

advance FOR

MAY 2012 | WWW.ADVANCEWEB.COM/NURSES

NURSES

SERVING NEW NURSE GRADUATES AND STUDENTS

Step in the Right Direction

► Resources for New
Nurse Graduates



WORK WONDERS™*

* We don't need clinical trials to know everyone feels better when they smile. Dansko's signature comfort collections give you the head-to-toe support you need. We do more than help you survive a long day. We help you smile your way through it.

DISCOVER THE
DANSKO DIFFERENCE
dansko.com/workwonders



Dansko, Work Wonders and Dansko LOCK are registered trademarks of Dansko, LLC. © 2012 Dansko LLC. 1.800.326.7564



STACEY MILLER
Editor of *ADVANCE*
For Nurse New Grads

FROM THE EDITOR

BUILDING YOUR CAREER

I recently had the opportunity to attend the National Student Nurses Association's annual meeting in Pittsburgh. For any nursing student about to enter the workforce, this was the place to be to get advice on how to design his or her nursing career.

One of my favorite gems of wisdom came from Eileen Zungolo, EdD, RN, CNE, FAAN, ANEF, recently retired dean, School of Nursing, Duquesne University. In a panel discussion, she quoted living nursing legend, Margaret L. McClure, EdD, RN, FAAN, retired chief nursing officer, New York University Medical Center.

McClure used to say, Zungolo told the audience, "what engineering student would be expected to build the Golden Gate Bridge upon graduation?"

Her point, of course, nurses are expected to graduate, get a job and immediately begin caring for patients, thinking they must know everything. Working on the same unit as nurses with 5, 10, 20-plus years of experience can be intimidating. Everyone has had that feeling of "oh, no, everyone knows what they're doing except for me."

That's just the point: everyone has at some point had that feeling. The Golden Gate Bridge was built by engineers who had to start out asking questions in order to create one of the most iconic bridges in the world.

As you begin your career, ask questions. If you think a colleague is going to be rude, short with you and brush you off, turn to someone else. If no one is willing to take the time to help you provide the best possible care for the patients, that workplace is probably not where you want to build your career. Get some experience and move on.

And furthermore, Zungolo noted, don't take someone's bad mood personally. Some people are just grumpy, she said. You're accountable for your own actions, not someone else's.

"You should not let anyone treat you badly because you don't know everything," she said.

In fact, no nurse is ever going to know everything. All you can do is keep educating yourself and be flexible — that's the best way to build your career. Best of luck! ●

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Stacey Miller". The script is fluid and cursive, with a large, stylized "M" and "L".

PROMOTING YOURSELF

Use these tips to make a great first impression as you begin the job search By Patricia Gilbert, RN

YOU DESERVE MANY CONGRATULATIONS; you graduated and are now going on your first interview. You have been preparing and dreaming of this for a long time-but now the long-awaited day has arrived and you're probably pretty anxious.

Calm down — you can conquer this next step and land a great job in the best field in the world.

First Impressions

You already have achieved a major goal by scoring the interview. Your résumé and cover letter impressed them enough that they want to see more of you.

However, there is another way you affect a potential employer's first impression — your voicemail. Although it may seem trivial, your children's voices, music or jokes on your answering machine do not generally appear professional to hospitals trying to contact a job applicant. Change your message to reflect your professional image. Rehearse it until you get it clear and concise.

In addition, review your e-mail address and change it if necessary to deliver the image you are seeking to project.

Research the Facility

Now that you have your appointment at the very best hospital in the area, a little research is in order. Know important facts about the facility before you arrive. Know the hospital's mission and values, the number of beds, the names of the department manager and CEO, any building projects, the hospital's areas of expertise and the different types ➔



“Volunteering impresses employers; it shows initiative and enthusiasm toward doing all that is necessary to be a qualified health care worker. In addition, volunteering shows a high level of commitment that is critical for long-term success.” — Gary Stafford

of rehab they offer. I find it very disheartening when candidates know nothing about the hospital — it is as if they picked a name out of a hat.

Someone who makes the additional effort to research the facility is the person who will bring professionalism, commitment and enthusiasm to the staff. If you can find information about the person who is interviewing you, that would be wonderful. How impressive do you think it is when a candidate says they have read an article I have written or have heard me speak?

Another step to take before the interview is to create a list of questions to ask so you can make an informed decision about employment. Remember, an interview is an exchange of ideas and information between you and the recruiter. Preparing in advance is much easier than attempting to come up with relevant questions while you are nervous and apprehensive.

Here are some questions you may want to add to your list:

What educational opportunities are available for staff?

Is the orientation program individualized?

Please describe your mentoring program.

What are the benefits as far as health insurance, vacation, holidays, personal time?

What model of care is practiced here?

Dress to Impress

The next issue to think about in the job hunting process is what to wear? The old expression “dress for success” is never truer!

