

# nurse's newsletter

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This article is brought to you by M/s **Nurses-Careers-Abroad**, a New Delhi, India based organisation specializing in placement of Indian / Asian Nurses in USA, Europe, Australia, New Zealand etc. Nurses-careers-abroad makes available ON-Line training facilities for NCLEX-RN and IELTS, both pre-requisites for Nurses from this part of the world for jobs in America and accepted as sufficient qualification (often not as a qualifying requirement) for jobs in many countries in Europe and Australia /New Zealand.

Such articles and other interesting facts / anecdotes about nursing profession are mailed by us on fortnightly basis to all Nurses registered with us at [www.nurses-careers-abroad.com](http://www.nurses-careers-abroad.com) for Newsletter Distribution. Please register if you wish to be on the direct mailing list.

**Welcome to all. The previous issue of our News Letter had an article on “Any Nurse Can Be A Leader”. Now the next article is on “Professional Growth”.**

### **PROFESSIONAL GROWTH:**

ALTHOUGH SOME NURSES are uncomfortable with *floating*, or being temporarily assigned to another unit (or even another facility in a large healthcare system), many welcome the opportunity to take on new challenges and enhance their clinical skills. If you work in a hospital, you may be called on to float from time to time. Not only is floating an enduring and cost-effective strategy for staffing, it may also be nurses' legal, moral, and ethical obligation as caregivers and patient advocates.

To make the most of a floating assignment, approach it in a proactive and confident way, knowing that your patients will receive safe, high-quality care from a nurse who has a solid knowledge base and can perform clinical skills competently.

### ***Top ten tips for fearless floating :***

- 1. Be positive about floating.** Replace any negative thoughts about floating with positive self-talk. Think of all the things you'll learn, people you'll meet, and experiences you'll have. Recognize how much you know already and have confidence that your transferable skills and common sense will keep you and your patients safe. Remember, whether departments require float help because of absences, emergencies, or unfilled positions, most are stressed and stretched. Even if you're not getting a warm reception, be friendly.
- 2. Request an orientation.** The Joint Commission requires that units and departments have well-defined orientation programs, checklists, education plans, and core competencies. Ask for these if they're not offered. The checklists, competencies, and education plans will help you focus on what's important to the host unit. If you're asked to float because of an emergency, the host staff may not have time to give you a thorough orientation. Again, most units have a new hire competency or orientation checklist that contains the most critical things a nurse needs to know to work safely. Frequently these are nonclinical items such as how to call a code or fire evacuation routes. Ask for the new hire checklist if no one's offered it to you.
- 3. Look for similarities between the care you deliver in your home unit and the care you give in the host unit.** Many nursing skills, such as inserting peripheral I.V. catheters, are useful in multiple practice areas. If nurses in the host unit have to perform unit-specific procedures for you, see if you can do some of their transferable work.

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**4. Know normal physical assessment findings.** For example, if you can identify normal heart sounds, you'll know when abnormal heart sounds are present, even if you can't determine if it's a murmur, S<sub>3</sub>, or S<sub>4</sub>. This is true in every practice area. Whether you're in obstetrics or ambulatory surgery, if you notice that a patient has deviated from normal, you need to act on your findings.

**5. Know common practice norms in your facility.** Most healthcare institutions comply with voluntary regulatory standards, such as The Joint Commission and state and federal regulations. Those regulatory standards are then applied to departments and units throughout the facility and become the basis for policies and procedures. This means that if your home unit has a policy and procedure for medication administration, it's a good bet that the same or a similar policy and procedure applies in the host unit. If you're well versed in the policies and procedures of your home unit, you'll know what to look for in a host unit when you have questions. Ask where you can find these policies and procedures for reference.

**6. Familiarize yourself with the host units documentation tools.** The unit's standardized forms will help you focus your nursing documentation. Whether you're working in a unit that uses traditional paper-based documentation systems or one that uses electronic nursing documentation, reviewing these forms can help you focus on what's important in that practice area.

**7. Always look up unfamiliar drugs or familiar drugs in unfamiliar places** because doses may differ. To ensure patient safety, ask a pharmacist or supervisor for help if you have concerns. Also ask a peer to double-check you. It may take you a little longer to administer your medications, but you'll be doing it safely.

**8. Ask questions.** Make it your responsibility to find out what you need to know to practice safely. You'll find many natural teachers who love to share their knowledge with others. Seek out the host department's resource person whenever you have questions your peers can't answer. Asking questions also shows you're interested and invested in the success of the host unit. Don't be reluctant to reveal that you don't know something. Your questions are another strategy that helps keep you and your patient safe.

**9. Research the host units practice area** if you have any free time. Most units and departments have references and journals available in print and online. Apply what you've read to your current patients. Even 15 minutes of reading per shift will enhance your knowledge base and confidence and help you focus on department-specific issues.

**10. Take care of yourself.** Eat your lunch or dinner, and drink plenty of water. Take your breaks, and use stress-relieving techniques such as exercising if you can. A low blood glucose level, aching body, and full bladder won't help your attitude or your ability to provide quality patient care.

*These tips will help you float to any unit, department, or specialty area with confidence. They'll also help host departments support visiting staff to maintain patient safety. These tips aren't a substitute for professional judgment. If you're asked to perform duties for which your competency hasn't been verified, you should report to your supervisor immediately and document your concerns according to your institution's policy.*

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### Attention:

1. Since the articles are either from archives generally in public domain or contributed by some of you with no exclusive rights we do not place any restriction on your forwarding these articles to your friends in good faith.

2. We have received offers from Nurses for publishing Articles /Anecdotes / Real Life Experiences proposed to be forwarded by them to Nurses-Careers-Abroad. We heartily welcome the idea. We shall do so mentioning the name of the sender. Contributors are advised to submit their Name, Address, Email and Phone Number so that we can cross check with them (for editing etc.) before publishing the article. Please bear in mind that we can publish only one article per week and subsequently these shall be archived at the website under Nurses Newsletter Archives.

3. Nurses-Careers-Abroad also proposes to establish a "NURSES-BLOG" on the website for the Nursing Fraternity. Look for it at [www.nurses.careers.abroad.com](http://www.nurses.careers.abroad.com)

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