

One of the public health nurses that I work with has been talking about getting married for several years. She has been engaged for three years and recently gave birth to the second child that she and her fiancé have. Several months ago she announced that they had set a wedding date. They decided that they were going to get married on the fourth anniversary of meeting each other.

As she started making calls for the wedding she discovered that she could not find a place for the reception. Rather than change the date the couple decided that they would have a beach wedding instead. The couple lives close to a large public beach. There is a pavilion close by in a large park. They decided that the ceremony would take place by the water and the reception would be catered in the pavilion. The bride's uncle is a minister and he did agree to perform the beach wedding, however he warned the couple that this arrangement does not always work out the best because the beach is a public place. The couple felt that he was exaggerating. They thought that strangers would respect the privacy of a gathering of people attending a beach wedding. The plan was to have an early evening ceremony followed by a light supper and dancing.

The day of the beach wedding was beautiful. The temperatures were warm and there was only a slight breeze coming off the ocean. The moon was close to full so the evening promised to be lovely also. Due to the warmth of the day the beach was very busy. The day was so nice that many of the sunbathers and swimmers were reluctant to leave. There was a problem finding parking for the wedding guests, this was one thing that the bride and groom had not considered. Another thing they did not consider is that strangers would move the ropes of the area where the ceremony was to be held. It took time to find a space on the beach that was large enough to accommodate the wedding guests. Once we were all in place the minister signaled the musicians to begin playing. Their music could barely be heard above the radios, talking and screaming of the beach dwellers. The bride made her appearance and the ceremony started. Many of the people that were spending the day on the beach came over to watch the ceremony.

The reception went much smoother and everyone had a very nice time. The bride admits that she should have listened to the minister regarding the beach wedding. She did not like how many strangers were standing around as they were trying to say their vows. She had wished for a nice weather day, but did not realize the amount of people that would stay on the beach to enjoy the nice day.