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## NURSES WEEK

# Career Trends in Nursing Today: A Time of Change

By **BOBBIE STONE**

SPECIAL TO NURSES WEEK

**F**lorence Nightingale (1820-1910), a pioneer in nursing, lived through the Victorian Era, which was a "time of change." As we consider the issue of a nursing shortage, we can equate the above with the current era, which too is in a time of change.

Recently, I presented a talk on Career Pathways to a group of nursing professionals from the metropolitan New York/New Jersey area and among the topics of concern were career options, generations of nurses co-existing and positioning oneself for growth. Let's discuss these individually:

### CAREER OPTIONS

New programs in universities

and colleges abound for nurses who are ready to try alternatives to traditional bedside nursing. Additionally, hospitals are creatively developing career tracks for the seasoned nurse.

Some new opportunities include: nurse anesthetist; forensic nursing; parish nursing; insurance case manager; patient safety officer; risk manager; nursing informatics; legal nurse consulting; medical expert reviewer; nursing research scholar; pediatric medical nursing certificate program for the advanced pediatric nurse; combined position of chief nursing officer/chief operating officer; and the "hottest and newest" clinical nurse leader.

The clinical nurse leader's role is to prepare direct care nurses to assume leadership of direct nursing care management. According to the University of Pittsburgh School of Nursing, the American Association of Colleges of Nursing (AACN) plans to call for the clinical nurse leader to be the "only" clinical nurse master's program to be of-

fered after 2015. The clinical nurse specialist (CNS), nurse anesthetist (CRNA) and nurse practitioner (NP) program/degrees will be replaced by the doctorate of nursing practice (DNP), which combines advanced patient care and administrative leadership.

### GENERATIONS OF NURSING

#### Pre-1945 (Traditionalists)

■ Remember the Depression

■ Patriotic, frugal and loyal

■ Trust in nursing success not measured by acquisition of goods, but by family, home and apple pie

■ WW II era referred to as "the greatest generation"

#### 1946-1964 (Baby Boomers)

■ Question the establishment

■ Competitive, idealistic and optimistic

■ Caregivers to children and aging parents

■ The events of the Vietnam War caused "two household paycheck financial issues for "The

#### Sandwich Generation"

#### 1965-1980 (Generation X)

■ Fiscally successful, no war, no struggles and highly independent

■ Skeptical, look for instantaneous results

■ Known as "yuppies"

#### 1981-1999 (Generation Y)

■ Realistic, worldly, computer savvy, privileged and casual in social grace and dress

#### 1999-current (Techno-savvy)

■ Nurses learning computers

■ Everything that is "hand-held is in"

The key to working with "generational issues" is to realize that each generation contributes value in the workplace and the need for respect and flexibility is paramount. Brainstorming and including representatives from each age group can bring about new ideas to solve some of the same old problems, yet address new issues in a different light. The more-seasoned nurse can bring insight and wisdom, which offsets the less-seasoned nurse's experience, whereas a less-experi-

enced nurse can bring technological experience. These "open behaviors" can create a more cohesive and harmonious work environment.

### POSITIONING ONESELF FOR GROWTH

Awareness is the first step in considering growth opportunities. A recommendation would be to create a list of likes, dislikes and tradeoffs (everyone makes them) when considering exploring a new job.

Be sure that your résumé is up-to-date and shows only the most-salient points of accomplishment in your career, as the reader will assess in one minute whether or not there is an interest in your background. Make a list of your skills and strengths so as to be able to mentally review your résumé quickly.

Decide if you want to relocate geographically to another area of the country as opportunities abound in certain regions. Consider completing your education and remember that "some day" is

not a day of the week.

A proven fact in today's job market, particularly in the New Jersey/New York area, is that if a hospital has two candidates applying for the same job, almost invariably the "candidate of choice" will be the individual who has completed a higher nursing degree program whether he or she has life experience or not.

Despite the choices, challenges and changes currently facing the nursing community, the difference between the possible and the impossible lies in a person's determination and everyday is an opportunity.

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