

# Interview Tips for Experienced Nurses

As an experienced nurse, you will likely feel more confident and comfortable during an interview for a new job. Despite your experience, it is still incredibly normal to feel anxious or nervous about if you will perform well in the interview and be offered the job. These tips below will help reassure you about what you already know, and also provide you with some tips you might not have heard before but will definitely help you demonstrate your expertise and confidence as a nurse.

## 1. Always be on time

- One of the most basic but important tips is to arrive to your interview on time. It is unacceptable if you are late or even arrive at the exact time your interview is meant to start. You should aim to arrive 10-15 minutes before the time your interview is scheduled for.
- Being on time shows you are a mature, experienced and professional candidate that understands appropriate etiquette for interviews
- Although you have plenty of experience in other hospitals or clinics, this new environment might still make you feel stressed or uncomfortable. Arriving 10-15 minutes before the interview time will give you enough time to feel relaxed in the new environment. If you arrive just on time or late, then you will likely be more stressed out and tense when walking into the interview.

## 2. Learn about the company before your interview

- In an interview, it will impress any interviewer if you can demonstrate that you know a lot about the company. As an experienced nurse, this will show the interviewer that you have likely performed well in your previous nursing job/s by valuing and understanding the workplace/s you have been employed at before. value and care about what a company's values are or what its purpose is. Mentioning any awards the company has received will also create a positive impression.
- You should also learn about the company's history, processes, strategies and services to better understand and show the employer and interviewer that you are interested specifically in that company and what they do.

## 3. How to behave in and dress for an interview

- As an experienced nurse, it is likely that you already know how to dress for nursing interviews. Although you are experienced, be sure to not slack off and wear casual clothes because you already have nursing experience and think that's all that matters. You must still treat this interview opportunity as if it was your first ever interview.
- Unless there is a specific dress standard that you have been told about, go for something more formal such as a suit, tie and black dress shoes for men or a mid-length skirt, blazer, plain white shirt and flats or low heels for women. You can't go wrong with these choices and these outfit suggestions do not change even though you are experienced.
- Your attitude and behaviour during the interview is also very important. Always be calm, answer slowly and answer questions directly and concisely. Also remember not to fidget or play with anything in your hands. You are an experienced nurse and should be confident in yourself. You need to show the interviewer this by being enthusiastic and positive when answering questions

#### **4. Do not forget to practice**

- Even as an experienced nurse, it is essential for you to do plenty of practice before your interview. This is especially true if you haven't had any nursing interviews for a few years. If possible, you can practice with family or friends, or even alone if that is your only option. It is a great idea to research possible questions you could be asked, and plan or think of how you would answer. You likely did the same things when you were searching for your first nursing job, so this should be familiar to you.
- Although you have probably had quite a few nursing interviews in the past, you should still avoid trying to memorise every word of your answers when practicing. Answering questions in this way during a real interview will likely throw you off and cause you to stutter or freeze. It is better to have a few key ideas or words you will say for each possible question. You have enough experience as a nurse so you should find it fairly easy to talk about relevant experiences when answering questions during interviews.

#### **5. Do not be too pretentious or overconfident**

- Although you should be positive and confident in interviews, be sure to not speak of yourself as if you are the greatest, most qualified nurse in the world. You have experience and the interview will know that, but you should still be humble.
- Focus on showing the interviewer what skills and knowledge you have learned throughout your nursing career. Relate these skills and experiences to how this would help you excel in the job you are applying for. Just be sure to avoid saying things like, "In my previous job, I was the top nurse in the hospital because I was the smartest, most experienced nurse and I treated my patients the best." Saying anything arrogant like that will make it much harder for you to get the job. While this may seem true to you, speaking like this will make you appear rude to the interviewer.

#### **6. Think about what gives you a competitive edge over other candidates**

- It is quite possible you will be asked a question like "Why should we hire you for this job?" To answer this, you must know your best and most relevant skills that can be applied to this position.
- Confidence, passion, enthusiasm, patience, and empathy are examples of skills and strengths you could talk about.
- After you have chosen what skill/s you will talk about, you can back this up by giving an example of a time when you demonstrated your strong ability with each of these skills.
- Giving a relevant example of when you demonstrated one or both of these skills will show the interviewer that you would be a valuable employee.

#### **7. Prepare to answer a question about any strengths and weaknesses you have**

- It is very common in nursing interviews, and even any job interview generally, to be asked a question such as "What is your greatest strength? Or "What is your greatest weakness?"
- These questions are typically easy to answer, and you have likely been asked this question in past interviews. Now that you are an experienced nurse, you should have confidence in knowing your strong points and weak points.

- Remember to not be too negative when answering about your greatest or biggest weakness. This means avoid saying something like “I am terrible at planning the tasks I need to complete for every shift”. If you genuinely feel this way, you can reword it to something more positive like, “I do not feel very confident planning every task for my shifts, so I take my time to plan everything I can before my shift starts. I also check in on how I’m progressing with these tasks whenever I have a break during the day, and I feel this is definitely helping me improve my confidence with planning.”

#### **8. Show you have clear goals for your future.**

- You can do this if you are asked a question about your future in nursing, such as “Where do you see yourself in 5/10 years?” This is a very common question, and you definitely should prepare for it.
- Employers always prefer to hire people who plan to stay with their company for long-term employment. It makes an employer’s job easier if they don’t have to keep hiring new people for the same position.
- Showing that you hope to stay in the company over many years also shows the employer that you will likely respect the rules and procedures of the workplace, and this is something all employers will look out for.

#### **9. Remember to ask the interviewer a question or two about themselves**

- During the interview process, the employer will almost always ask near the end if you have questions for them. This is the perfect opportunity to differentiate yourself from many other candidates who say they don’t have any questions. By asking the interviewer a question, you are showing your interest in them and their role at the company.
- Asking a straightforward question such as “What do you like most about your role in this company?” or “How long have you been working at this company?”, is sure to impress the interviewer.

#### **10. Thank the interviewer/s for their time**

- The final impression can be just as important as the first – this is the most prominent image that will stay in the interviewer’s mind after the interview is over.
- If you feel it is appropriate, you can shake hands with the interviewer before leaving the interview, as this shows professionalism and confidence.