Impressions are made within the first five seconds of meeting someone. The purchase of one business suit — in black, brown or navy — is a wise investment in your future career.

Most positions will require you to participate in more than one interview, so one suit with a different shirt or blouse is fine. Before you leave the house, examine yourself very carefully in a full-length mirror. Do you project a professional image? If the answer is yes — go for it!

Don’t Be Late

There is not much that needs to be said on the following topic, just be on time! Nothing makes a poorer first impression than arriving late. A call from the road does not help. Once the interviewer’s enthusiasm about meeting you has waned, it is hard to get it back. Enough said.

Once you arrive, the first person you will probably meet is the secretary or assistant. This is a very important person — never forget they are the “gate-keeper.” Be polite, both in person and on the phone. When a candidate is overbearing or downright impo-

lite to my assistant, I immediately wonder what her attitude will be toward our patients.

Before you meet with the recruiter, you probably will have to complete an application. Do not get testy, even if you have already sent in a résumé. An application is a standardized way the institution collects information on all candidates and employees.

Be very careful to fill out all areas honestly. Now is the time you must own up to those mistakes you may have made in your youth. Most institutions perform criminal background checks on all candidates for employment. The question “Have you ever been convicted of a misdemeanor or a felony?” appears on all applications and must be answered truthfully.

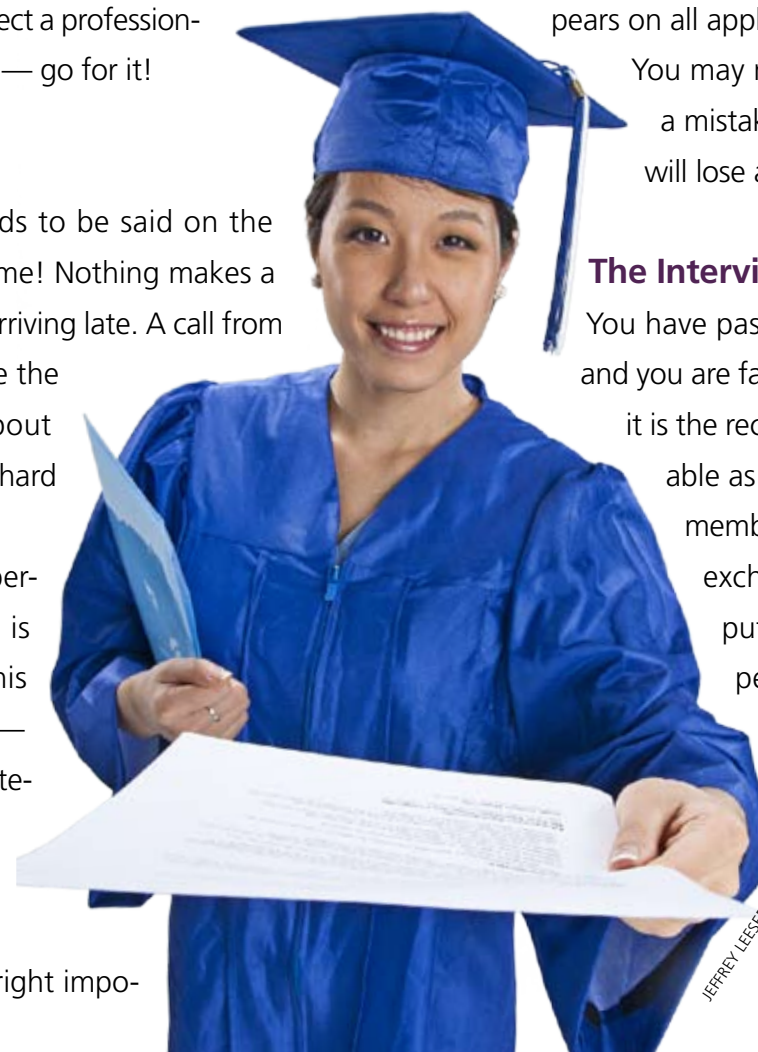
You may not lose your chance for employment for a mistake you made years ago, but you definitely will lose any chance if you lie on your application.

The Interview

You have passed through every obstacle with success and you are face to face with the recruiter. At this point, it is the recruiter’s job to try to make you as comfortable as possible so conversation flows freely. Remember what we said before; an interview is an exchange of information. The recruiter must put you at ease to have this exchange happen. The quality of the interview depends on this.

At this point your job is to:

- Make eye contact-do not look out the window or stare at your feet or the ceiling.
- Answer questions clearly, directly ➔



JEFFREY LEESER

READ MORE ARTICLES ON SELF-PROMOTION

NEW GRADS NEED TO KNOW

Read sage advice from seasoned veterans on what new nursing graduates should keep in mind as they start out in the profession.

Click on image above to go to website

and concisely-avoid slang expressions and speak clearly.

