In life and in nursing it is important to reflect on your accomplishments and identify areas were you have been successful and areas that you can continue to develop. The following is a self-assessment of my skills as they relate to accomplishing my DNP essentials and learning objectives.

With respect to the Doctorate of Nursing Practice (DNP) essentials and learning objectives my strengths include i) possessing the scientific underpinnings needed for practice, ii) understanding organizational and systems leadership for quality improvement and systems thinking, and finally I posses the ability to iii) collaborate with professionals to improve patient and population health outcomes. Attending the University of Virginia for my Nurse Practitioner Master’s program provided me with an excellent education and foundation to support my nursing practice. Because of the broad foundation I was given, I have been able to gain a deeper appreciation of nursing practice and scientific underpinnings through the DNP program. Secondly, I have chosen to focus my career on mental health nursing. Society is beginning to appreciate that mental health can no longer be separated from and individual’s health. Two goals and potential opportunities that exist for me are the ability to integrate mental health care into primary care treatment and opening a nurse lead outpatient psychiatric practice. Additionally, my DNP capstone will be focused on the first steps of a quality improvement project to address the ethical climate and moral distressed experienced by staff within a residential treatment facility for children and adolescents and the impact that it has on the client. Lastly, collaboration is essential to provide the best care for patients. The faculty at The University of Virginia has provided an exceptional example of what interprofessional respect and collaboration looks like. I have been able to use these skills that have been modeled for me while working to improve the quality of care given to my patients.

Areas that I am going to continue to improve and develop are i) advocating for health care policy, ii) improving population health through clinical prevention, and iii) transforming patient care through information systems and technology. While I am familiar with how to achieve these essentials currently opportunities in my nursing practice haven’t been focused in these areas. With respect to advocating for health care policy, as a mother of a child with mental illness, I work with and support mental health organizations. I frequently write letter to politicians requesting them to support or deny mental health bills that effect the mental health population. In the future, I would like to take a more active advocacy role as a Nurse Practitioner to support these same efforts. It is a bit of a daunting task because mental health care and delivery in the United States needs such a significant overhaul. The same sentiment applies to providing clinical prevention to improve the population’s outcomes. There are a multitude of risk factors that increase the risk of mental health disorders. I am passionate about decreasing mental health risk factors and increasing resilience in children and improving the delivery of care for the seriously mentally ill population. Both of these issues have multiple variable and require extensive collaboration and funding agreements between schools, communities, state and county agencies and local mental health service providers. More time is required to accomplish these goals then I currently have available. Last but not least, I haven’t had the opportunity to use information systems or technology to improve health care in my work environment. I believe that implementing clinical decision support system in the residential treatment center that I work in would improve patient outcomes. Specifically, using technology to track and monitor cardiometobolic risk factors in children on antipsychotic medications would prompt clinicians to have laboratory testing completed in a timely manner and deviations could be addressed more expeditiously. Again, I haven’t had the time or influence needed to make this change thus far.

I have been a nurse for seven years and I have been an advanced practice nurse for almost 1 year. Some opportunities have presented themselves to me because of my personality or the availability of them in my workplace. I happily accept additional challenges and responsibilities that I can commit the time too. On the other hand, there continues to be areas in which I need to become more involved in. These areas are require a greater time commitment and more involvement then I am currently able to provide so I will likely involve myself more deeply in these activities after I have completed my schooling and have some free time. I will continue to busy myself with “projects.” Overall, I am a driven individual and I am confident that all areas will be developed in time.