Sigma
GLOBAL NURSING EXCELLENCE

20 TIPS AND TRICKS FOR EARLY CAREER NURSES

It's normal to be excited, nervous, and anxious as you start your career as a nurse. We asked Sigma's early career nurses to share advice on how to navigate the "real world" of nursing. Here are 20 tips to help you get started as an early career nurse.

1



Invest in you! And your feet.

Wear comfortable shoes and compression socks, as well as shoes with traction in case of spills.

2



Invest in you! And your sleep.

Cut out screentime right before bed. Consider taking melatonin when navigating shift from days to nights and then commit to the new schedule.

3



Your mind and your body.

Remember to eat and exercise to maintain healthy habits. Carry water and a protein bar in case your mealtimes are delayed.

4



Get to know the job.

Look at more than the hourly rate and sign-on bonus. It's different for each country but look at the total package of what is offered to you: paid time off, insurance, labor union beliefs.

5



There are things to avoid and things not to avoid.

You shouldn't avoid speaking up for self, patient, and team. Kind communication is key. Avoid passive aggressive communication. Be kind to the unkind.

6



Go to meetings.

Try to share your expertise or interests to build collaboration with others. Conversations can help create a healthy work environment.

7



Always approach with positivity and a big smile.

Facemasks can make it difficult, but we smile with our eyes. We can't control all things, but we can control our response and reaction to the situation.

8



Educate. Educate. Educate.

Education empowers the patient. Give independence to the patient. They have the right to know what is being done to them.

9



Spend time with people.

Develop a positive relationship with your patients. You never know how much time you will have with them. Distract them from the negatives by discussing topics beyond illness.

10



Help others.

You bond and create relationships when helping others. Developing a support circle of colleagues can help keep you balanced. You never know when you will need the help reciprocated.

11



Be open to suggestions.

You don't know everything when you are first starting out. Advice isn't always a threat, but a way that others can teach you from their own experiences. This allows you to be creative and blend their advice with your knowledge. Being open will lead to a mentorship.

12



Organization goes a long way.

Nursing is full of urgent and important tasks, but it is important to reflect back on past procedures. Break them down in an organized way to prepare for the next time.

13



Get to know colleagues.

You can learn more beyond nursing. Don't worry about hierarchy and learn what others on the healthcare team do in their roles.

14



Maintain your integrity.

Integrity defines nurses. It is needed to build trust.

15



Think before you answer.

Sometimes thoughts are out of focus. Take a moment to reflect before speaking up.

16



Leave your work at the hospital or office.

Keeping work life and personal life separate is important. It can be used against you and can bring unneeded stress.

17



Remain calm all the time.

Trust yourself. You can handle more than you even know.

18



Experience makes perfect.

Slow down and don't strive for perfection. Learn from your mistakes.

19



Be a nursing ambassador.

You are not a member of the profession; you are a member of a professional organization. Use nursing as a career and not just a job.

20



Never forget the reason why you became a nurse.

Be proud.

This information was compiled from one of Sigma's Early Career Nurses Series webinars, titled 20 Tips for Early Career Nurses.

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