- Be aware of your body posture — body language is just as, if not more, important than verbal communication, so keep your facial expression one of interest. Do not fold your arms across your chest.
- Face the recruiter, if possible, and do not squirm and fidget.

Questions

When you arrive for an interview, you should be prepared to answer some frequently asked questions. These questions will be open-ended, probing and address why, what, who, when, where, and how. Here are some examples:

- How would you ____?
- Describe your techniques for ____.
- If you encountered ____ what would you do?
- Tell me about your experience with ____.
- Explain your role in ____.
- What aspects of this job would you find most difficult?
- What strengths would you bring to this position?
- What competency would your former boss recommend you strengthen?

If you are a new graduate with limited employment history, the following questions may be asked:

- Describe a teacher you had a problem with and how you handled the situation.
- What have you done that shows initiative and willingness to work?
- What are your long-range goals and expectations? How do you plan to fulfill these?
- A candidate also should be aware of illegal questions.

These questions should not be asked and you should not answer them:

- questions related to age, race, creed, color, religion or national origin;
- questions related to marital status, or plans to marry or have children;
- questions related to child care; or
- questions related to your spouse.

At the End

As the interview winds down, do not be afraid to ask about salary if it has not been discussed. Knowing your potential salary is important in your decision-making process. The more sophisticated the position you are applying for, the more room there is to negotiate salary.

The rule of thumb for a new or promotional opportunity is to request a 10 percent to 25 percent increase. Remember, when asked for a figure, do not forget to add per diem and overtime into your base rate of pay and always set realistic goals.

The interview is over, and you think everything went well. But there is one final step: a follow-up letter to the recruiter. This action shows your interest and reminds the recruiter of you. It should include an expression of gratitude for the person's time and consideration. The letter is an opportunity to reinforce your positive image; be clear, sincere, concise, brief and show your enthusiasm for the position. A very nice touch is to send a note to the secretary too.

Now make your list of the pros and cons of the institution. Remember, the people you have met during the interview process are a reflection of the hospital. Weigh everything when making your decision. You are in charge — this is your career! ●

Patricia Gilbert is director of nursing personnel at Stony Brook University Hospital, Stony Brook, NY.

7 ADVANCE FOR NURSES: SERVING NEW NURSE GRADUATES AND STUDENTS

Back View Professional
Funky Knit



The popular Dansko Professional has a very wearable 2" rise.

Viv White
Coated Canvas



Twin goring allows the Dansko Viv to expand or contract to fit different insteps.

Maryjane
Espresso Oiled



Seams on the new Dansko Maryjane are completely finished for a smooth fit.



Slip resistant should be clearly noted.

STAND TALL — WITH THESE TIPS FOR SMART SHOE SHOPPING

Content provided by Dansko

THERE ARE LOTS OF BEAUTIFUL SHOES out there but how many can stand up to a nurse's brutal schedule? Dansko's Creative Director, Ann Dittrich, tells you exactly what to look for.

Dittrich's number one priority is to make sure each delivers on Dansko footwear's all-day comfort promise. So let's just say she knows a thing or two on what you need to make a comfortable shoe.

Give yourself a lift. No need to feel confined to flats — you'll actually be better off with a slight heel, says Dittrich. Her advice: "Look for a shoe with at least a half-inch lift. It will help better support the arch."

Look for support. Standing all day is tough on your feet, knees and lower back. Look for shoes, like Dansko, that have a contoured foot-bed and provide plenty of arch support. When combined they provide the support you need to stand comfortably for long periods of time.

How's that feel? The leather of the shoe should be soft to the touch. Before you buy look for rough edges where the material has been cut or finished. These areas may cause blisters or rubbing later.

Make adjustments. Look for shoes with laces, buckles or elastic straps. These features allow for greater adjustability. "It's like a personalized fit for your foot," says Dittrich.

Read the labels. Does your hospital require slip resistant footwear? In order to comply with this requirement footwear must meet a preset industry standard. This should be clearly noted on the footwear packaging.

Follow these simple tips and you'll be ready wherever and whenever you're needed. ●



DANSKO



VOLUNTEERING BRINGS SUCCESS

Demonstrate personal proactivity and
commitment to potential employers

By Nick Schaefer

.....

IN TODAY'S BUSY SOCIETY, it can be hard to think about finding time to volunteer. However, the benefits of volunteering are enormous, both to you and the community. The right match can help you find friends, reach out to the community and, most importantly, learn new skills and even advance your career.

As you move forward with your job search, budget time to explore volunteer opportunities that match your skills. Volunteering just a few hours per week or month is as valuable to the community as it is to your future.

Boosting Your Résumé and Career

In an increasingly competitive marketplace, volunteering is seen as a good way to demonstrate personal proactivity and commitment to potential employers.

