



IN THE KNOW

Developing Top-Notch CNA's, One Inservice at a Time

A Professional Growth Module: The Caring Qualities of a CNA

MAKING THE MOST OF NURSING!

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Without question, the field of nursing has changed over time. And, thankfully, the qualities required to succeed in nursing have changed, too. Let's go down memory lane...

The famous British nurse, Florence Nightingale, believed that if a patient was feverish, faint or feeble, it was the *nursing staff*—and not the patient's illness—that was usually at fault. For Ms. Nightingale, nursing required a keen and unrelenting sense of observation.

In 1872, Linda Richards was the *first* student at America's only nursing school. Here is how she described her life:

"I rose at 5:30 a.m. and left the wards at 9 p.m. to go to my bed, which was in a little room between the wards. I took care of six patients, both day and night. Many a time, I got up nine times in the night; often I did not get to sleep before the next patient called. I had no evenings out and no hours for recreation. Every second week, I was off duty for one afternoon from two to five o'clock. I received no pay until I'd been there for three months."

Working more than 16 hours a day, 7 days a week? For no pay? From that description, it would seem that, above all, nursing required *stamina* and an almost desperate dedication.

In the early 1900's, things weren't much different. The nursing staff was supposed to *"do everything as quietly as possible, step lightly and avoid creaking shoes."* Oh, and it didn't hurt if they were pretty, but they shouldn't use snuff or ask any unnecessary questions. Basically, nurses were supposed to be *seen* but not *heard!*

The focus on a perfect *appearance* lasted for decades, with pristine, starched uniforms and spotless white shoes. In the 1970s, nursing was still a field for women—and none of them were allowed to date or marry while in training. They were expected to direct their full attention to their work.

Today, the crisp uniforms are rare, replaced with more comfortable scrubs. And, while nursing *does* require observation skills, stamina and dedication, there are other qualities vital to success on the job. Keep reading for some great tips on how to use *your* best qualities to give your nursing career a boost.



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