet around here” that suddenly things were gonna happen like your patients would start to not do well or...ya, something to make the rest of your shift busier, so it was kind of like jinxing yourself, and I learned that pretty quick and it seemed to be fairly true, it's like ya, people said it's quiet around here, you just knew it wasn't going to last. So, we'd have to knock on wood...and that would kind of be like the remedy...hopefully, the [smiling] superstition nursing gods, whoever they are, would ignore it if we knocked on wood or something.

Me: Do you get told outright to not say this when you start the job or do you just learn it?

Informant: No, you just learn it. I don't think anyone ever said in nursing school or while I was learning how to be a nurse that that was a superstition. It wasn't until maybe I was even a CNA, that I was in that occupation of caring for, you know, elderly or sick people, being in a medical

field, but...I happened to say it one day...and that's when I learned it. Others taught it to me in –
in the job environment.

Texture: When the informant was being interviewed, she joked around and was smiling, probably trying to take the seriousness out of the superstition. She had the same kind of manner as a lot of other people would have when talking about a superstition like breaking a mirror and getting seven years of bad luck, in a way that shows that they do not devoutly believe and loyally follow the belief, but keep it in mind just in case.

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Introduction to Folklore
Lynn McNeil
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