"It is imperative to pursue volunteer opportunities when you are a potential job candidate because with all the competition for positions, you need to stand out among the other candidates," said Heather Marchand, who routinely assists nursing and allied health students with their career development ➔

“Volunteering impresses employers; it shows initiative and enthusiasm toward doing all that is necessary to be a qualified healthcare worker. In addition, volunteering shows a high level of commitment that is critical for long-term success.” — Gary Stafford

as the assistant director of career placement at Sacred Heart University, Fairfield, CT.

Regardless of whether you are seeking your first job or a new career direction, volunteering may provide the extra boost you need to get on the right path. Volunteering can also help fill in the gaps of a résumé when you have been out of work or need to reestablish new networking options.

When it comes time to prepare a résumé for potential employers, volunteer labor may count as work experience, which would be a positive aspect to those reviewing your credentials, skills and know-how, Marchand said.

Volunteering adds interest and appeal to your résumé. It sets you apart from the rest, she added.

Enhancing Skills

Volunteering provides you with development opportunities not always possible in some settings; for example, mentoring and leadership, communication and people skills, help with organization and time management, or planning and budgeting knowledge. It can help open fresh opportunities and is a way to explore new career paths.

Let’s take the volunteer work that occurs within the medical world. Hospitals provide the perfect environment for future healthcare professionals to learn the ropes of the work setting. Or, those already in the field can discover other areas of interest. The experience allows one to develop the hands-on

familiarity that sets you ahead of the rest when preparing a résumé or interviewing.

“As people pursue more exposure to their field of interest, they will show the employer they are willing and ready to do whatever it takes to become a sound health care professional,” said Gary Stafford, who, as assistant director of career employment services, works with students pursuing health care degrees at Ozarks Technical Community College, Springfield, MO.

Make the Most

You’re donating your valuable time, so it’s important you enjoy and benefit from your volunteering. It’s vital to make sure your volunteer position is a good fit and to communicate with the people you’re working with in the volunteer organization. Suggestions include:

Ask questions. You want to make certain the experience is right for your skills, goals and the time you want to spend. If you have any questions, speak up.

Make sure you know what’s expected. Before starting, ensure you are comfortable with the organization, know what’s expected and understand the time commitment. Consider starting small so you don’t over-commit. Give yourself some flexibility to change your focus if needed.

Don’t be afraid to make a change. Speak up if your experience isn’t what you expected. Don’t force yourself into a

bad fit. Talk to the organization about changing your focus or consider looking for another match.

Finding Opportunities

Volunteering can be accomplished almost anywhere and most places won’t turn down a bit of free assistance. For healthcare professionals, some of the best places to look include hospitals, long-term care facilities, nursing homes and not-for-profit organizations.

For example, if people want practice in developing cancer treatments they should think of gaining experience by volunteering for the American Cancer Society, National Breast Cancer Foundation or the Cancer Council, suggested Stafford.

“This will allow them to gain a powerful insight that could drive their determination for future success,” Stafford said.

Outside of healthcare, opportunities are endless: helping children or animals, cleaning up the environment or supporting the arts. Volunteering brings you closer to an assortment of people who could prove quite beneficial. This is why it is important to make a good impression wherever you are in the job setting; you never know who will be your next ally in a job search. Also, numerous volunteers have found paid employment with the very company or job site they have spent time at, just by proving themselves a worthy team member.

“Volunteering impresses employers; it shows initiative and enthusiasm toward doing all that is necessary to be a qualified healthcare worker,” Stafford said. “In addition, volunteering shows a high level of commitment that is critical for long-term success.” ●

.....
Nick Schaefer is director of Career Services at Gwynedd-Mercy College in Gwynedd Valley, PA.

HEALTHCARE APPAREL GETS A FASHION UPGRADE

Sophisticated patterns, quality fabrics and tailored garments drive a trend toward more polished and comfortable work wear *Content provided by Dansko*

WEST GROVE, PA: For years RNs, hygienists, NPs and others whose profession dictates they wear scrubs at the office had few choices. Fortunately for today's nurse, this is no longer the case. With the introduction of new fabrics, more sophisticated cuts and pretty prints, nurses are finding their options for both style and comfort are growing.

When Dansko introduced their apparel collection in 2011, improving the wear experience was their first priority.

"We started with fabric," says Melissa Moreno, Dansko Apparel Development Manager. "It had to be soft to the touch, move with the wearer and stand up to the rigorous demands of the nursing profession. Once we knew the garments would stand up to the Dansko all-day comfort promise, we looked at color and cut. We wanted to make sure they were flattering and fashionable as well."

Building on last year's successful launch, Dansko is expanding its collection to offer new materials, styles and colors. Each piece



Dansko Greta and Gina in new purple stretch woven. All Dansko garments contain 5% spandex for improved fit.

holds true to Dansko's all-day comfort promise featuring soft materials, clean lines and carefully constructed garments for uniform options that feel great and look amazing wash after wash.

"It's the perfect combination of "comfy like scrubs" and "stylish like a casual dress pant," says Dr. Salina Green, St. Louis, MO-based MD.

