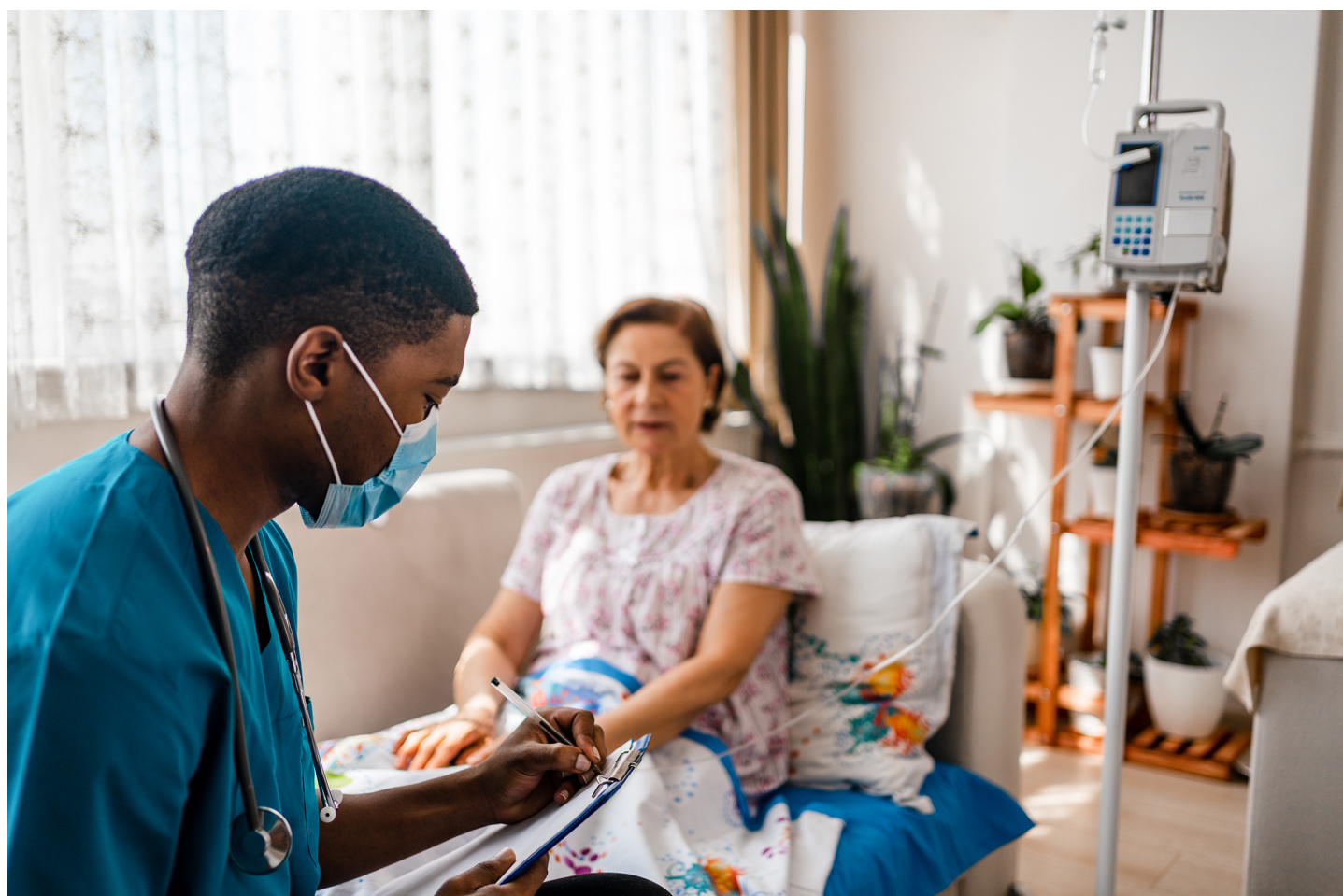


So, you want to be a nurse? A brief introduction to nursing



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Introduction

This free course, *So, you want to be a nurse? A brief introduction to nursing*, will give you an insight into nursing in the UK and its place globally.

A worldwide pandemic (COVID-19) has shone a spotlight on health services and those who work within them. This includes nurses who make up the largest occupational group in the health sector. But what does it mean to be a nurse? How do people become Registered Nurses in the UK and what does their education programme look like? What types of roles are nurses in the UK working in and how do you decide if nursing is for you?



This course will explore all these things and more. As you work your way through the sections and activities, you will learn more about nursing today and where your place within the family of nursing might be.

This OpenLearn course is produced in association with Open University courses in [Nursing and healthcare](#).

Learning Outcomes

After studying this course, you should be able to:

- identify the opportunities and key roles undertaken by nurses in the UK today
- summarise some of the key challenges nurses face and establish what makes a great nurse
- understand the differences between the four fields of nursing and the different ways to become a Registered Nurse in the UK.

