

Nursing Job Search Handout

It can be tempting in a strong market for nursing students to count on the fact that you will have several offers to choose from or be tempted to take the first offer that comes your way. The reality is, just like in other industries, those individuals who take the time to assess themselves and research their chosen field will be better prepared to launch a targeted job search and to present themselves well in the interview process. Take a moment to identify your values, skills and personality preference. Values are often reflected in the culture of the hospital (schedule, patient load, mentor programs, support for professional development). Review your clinical and work experience, what skills do you have and which do you enjoy using? Consider whether you have a favorite population, age group, or health issue that you wish to concentrate on. Need help with self-assessment? Call Career Services to set up an individual appointment.

Informational Interviewing/Networking

The fact that you participate in a number of clinical rotations gives you a wonderful opportunity to network with seasoned nurses who can give you insight not only into the job but also the culture of a hospital. People love to talk about what they do and how they got there. Scheduling an informational interview (see Informational Interview Handout) with a seasoned professional will allow you to take a moment away from the busy hospital floor to have an in-depth conversation and gain the inside scoop on your profession. Many times the best positions are heard about through personal networks long before they are posted on-line. Rather than just do the work required of you on your rotation look around to see with whom you would like to develop a connection.

As you participate in your rotations and talk with people in your field keep a running list of the skills that are valued and the vocabulary used. This information will be helpful both as you develop your resume and in the interview, there is no quicker way to let someone know that you belong than to use their language. Networking opportunities and job leads occur in all aspects of our lives, (family, friends, faculty, colleagues) be sure that your personal network knows that you are looking. Employers won't hire you on who you know however they typically will interview you, then it's up to you to sell yourself to the employer.

As you get ready for your job search be sure to use multiple strategies to identify opportunities. Job fairs, newspapers, websites, and professional associations are all good ways to identify possible leads. Remember people make hiring decisions, avoid the trap of conducting your job search solely on the Internet, look for opportunities to expand your contact with individuals who have the power to hire.

Transferable Skills

In addition to core content skills interviewers will also be interested in transferable skills. Listed below is a short list of examples of transferable skills often sought by nurse recruiters.

initiative	team work	interpersonal	time management
problem solving	teaching/instructing	research	technical

As you think about your experiences keep in mind that employers don't care whether you were paid or not they are focused on what you can do for them. Look at your involvement in groups/clubs, part-time/volunteer experiences as well as your academic and work history.

Interview Questions

As you prepare for an interview it is helpful to look at the process through the eyes of the employer. In the best of situations the interview is a two-way conversation, not something done to you. Ask yourself if you were hiring for this position what skills and experiences would you be looking for? It is a good idea to create two lists, the first a list of questions you would ask if you were the interviewer. The second list focuses on what you want to know about the hospital, position so you will have enough information to make a thoughtful decision when you are offered the position. Once you have created your lists review your resume, think about your experiences in and out of the classroom and consider what experiences you may want to emphasize in your conversation with the employer. This process allows you to remove much of the unknown from the interview experience. Listed below are samples of questions which you might expect to be asked as well as questions you might ask.

Sample interview questions:

- Tell me about yourself (focus on relevant information no need to tell your whole life story)
- When did you know you wanted to be a nurse? Was there a particular event that prompted your choice?
- Tell me about the most difficult clinical experience you faced and how you handled it?
- What gives you satisfaction as a nurse? Why?
- What are some characteristics of the best nurse that you know?
- What do you think is the most significant problem in health care today?
- How do you manage stress?
- What would you do if...? (clinical situation)
- Describe your ideal supervisor.
- Tell me about a situation where a patient was resistant to comply with your instructions, what was the situation, what actions did you take, what was the result?

Sample Questions to Ask an Interviewer:

- What are the skills and characteristics which you seeking for this position?
- What words would you use to describe the culture of the organization?
- How would you describe the population which this hospital serves?
- How has this organization been effected by changes in the health care industry?
- Who would be my supervisor and what is that person's management, supervisory style?
- What is your anticipated timeline for filling this position?

Print Resources *(sample available in the Career Resource Center)*

Opportunities in Nursing Careers - Frederickson, Keville

Majoring in Nursing - Katz, Janet

The First Year of Nursing - Finkelstein, Barbara, editor

The Nurses Career Guide - Zardoya, E.

Careers in Health Care - Swanson, Barbara

Educational and Career Opportunities in Alternative Medicine - Jones, Rosemary

Yale Guide to Careers in Medicine and the Health Professions - Donaldson, R., editor

Web Resources

Massachusetts Nurses Association <www.massnurses.org/html/contacts_right.htm>

American Nurses Association <www.nursingworld.org/>

Links/Healthcare Organizations <www.massnurses.org/links/main2.htm#mahcorgs>

Nursing Spectrum <www.nursingspectrum.com/>

Healthcare Resources <www.healthcaresource.com/career.cfm>

Norah Nurse
50 Pond Street.
Salem, MA 01970
978-542-XXXX
e-mail

CLINICAL ROTATIONS

- Adult Health*/Salem Hospital
- Pediatrics*/Mass General Hospital
- Mental Health*/Boston Medical Center
- Critical Care*/Melrose-Wakefield Hospital
- Rehabilitation*/Spaulding Rehabilitation Hospital
- Public Health*/Partners Home Care
- Maternity & Women's Health*/Beverly Hospital

EDUCATION

SALEM STATE COLLEGE, Salem, MA

Bachelor of Science, Nursing

May 20XX

GPA 3.5

Related Courses: Adult Health, Women's Health, Infant & Child, Mental Health
Critical Care, Rehabilitation, Public Health, Nursing Research, Principles of
Pharmacology, Health Assessment in Nursing

Activities: Student Nurses Association, Students Educators on Sexual Assault

RESEARCH

Issues of Homelessness in an Urban Environment

Interviewed health providers, social service agencies and members of the homeless population within the city of Lynn to access needs of homeless population. Identified strategies to improve outreach and delivery of care within the city of Lynn.

RELATED EXPERIENCE

BEVERLY HOSPITAL, Salem, MA

Certified Nursing Assistant

Sept. 20XX-Present

Provide direct care to middle-aged and geriatric patients under the direction of RN/LPN staff.
Take vitals, assist patients with activities of daily living and document in the patient charts.

MARION MANOR, Boston, MA

Home Health Aide

Sept. 20XX-Aug. 20XX

Assisted nursing staff with patient care including bathing, changing and feeding.
Interacted with patients encouraging individuals to participate in social activities.
Maintained cleanliness of patient rooms and general facility.

ADDITIONAL EXPERIENCE

RED'S RESTAURANT, Salem, MA

Waitress

Sept. 20XX-Nov. 20XX

Provided efficient service to customers. Answered questions and resolved concerns.
Worked effectively as a member of a team in a very busy, fast paced environment.

CERTIFICATIONS

Certified Nursing Assistant, First Responders, CPR

COMPUTER SKILLS

IBM; Excel, Access, Power Point, Microsoft Word, Meditech

LANGUAGE Spanish (fluent)

COMMUNITY SERVICE

Salem State College Blood Drive, Walk for Hunger,
Walk for HAWC (Help for Abused Women and their Children)