Available in July 2012 at leading retailers nationwide, Dansko's 2012 Fall Apparel Collection will offer a wide range of design options for men and women complete with fashion and industry standard colors in a variety of figure flattering silhouettes.

"For fall 2012, Dansko's apparel color palette direction is cheerful yet maintains the level of professional elegance that a health care professional requires," said Ann Dittrich, Dansko Creative Director. "Our colors are clear and bright, conveying a sense of optimism."

Check out all Dansko apparel offerings at your favorite Dansko retailer. Visit Dansko.com for a complete list of styles and locations in your area. ●

FALL AT-WORK FASHION TRENDS

From subtle prints to sophisticated color palates, healthcare apparel presents a polished look for fall.

TIPS FOR EFFECTIVE NETWORKING

Presentation and personal engagement are keys to expanding your professional circle

By Barbara Bergstrom

.....

AS YOU CLIMB TO THE TOP of your chosen field and become known as a skilled professional, you must first admit that school is never out. Conservatively speaking, there are at least five people who want your job. Right now they are gaining experience, educating themselves and searching for the tools necessary to compete with you for your position. Business today is so competitive; we cannot sit back on our laurels and assume we are secure.

Be sure to attend continuing education courses pertaining to your career. Join professional organizations to keep up with the latest trends. Also, become active and well-known among your peers. Attend seminars and conventions that provide workshops on numerous subjects. Take advantage of networking opportunities with the Chamber of Commerce, which provides many speakers, innovators and specialists to help raise your level of community and business involvement. You will be stimulated and your energy and enthusiasm will be appreciated by upper management as well as your clients.

No Typical Event

Networking events come in all shapes and sizes. The “speed



KYLE KIELINSKI

networking” get-together, or the “talk to everyone in 3-minute intervals” events, are spin-offs of speed dating. “Business after hours” events have been around forever. Organizations meet regularly for events labeled as “networking” or “meet and greet” activities and are always publicized for breakfast, lunch or dinner.

For some, these events fill a social need and enable them to make specific contacts. A networking opportunity is especially helpful for people new to the field, new to the community, or who want to expand their reach. Don’t fool yourself,

however, into thinking you don’t need these events. You will find the movers and shakers in the competitive business arena are at the same events and they are “working the room” as seasoned professionals.

Every time you walk out your door to attend anything, anywhere, realize you are on your way to a networking opportunity. Prepare yourself with a good supply of business cards, check your wardrobe choice, your accessory choice and make certain you have breath mints.

Prior planning prevents poor performance; these five ➔

READ MORE ARTICLES ON NETWORKING

HEART SOUNDS

Accurate cardiac assessment is a technique that is learned over time with practice and patience.

Click on image above to go to website

Ps will contribute much to your success. Always prepare, in advance, for a conference, a meeting, a business meal, a charity event, a networking opportunity and especially a board meeting.

Ask yourself: Who is hosting the event and who is sponsoring it? What is the event’s purpose, and who will be there? Know the answers to these questions before you head out the door. The final question is: What can you contribute to the event’s success?

Tips for Success

The following 11 suggestions should be helpful when attending any networking opportunity or event:

1. Check your business card supply and make sure your cards are with you even at social or charity events.
2. Smiling is contagious, so start an epidemic and infect the whole room with yours.
3. Shake hands with those you know and introduce them to others. You are the consummate professional. Plan ahead of any event and get an idea of who will be there and who you specifically want to meet.
4. Look into a person’s eyes when you shake hands and say the person’s name. People love to hear their own name, and saying it will help you to remember it.
5. See and be seen. Everyone watches the door to see who is coming and who is leaving. When you enter, stop for a moment and then step out of the doorway. Get your bear-

ings and head in the direction you want to go. Chin up, good posture and confident stride, rather than wandering around trying to fit in.

6. Avoid two persons talking together. It is a private conversation and should not be interrupted.
7. Recognize your peers to be appreciated as a team player, but don’t spend time talking with them. Cultivate those you don’t know.
8. Never write anything on the back of a business card in front of the person who gave it to you. Walk away and make your note privately.
9. Do not head for the bar or buffet table. It is counterproductive. Eat something before you go.
10. Be selective. Don’t give your business cards to everyone as if they were flyers at a hardware store opening. It appears pushy and unprofessional.
11. Finally, follow up. Don’t send e-mails or make phone calls to everyone you meet. Be specific. Don’t waste your time or theirs.
Remember, it’s not about you, but how you are perceived by others. Be perceived as a thoughtful professional and you’ll be surprised how people will seek you out and look forward to doing business with you. ●

Barbara B. Bergstrom is an award-winning trainer, public speaker, author and nationally syndicated columnist.

ADVANCE is your one-stop shop to dress yourself for success!

Visit us online to see our entire selection of scrubs, shoes, medical equipment, gifts and more!

