

Activity 2 Diversity of the profession

Activity instructions for ambassadors

Background

To become a nurse, you must choose to study your degree in one of four fields:

1. Child nursing
2. Adult nursing
3. Mental health nursing
4. Learning disability nursing

Once you are qualified as a registered nurse, you can choose to work in many different settings, such as a hospital, school, care home, GP surgery, in the community, conducting research or taking a leadership role and many others. You also have the opportunity to specialise in a certain area, such as anaesthetic, intensive care or even a specific health condition. No matter what setting or role you work in, you have the opportunity to make a real difference to the lives of people every day.

This group activity has been designed to demonstrate the breadth of different opportunities available, some surprising and interesting elements of the different roles, and the things that make them different.

The challenge

Students must review five nurse job descriptions and then identify the correct job title of five nurse profiles.

What you will need

- A printout of the activity sheet (job descriptions and nurse profiles) for each group
- A pen for each group
- A copy of the answers and discussion points

Instructions

- Split the class into groups of 2–3 students
- Give each group an activity sheet
- Each group must review the job descriptions and nurse profiles and write the correct job title alongside the nurse profile (with a guide time of 10 minutes)
- Once the designated time limit is reached, go through the answers and move on to the discussion points below

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Answers

Joanne

My name's Joanne and I've been working as a **mental health nurse** for 3 years. I chose this career because I knew I wanted to help people and I didn't want to be stuck behind a desk! To be good at this job, you've got to be a really good listener – even when a patient is distressed, you've got to stay calm and try to work out what's upsetting them.

My favourite part of my job is running the football sessions with patients. You see them develop and grow, get fit, join in with others. It's a great way to get patients to trust each other and me – it's basically 90 minutes of therapy, in the fresh air!

Arjun

I'm Arjun and I've been qualified as a **learning disability nurse** for 6 months now. I'm really enjoying it – I wanted to work in the community. I get to take patients out and do activities with them – no two days are the same.

One of my patients loves going to the local farm park and the staff there know him and give him achievable jobs to do – it's really good for helping him build skills. I never expected my job would include feeding lambs when I started my degree!

The best thing about my job is spending plenty of time with each patient, really getting to know them and working to help them get the most out of life.

Aaliyah

I'm Aaliyah, I'm a **research nurse** and I've been doing it for 7 years. I'm hospital based, so I work closely with the rest of the team around each patient, helping to assess suitability and keep the patient informed.

I'd say the most important skill in my job is good communication skills. It's often a stressful time for the patient and their loved ones, and you need to make sure they understand the options and can make an informed decision.

Many of the patients I work with are seriously ill, so it's not all happy endings. But when a treatment makes a difference, and you know you've not only helped that patient but contributed towards something that can go on to help others, there's no better reward.

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Lilly

I'm Lilly and I'm a **general practice nurse**. I've been a registered nurse for almost 15 years and I worked in a hospital setting for the first 10 years, but once I had my kids I wanted to work closer to home and with more regular hours. This job lets me carry on doing what I love.

I really enjoy working in the community – I live close by so I know lots of the faces that come in. It's brilliant when you see a patient out and about, fully recovered and you know you were part of that. I particularly enjoy helping patients make healthy changes like quitting smoking – you get to know people, which really helps you to find the support that is right for the individual.

Matt

My name's Matt, I'm 38 and I'm a **charge nurse**. I worked for a few years as a staff nurse and had a lot of experience when then this role came up. My kids were starting secondary school and I was ready for a new challenge, so it came at just the right time for me.

There's always something new in this role – in a way it's more varied than hands-on nursing although I still do some of that too. To be good at it, you need good people skills and you need to be super-organised. I've had to learn to delegate and to recognise people's strengths – a department is only as strong as its staff team.

There's a lot of responsibility comes with this job – basically on a lot of things the buck stops with me.

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Discussion points

After the students have finished, talk about the activity and the breadth of diversity in the profession. Areas of discussion could include:

- What did students learn from this activity? What did it tell them about a nurse's job?
- The surprising and interesting elements of the five roles – what did the students find unexpected?
- Which roles do the students think would suit themselves or their friends?
- Other roles in the profession
- Career progression opportunities
