

Essential tips to prepare and deliver a talk



When talking to young people, here are a few simple things you can do to make sure your sessions run smoothly and to ensure you, the students and the school get the most out of your visit.

But remember – whether you're experienced at giving talks or not, one of the most important things is that you enjoy the session. After all, you are the expert. Nothing you say will be wrong.

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Before the talk

- **Prepare a structure for your talk.**
This should include an outline of timings and content. An example of a possible structure is summarised on the next page.
- **Tailor the content of your talk to the age group of the students.** Older students are probably more interested in the routes into nursing and midwifery and what qualifications they need. Younger students are more likely to be interested in what you do day-to-day and the more practical side of your role. The activities are a great way to get the younger students engaged in your talk.
- **Consider the size of the group you are talking to.** For smaller groups, you can get students moving around and involved in activities. For larger groups, an interactive discussion is probably easier to facilitate.
- **The beginning and end of your talk are the most important.** The introduction sets the tone for the session and gets the audience engaged. The end is the chance to make a lasting impression and leave the audience inspired to find out more about a career in nursing or midwifery. Consider telling a short, compelling story about your journey and how you have got here today or show them the inspirational video.
- **Prepare a little introduction about yourself.** Try to keep it relatively short: your name, where you're from, role that you do day-to-day, favourite thing about your job or maybe what inspired you to get into nursing. A brief introduction is more powerful than a lengthy speech.
- **Plan to be interactive.** This is the best way to get your audience engaged. Use the Q&A document to prepare questions and facilitate a classroom-style discussion. Get the group involved in one of the activities or play the short inspirational video.
- **Consider going with a colleague.** A change of speaker creates a more dynamic environment and can add energy to a session. If you've never done a talk before, buddying up with a colleague makes things a lot less daunting.
- **Don't try to do too much.** Identify the key messages you want to convey and concentrate on communicating these in a variety of ways. The key messages you should consider include:
 - Breadth and diversity of the opportunities
 - Surprising and unexpected aspects of roles
 - Skills and values
- **Practice makes perfect.** If you've never delivered a talk with young people before, make sure you rehearse as much as you can. It may help you to do a 'dry run' with a friend, colleague or young adult in your family who can then give you honest and constructive feedback.

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Session structure

Preparing a structure will help to ensure your talk runs without any problems and everyone gets the most out of your visit. Below is an example of how you could structure your talk. We also recommend you speak to the school to ask advice on what the students already know about the profession and the areas students will be most interested in. You can then use this information to help shape your talk.

10 minutes: introduction

- Give a brief introduction about yourself. Try to keep it relatively short: your name, where you're from, role, what you do day-to-day, favourite thing about your job or maybe what inspired you to get into nursing.
- Provide an overview of the key messages you want the students to take away from the talk and why it's applicable to them or their lives e.g. how it might have an impact on them or change their perception.

20 minutes: activity

- Facilitate interaction with the group. You can use the Q&A document to prepare questions for a classroom-style discussion and/or get the group involved in an activity.

10 minutes: questions from students

- Give students the chance to ask you any questions.

5 minutes: play video

- A visual way to capture the breadth of opportunities available within nursing and midwifery.

5 minutes: wrap up

- Reflect on your journey and how you have got to where you are today. Share candid examples of failures and successes and what they have taught you. Prompt students to think about their futures and the pathways they might take.

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During the talk

- **Be aware of your audience.** Let their interests, reactions and questions shape your talk.
- **Smile, communicate with passion and make eye contact with the audience.** This helps to build rapport and connect with them.
- **Tell stories wherever you can.** Young people like to hear 'real-life' examples so it's a great technique to capture their attention. Adding an element of humour will help keep the audience alert.
- **Don't sit behind a desk.** Avoid creating a physical barrier between you and the audience.
- **Try not to put students on the spot.** Young people are very self-conscious and many are embarrassed or worried about looking silly in front of their friends. Ask open questions or get volunteers. Or make things interesting by asking all students to stand up and then sit down if they agree or disagree with a statement. Always positively respond to every question.
- **Be honest.** It will make you more human and help you earn the respect of the audience.
- **Avoid using medical jargon.** Or if you do use it, make sure you explain what it means.

After the talk

- **Supporting schools to continue conversations.** Leave behind any resources you think would support schools to continue the conversations with students about a career in nursing and midwifery, such as the become a nurse poster. It's also an opportunity to ensure there is signposting for students who want to find out more information.
- **Evaluation.** Use the evaluation form to get feedback from the teacher. This will help to shape and improve how you deliver your next talk. You could also ask students for a before and after show of hands about a career in nursing or midwifery.
- **Share your experience.** Write a blog or tweet about your talk to inspire your colleagues. Use hashtags #NursingNowEngland and #WeAreTheNHS

Reminders

- It's the responsibility of the teachers to manage behaviour. Your sessions should always be attended by a teacher.
- You can join Inspiring the Future and use their online matchmaking platform to search for volunteer opportunities in local schools. You can also access other useful resources. Visit inspiringthefuture.org
- Make the most of the resources that are available. This includes a Q&A document to facilitate a classroom-style discussion, a number of practical activities and an inspirational video. They have all been developed to help you deliver the key messages in a variety of engaging ways.
- Students can visit healthcareers.nhs.uk and stepintothens.nhs.uk for more information.