1 What do you know about nursing in the UK?

You will start this section with a quiz so you can check your current understanding of nursing and what it entails. Don't worry if you don't know the answers to any of the questions, feedback is provided to each.

Activity 1 What do you know about nursing in the UK?

How long does it take to train to become a Registered Nurse in the UK?

Provide your answer...

Answer

Course length can vary depending upon your qualifications and experience. Some universities offer short courses for graduates and longer courses for those who need to study part time or do foundation level study. All education is at degree level in the UK and usually takes between 2 and 6 years to complete, with the average full-time degree being around 3 years.

Anyone can call themselves a Registered Nurse. True or False?

- ☐ True
- ☐ False

Answer

In the UK, the title 'Registered Nurse' is protected by law and everyone who uses this title has to be registered with the Nursing & Midwifery Council. However, the title 'nurse' is not protected so anyone can use it. In Section 5 of this course, you will be looking at the role of regulation and the Nursing & Midwifery Council.

Other than a hospital, where else do nurses work?

Provide your answer...

Answer

Nurses work in a diverse range of workplaces in the UK and across the world. Other than hospitals you will find nurses in health centres and clinics, GP surgeries, schools, prisons, care and nursing homes, on cruise ships, in large businesses, in the community, in people's homes, in call centres such as 111, in Government and in education. Section 2 of this course explores these different work roles a little further.

In the UK, what percentage of nurses are men?

Do you think it is around:

- ☐ 5%

- ☐ 10%
- ☐ 20%
- ☐ 25%

Answer

The Nursing & Midwifery Council's data report for 2020/2021 suggests that in the UK just over 10% of those on the nursing register are male (80,500) (Nursing & Midwifery Council, 2021).

In the UK, what percentage of nurses work in hospitals?

- ☐ 23%
- ☐ 45%
- ☐ 56%
- ☐ 80%

Answer

According to Carmel (2017), in the UK 56% of nurses work in hospitals.

Who was Mary Seacole and what does she mean to the nursing profession?

Provide your answer...

Answer

The history of nursing is important to the profession and nursing is a diverse workforce. Mary Seacole was a British-Caribbean nurse who worked at the same time as Florence Nightingale, during the Crimean war. She worked on the front line during the war, offering treatment and rehabilitation to hundreds of soldiers.

Often people have heard of Florence Nightingale, but know very little about the British nurse Mary Seacole and her work. If you would like to know more about Mary Seacole you can read more at the [Mary Seacole Trust](#).

What are the four fields of nursing in the UK?

Provide your answer...

Answer

There are four fields of nursing in the UK:

- Adult nursing
- Mental health nursing
- Children's nursing
- Learning disability nursing.

Each one of these fields is its own specialism and has its own standards for education. In Section 8 of this course, you will explore each of the fields in more detail.

As you work through the course, the sections will expand your knowledge about nursing. In Section 2 you will begin with a look at a definition of nursing.

2 Being a nurse

In this section, you will look at a definition of nursing and explore further what it means to be a nurse in the UK and beyond.

Definition of nursing

The International Council of Nurses (2002) defines nursing in the following way:

Nursing encompasses autonomous and collaborative care of individuals of all ages, families, groups and communities, sick or well and in all settings. Nursing includes the promotion of health, prevention of illness, and the care of ill, disabled and dying people. Advocacy, promotion of a safe environment, research, participation in shaping health policy and in patient and health systems management, and education are also key nursing roles.

(International Council of Nurses, 2002)

There are key messages about nursing within this definition, including how the focus in nursing is not just on those who are ill but on maintaining the health of those who are well. This is a key role when working with people, of all ages, who have disabilities or other health conditions. It is also clear from this definition that nurses don't just work in hospitals but in a variety of settings. Nurses also work in education, research and the building and shaping of health policy.



In the quiz in Section 1, you looked at some aspects of what being a nurse in the UK involves, but of course nurses exist all over the world. Although their roles may vary, and they may undertake different types of education to become a nurse compared to those in the UK, the word nurse is recognised globally. According to the World Health Organization's 'The State of the World's Nursing 2020' report, there are 27.9 million nurses worldwide and the global nursing workforce makes up the largest group of workers in health care (World Health Organization, 2020).

Each country has its own approach to the education of nurses, but the UK is currently the only country that has four 'fields' of nursing at the point of qualifying as a Registered Nurse. Many countries have more generic style education and then the nurse will specialise after qualification.

In some countries, the role of the midwife is also included in the role of the nurse and there is not a separate qualification for midwives, however in the UK, midwifery is a separate qualification with a separate educational programme.