Gifts to Celebrate Your Graduation



#19800

personalize

#18278

#14411

personalize

#20066

#02160

#19230

#19229

#25313

#06058

Professional Accessories

BLUE

personalize strap

PINK

BLACK

#18583

#18977

#02444

Shoes

#19738



#19739



#00214 Women's
#00215 Men's



**15%
OFF**

**any order
\$50 or more!**

Use promo code
NNGRAD528
now through
12/31/12.

Not valid on Littmann stethoscopes,
Ultrasound (#11840), Oximeter (#13221),
Cherokee WorkWear, affiliate-specific
merchandise or items ending in \$.97.

CONQUERING FIRST DAY FEARS

Tame those nerves before your first day
working as a nurse By Sue Coyle

WHETHER YOU'RE WALKING into your first day of class, beginning your academic journey toward becoming a nurse, or meeting your first patient in your first job, you're sure to be somewhat nervous.

As a result, you may not be as focused as you should be in those initial hours, resulting in the loss of valuable information and/or time. To avoid this, you'll want to figure out ways to untie the knots in your stomach before you even get to the first day, meaning you need to find some in-the-moment relaxation techniques, right about now. Then, if you do get to class and the nerves are high, you'll be ready.

Though relaxation is different for everyone, there are some general techniques that you can try to as you work toward individualizing your method. Several are listed below. Try them; try.

You'll want a few ready to go, just in case.

General Rules

The first things to do when attempting to relax may not seem innovative, but they are effective. Sometimes, simple, tried, and true is the way to go; there's a reason they're tried and true after all.

Don't rush. If you usually need half an hour to get ready, give yourself an hour. Make sure you have that extra bit of time to change your mind about what you're wearing or to wade through your things a third time to be sure you have your ID. This

way you won't be frantic from running when you get there.

Remind yourself you aren't the only one who's new. As a student, whether in class or at practicum, you're not alone. Everyone is a little bit nervous.

Take time for the things that calm you. If running, yoga, reality TV, or cooking calms you down, make sure you do it. You may not have time the morning of, but the night before is likely available.

Destressors work well in advance too, giving you a zen feeling that should get you through the morning.

Do not force relaxation. If running, yoga, reality TV, or cooking freak you out or feel like torture, don't do it. Just because something works for your best friend or neighbor doesn't mean it will work for you. Trying to pretend it does will only add to your anxiety.

In-the-Moment Techniques

Even if you do take the time to relax and "zen out" before your first day, you may still come face-to-face with a healthy handful of jitters once you get inside the building. That's OK; it's to be expected, even, which is why you'll have techniques such as the ones listed below at the ready:

Bring a talisman — Carry something in your pocket or around your neck that calms you. It may be a worry stone, a locket, or a textured piece of fabric. When you get nervous, touch it. Worry stones were invented for moments like this. And, once you get to the class about sensory perception, you may understand why.

Write down or repeat an affirmation — Affirmations are simple, positive sayings about yourself that can help to boost your confidence. It's a good bet that some of your anxiety stems from not being sure that you'll excel in class or in the



field. Having a little saying written down on a piece of paper or repeated in your head throughout the day that's as basic as "I'm awesome" can make a world of difference.

Breathe — It may sound silly, but breathing is a key step in reducing anxiety. We're not talking about the usual in and out but rather focused breathing. If you're having trouble controlling your nerves, take a moment (if you can) to center your thoughts on a slower method of breathing. Breathe in counting to four, breathe out counting to six. Repeat a few times before coming back to reality.

Talk about it — As stated above, you're not the only one starting fresh. Turn to the person beside you, tell them you're nervous. You may be surprised by the conversation and friendship that follows. ●

Sue Coyle is a frequent contributor to *ADVANCE*.



YOU SPEND THE DAY TAKING CARE OF OTHERS,
LET DANSKO TAKE CARE OF YOU

* Made from top-quality materials specially selected for their suitability to demanding work environments our shoes and apparel are designed to not only help you survive your day, they help you love your day!

DISCOVER THE
DANSKO DIFFERENCE
dansko.com/workwonders



Dansko, Work Wonders and Dansko LOCK are registered trademarks of Dansko, LLC. © 2012 Dansko LLC. 1.800.326.7564

CE OFFERING: 1 Contact Hour

TEAM BUILDING ESSENTIALS

Learn how to build an effective clinical team

By Ken Stanton, PhD, RN, & Jerry Garfield, MSW

IT IS 7 A.M. AND DAYSHIFT STAFF MEMBERS are gathering to listen to report. As you expected, the regular charge nurse is away and you will be in charge today.

You take a look at the staffing sheet. You recognize most of the names and are relieved to see a few of your strongest nurses and nursing assistants — people on whom you can always rely — will be working with you today. There also are two people you know well, but are not looking forward to working with. One is a nurse who frequently complains when other people and other departments do not do what is expected of them; the other is a nursing assistant who lacks initiative and often has to be told what to do.

