

## ENVIRONMENTAL FIT

Have you ever thought about what kind of environment fits you? It seems to me.....we are conditioned to think about whether we fit into our surroundings, but we are rarely encouraged to consider whether our surroundings fit us. After years of traveling and being subjected to a variety of environments, I discovered that some environments worked better for me than others.

If you have traveled or worked local agency work, you may have notice how different hospitals tend to attract different types of people. For instance, I used to work local agency work in a city in Texas. One hospital seemed to attract all the laid back people. In general, they were easy going and fun to be around. Then there was the intense hospital that attracted the radical people that didn't really seem to fit anywhere else. But these people were real. Once you got to know them, you really knew them and were part of their family. Then there was the hospital that attracted the immature people. They try to blame everyone else for their mistakes and constantly feud with each other.

Once you have traveled enough, you will begin to realize how different you feel at each place. In one place you feel confident and accepted. You seem to bring a particular strength they were looking for. You seem to be one of their most experienced nurses whom they call on when they need help. Then you go to another place and you can't seem to do anything right. They don't want you doing certain things because they don't think you are skilled enough or as skilled as someone else.

At first, I found all this change in how I felt in each place confusing. I would blame myself when things didn't seem to be going right. Then one day I realized that it wasn't me.....it was the place. I just seem to be more comfortable in some environments than others. This realization has helped me make it through many assignments without bailing. I realized I was the same person, but my environment was different. I can make it through any environment for a short period of time and it doesn't have to affect my self concept.

After my realization, I tried to become more aware of my environment. What was it about certain environments? Do I like small, medium, or large hospitals? Do I like teaching hospitals, private hospitals, or nonprofit? I discovered that I tend to like medium hospitals and/or teaching hospitals. For me, the politics seem to be more intense in the small hospitals. In large hospitals, I feel like I get lost in the shuffle. Teaching hospitals tend to do new and interesting procedures and they are used to new faces and thus travelers.

Remember the environmental fit concept next time you feel discouraged while on an assignment. You may simply be working at a place that doesn't fit you as well as it could. Once you find somewhere that fits, you will know. You might even decide to stay there and then again....you might not.