The role of the nurse and their education will also reflect how health services are set up in a particular country. For example, in countries where health care is focused on more specialist treatment, then you will find more specialist nurses. As an example, in the UK nurses can study specialist courses after their initial qualification to become Epilepsy Specialist Nurses or Diabetes Specialist Nurses. Additionally, nurses may undertake

further qualifications to become District Nurses, School Nurses or Health Visitors in the UK.

Nursing across the world faces some similar challenges, which include a shortage of nurses and of course in recent times, a global pandemic. Many health issues that face populations exist across the world, including nutrition (malnutrition and obesity), child health, sustainable health care, emergency and trauma care and public health in communities. Nurses in many countries also work in conflict zones and deliver care under the most extreme conditions, for example in field hospitals during or following a war or after natural disasters, such as flooding or earthquakes.

Activity 2 International nurses' day

Each year International Nurses Day celebrates the work of nurses around the world. Watch Video 1 below, which was made for the 2020 celebration.

Video content is not available in this format.

Video 1



What messages did you notice when watching this video?

Provide your answer...

Discussion

You may have noticed that the people in the video were from all across the globe and each had their own stories of how nursing had impacted on them personally. The message that there is a global nursing shortage and a call for Governments to respond to this may also have resonated with you.

This video was due to be longer, but as the presenter says the COVID-19 pandemic impacted on nursing across the world. A series of images of nursing then followed showing the many different roles of nurses in many different countries.

3 Understanding your own values and values in nursing

Understanding the connection between beliefs, values, attitudes and behaviours is key to understanding where your thoughts, attitudes and behaviours come from both in your personal life and in your life as a nurse. Figure 1 shows the connections between your beliefs, values, attitudes and behaviours.

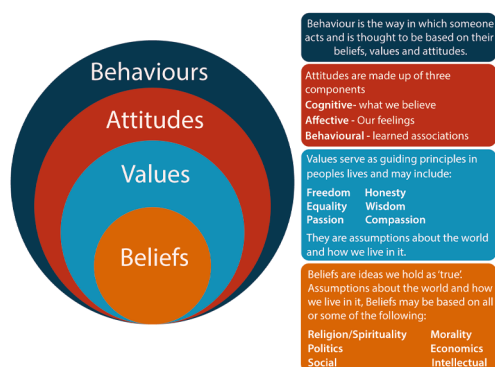


Figure 1 Values and beliefs diagram

In Figure 1, the four sections overlap each other to suggest that each section has an impact on the other. Our beliefs shape our values, our values shape our attitudes and in turn these all shape our behaviours.

Activity 3 What are my beliefs and values?

In Table 1 below write your responses to the questions, what matters to me? And what is most important to me?

Table 1 My beliefs and values

| | In the world | In my work (paid, unpaid or voluntary) | In my relationships | In myself |
|-------------------------------|------------------------|--|------------------------|------------------------|
| What matters to me? | Provide your answer... | Provide your answer... | Provide your answer... | Provide your answer... |
| What is most important to me? | Provide your answer... | Provide your answer... | Provide your answer... | Provide your answer... |

Do the things that matter to you cross over between each category? Often if a value, such as honesty, is important to you in work, it is also important in your relationships. Have a

look at the overlaps and what is most important to you. As you work through the next sections, you will see how your beliefs and values impact on nursing practice.

3.1 Beliefs and values in action in nursing practice

Nursing involves many aspects of human interactions including communications, decision making and relationship building. Your beliefs and values are a key feature of who you are as a nurse. In your role as a nurse, you need to understand your beliefs and values so you can ensure you deliver professional, non-judgemental care to those who need it.

Activity 4 Exploring your beliefs

In each scenario below imagine you are the nurse. Reflect on how you feel when reading the scenario, how you think you would react and explore what beliefs your reaction might be based on.

Scenario 1

A patient has been admitted to your ward/unit who is ill but has committed a crime against a child.

In this scenario, do you think the person is deserving of treatment? If you have answered yes or no, then what do you think this tells you about your values and beliefs?

Provide your answer...

Scenario 2

An alcohol and drug-dependent person has been admitted for a liver transplant. You are aware that they have tried on numerous occasions to give up alcohol and drugs, but they have made it clear they intend to go back to this after their treatment.

In this scenario, do you think the person is deserving of treatment? If you have answered yes or no, then what do you think this tells you about your values and beliefs?

Provide your answer...

Scenario 3

A young person has been brought into your care following a suicide attempt. They do not want to be treated and discuss with you 'wanting to die'.

In this scenario how do you think you would respond? What do you think your reaction tells you about your values and beliefs?

Provide your answer...

Scenario 4

A child with severe learning and physical disabilities is very ill and a discussion needs to take place with the parents around resuscitation options.

In this scenario how do you think you would respond? What do you think your reaction tells you about your values and beliefs?

Provide your answer...

Discussion

The feedback below looks at how your values and beliefs may have impacted the way you responded to the four scenarios.