You see two people you do not know are assigned to your unit. One is a nurse from a staffing agency; the other is a per diem nurse who usually works on another unit. As you think about what your unit will need to accomplish today, you are conscious that your first task is to organize your team.

Nurses Work in Teams

Whether the work setting is an inpatient unit or an outpatient clinic, nurses generally work as members of multidisciplinary teams. This is true whether the unit uses a team nursing ➔



KYLE KIELINSKI

ONLINE CEs

Online nursing CE is a convenient way to earn contact hours. Nursing CE hours can be obtained on a wide range of topics and online nursing CE can help nurses remain licensed.

CE On Demand

Get unlimited online CE. Sign up for CE On Demand. It's quick and easy.

or primary nursing practice model. These teams often include both licensed and unlicensed clinical staff, as well as non-clinical staff, such as unit secretaries and housekeepers. Some staff, such as discharge planners, respiratory therapists, physical therapists and others, may spend part of their day working alongside staff members who are assigned to the patient care unit.

Team building is a daily activity in nursing. On any given day, the patient care team may include per diem staff, staff who float from other units or other shifts, and staff from outside agencies. These individuals may or may not be familiar with the work setting, and they may or may not be known to other members of the team. In practice, it is frequently necessary to form a new team at the start of each shift.

Because clinical teams work within a larger organizational context, much of the work of team building has been done before the team members even assemble. Healthcare organizations have regulations, policies and procedures that explicitly define formal aspects of organizational culture, including the roles and functions of specific types of teams, and the roles, qualifications and competencies of team members. For

example, the number and responsibilities of nurses, nursing assistants and housekeepers are defined before any individuals are assigned to fill those roles. Team members may be new to this shift or this unit, but most of them will have worked many times on other shifts or other units. Because the team is embedded in the organizational culture, teams know they can rely on the organization's logistical and moral support.

Equally important, the organizational culture provides a shared frame of reference that enables everyone to understand the purpose of the team and the roles of its members before the team is even assembled. Individuals with a shared frame of reference approach a particular situation with a common orientation and set of values. They have a shared understanding of the actions that must be taken, and of the role played by each person who takes action in that situation.

Team Development

We can think of the process of team building as happening in stages: individuals assemble; the individuals join together as a team; and the team engages in the task at hand.

It begins with a collection of individuals who are assembled, ready to begin a new shift. They are available, but in a sense, they are not yet committed to the team, and they are not yet engaged in the task at hand.

For team building to be successful, two transitions have to be achieved. First, the individuals must join together to become members of a team. This requires agreement on shared goals and a process to achieve those goals. When this happens, they become committed to one another and to the team effort. Second, the team members must become engaged in the task at hand.

In a classic work on team development, Bruce Tuckman

described this process as forming, storming, norming and performing.¹ In Tuckman's model, forming occurs when individuals assemble and become oriented to the task at hand. Storming describes the initial resistance to group influence and task requirements that often occurs as the group transitions to norming, the development of group cohesiveness, the adoption of group standards and the assumption of individual roles. This process enables the individuals to join together as a team that is ready to engage in the task at hand. Individual concerns have been resolved and the group is ready to work together by performing constructively.

Effective Team Building

The team leader has primary responsibility for team development. Teams are most effective when one person is designated as the formal leader to whom everyone on the team is accountable. Qualified leadership requires definition of the leader's role and assignment of a particular individual to fill that role. The team leader may be designated by a job title, such as charge nurse. Alternatively, the leadership role may be defined generically. For example, more than one individual may be called upon at times to function in the role of charge nurse. By means of policies and procedures, the organizational culture provides a mechanism for defining the leadership role and filling it.

Being an effective team leader is not the same as being a competent nurse. As nurses, we are educated to provide clinical care within our scope of practice. Through experience, we develop our skills and competence. For most nurses, being able to provide excellent care to our patients is a source of great personal and professional satisfaction. Although team leaders often find opportunities to apply their clinical expertise to ➔

direct patient care, their primary responsibility is to facilitate the patient care delivered by members of their team.

Competent team leaders are able to look at the big picture. Nurses who assume a leadership role must be able to understand and prioritize the work of the unit as a whole. They must understand the flow of patients from and to other departments, such as the emergency department or the op-

erating room, and how the clinical unit interacts with ancillary departments, such as imaging or discharge planning. To make assignments and plan effectively, team leaders must understand the work and scope of practice of each member of the team.

Team leaders must be able and willing to lead. In a very influential article, "Leadership: Good, Better, Best," Bernard M.

Bass suggested there are three major leadership styles: laissez-faire, transactional and transformational. Laissez-faire leaders are passive. They show little interest in the work of the team and tend to act only when there is a problem. Transactional leaders actively set goals, monitor progress and reward successful performance. Transformational leaders go beyond that approach. They seek to inspire excellence and address the individual needs of team members to improve the performance of the team as a whole.²

These leadership styles have a real and significant effect on team performance. In a study of staff and patient satisfaction, and quality-of-life outcomes in mental health treatment programs, Patrick Corrigan and colleagues demonstrated that patients' "satisfaction and quality of life were inversely associated with laissez-faire approaches to leadership and positively associated with both transformational and transactional leadership." They found staff "who viewed their leaders as charismatic, inspirational and considerate of individuals worked in programs with [patients] who reported a relatively higher quality of life." The authors' conclusion is relevant for clinical teams in any setting: "Active leadership skills that inspire and intellectually stimulate appear to be an important element in programs that are satisfactory to consumers."³

Building Your Team

Instead of rushing to hear report and make assignments, take a few minutes to build your team. An article in Harvard Management Update describes specific techniques leaders can use to help a group of individuals join together as members of a team, quickly and effectively:

- Share personal histories. Personal stories reveal competencies, generate respect and foster cooperation.



KYLE KIELINSKI

"Active leadership skills that inspire and intellectually stimulate appear to be an important element in programs that are satisfactory to consumers."³ — *Bernard M. Bass*

- Ask: "What has worked for you in the past?" This signals that past experiences are valued as potential contributions.
- Describe how the team will work together. Clearly state the vision, purpose and plan, and describe each person's role within the team.
- Optimize individual team member's strengths. Make realistic assignments that take advantage of each team member's strengths.
- Establish norms for making decisions. Let team members know what types of decisions they are expected to make on their own and what types of decisions will be made by the team leader.
- Establish a process for giving and receiving feedback. This allows information to be exchanged quickly, easily and in all directions.⁴
- At the start of a shift, it may seem as if there is not enough time to do all this. In practice, however, it takes only a few minutes, and it sets up the team for a productive and successful shift.

Putting It Together

Everyone is seated waiting for report. You greet them, introduce yourself and tell them a bit about your professional background.

You ask the team members to introduce themselves. As they give their names, you ask questions about prior experience on this and other units, and types of work each person has done. You casually elicit information about the nurse from the

staffing agency and the per diem nurse who usually works on another unit. You acknowledge prior acquaintance with your regular team members and tell a few anecdotes of experiences you have shared in the past.

You give the team a brief overview of the plan for the day and describe any issues you anticipate, such as special procedures or difficult clinical problems. You ask if they have any preferences regarding procedures and routines. After each person has been heard from, you make the assignments and outline your expectations of the team. You conclude by saying how much you are looking forward to working with this particular team.

The whole process has taken less than 10 minutes. What you have done is create in your team members' minds the thought, "I want to be part of this team. This team is likely to be successful, and these are people with whom I will enjoy working." You also find that you feel the same way.

Tips for Team Leaders

Clinical teams have three goals: 1) provide good clinical care; 2) provide good service to patients and their families; and 3) use resources wisely. Your most valuable resource is your team.

Patient care is provided by teams. The quality of care provided by a clinical team depends on how well the team members work together. Team leaders can make it happen.

Everyone who works on your unit is part of the patient care team. By including the nursing assistants, the housekeepers, the unit secretary and others in your planning, decision-making and team recognition, you increase the capacity of your team to achieve successful patient care outcomes.

Work with the team you have. Ignoring new team members or complaining about being stuck with particular individuals is insulting, rarely changes anything and does not lead to successful results.

Diversity is not only a policy; it is a fact of life. If you find ways to use people's strengths, you will spend less time trying to cope with their weaknesses.

Address the needs and concerns of your team members. If you do this, they will be more interested in addressing your needs and concerns. ●

References

1. Tuckman, B. (1965). Developmental sequence in small groups. *Psychological Bulletin*, 63(6), 384-99.
2. Bass, B.M. (1985). Leadership: Good, better, best. *Organizational Dynamics*, 13(3), 26-40.
3. Corrigan, P.W., Lickey, S.E., Campion, J., et al. (2000). Mental health team leadership and consumers' satisfaction and quality of life. *Psychiatric Services*, 51(6), 781-785.
4. Garfield, J., & Stanton, K. (2005). Building effective teams in real time. *Harvard Management Update*, 10(11), 1-3.

Ken Stanton is a staff nurse at Alta Bates-Summit Medical Center in Berkeley, CA. Jerry Garfield is an executive coach and change management consultant at Garfield Leadership & Management Development Services. The authors have completed disclosure forms and report no relationships relevant to the content of this article.

Dear Future Nurses,

*Welcome to an incredible
profession! You are joining a
proud group of men and women
who are fiercely dedicated to
caring for their patients.*

*We have a few pieces of advice
for you as you begin your career.*

*Warmly,
Suzanne, RN (& friends!)
Dialysis unit, Guthrie Robert
Packer Hospital
2 years of experience*

Provided by  **dansko**[®]