Values have a major influence on the actions of practitioners in subtle and less subtle ways. Sometimes you are not aware of your beliefs and how they might shape the way you think about patients. For example, if you believe that people should control their drinking and not expect any help from the NHS if they can't, then you are likely to believe that the patient in Scenario 2 does not deserve help.

Your personal values and beliefs are integral to your professional socialisation. The values and beliefs you come into nursing with shape your development as a nurse, and your professional socialisation. It is during this time that you learn what it is to be a nurse, how to be non-judgemental and to not allow prejudice to shape your decision making. Although you may truly believe that the person in Scenario 1 does not deserve any form of treatment, health services are there for all and your nursing values suggest you care for everyone.

Often, personal beliefs and values are at the heart of why people choose nursing. People often say they chose nursing because they wanted to care for others and help others to become as independent as possible. These are beliefs and values about supporting vulnerable and ill people in society. You will also have a set of personal beliefs that might have been shaped by your religious views. In the case of Scenario 3, you may hold a personal belief that suicide is wrong and that might then shape the way you interact with that young person.

Most studies suggest you do not change your basic values and beliefs when encountering scenarios that may challenge your views, but that you do take a particular approach when these beliefs and values conflict with the organisation.

Generally, you hold on to your basic values when you enter into nursing, but you may find times when these personal values are challenged. An example might be that you hold the belief that all life should be protected under any circumstances. It may be that in Scenario 4 where there is a discussion about whether a child is resuscitated this clashes with your personal beliefs and values.

Where too much conflict between your personal beliefs and values occurs, nurses may choose to leave the organisation and even the profession.

3.2 Six core values of nursing

Nursing is a profession based on a number of key values, but what is a value in the context of nursing?

Nursing values are fundamental beliefs within the profession. They are what the profession means and shape the actions that those within the profession take.

The NHS in England defines six core values, labelled the 6 C's. These values are fundamental and recognised across the UK.

They are care, compassion, competence, communication, courage and commitment.

Activity 5 Exploring your own values

Watch Video 2 and reflect on your own values by answering the questions that follow. There are no right and wrong answers as these are your values that you would bring to nursing.

Video content is not available in this format.

Video 2



Why do you think it is important to treat people with respect and dignity? What does this look like to you?

Provide your answer...

Why do you think people deserve care from those who have the appropriate skills and knowledge?

Provide your answer...

Think of a time when you were communicating well either in a work setting or at home. How did effective communication help in that situation?

Provide your answer...

Think of a time when you have had to be courageous, when maybe you have had to stand up for yourself or someone else. Was this difficult? How did you feel? What do you think you achieved?

Provide your answer...

Reflect on a time in your life (personal or working life) when you have committed to something and there has been a positive outcome. How did it feel?

Provide your answer...

Discussion

Your answers will reflect the values you hold. When universities select students for nursing courses, they often ask questions about your values to find those people whose values align with the values of nursing.

Nursing practice in Wales and the 'Active Offer'

Language is at the heart of effective clinical assessment and safe treatment, and especially so for certain patient groups. The 'Active Offer' is a responsibility on health and social care providers in Wales to offer services in Welsh, rather than on the patient or service user to have to request them.

The Welsh language is part of daily life and practice in Wales. Making an 'Active Offer' recognises that effective communication is key to meeting the needs of Welsh-speaking patients, as well as ensuring patient safety by way of accurate communication and maintaining respect and dignity towards patients and clients. Everyone can contribute, whether you are a Welsh language learner or completely fluent.

The Welsh Government have a [Five Year Plan](#) aimed at improving this area. Your awareness, knowledge, and skills in language sensitivity for patient care could contribute to your competence achievement as a nursing student and can also contribute to your future employability in Wales.

4 Working with other professionals – the role of the multidisciplinary team

Patients often have multiple and sometimes complex needs that need more than one professional discipline involved in their care. In health care, professionals from a range of disciplines work together to form Multidisciplinary Teams or MDTs. NHS England have described multidisciplinary working in their 2015 report as follows.

Multidisciplinary and Multiagency working involves appropriately utilising knowledge, skills and best practice from multiple disciplines and across service provider boundaries, e.g. health, social care or voluntary and private sector providers to redefine, re scope and reframe health and social care delivery issues and reach solutions based on an improved collective understanding of complex patient need(s).

(NHS England, 2015)



As identified in the quotation from the NHS England report, multidisciplinary working in health care has the patient at the centre of care; to assess, plan and manage care jointly and effectively. A multidisciplinary team (MDT) in health care will include several professionals from different disciplines. These may vary depending on the service or the client's needs. For example, a community MDT working with an older person who is recuperating after a hip fracture may include a GP, community nurse, occupational therapist, social worker and physiotherapist.

Activity 6 Identifying members of the multidisciplinary team

Below are some examples of patients and their needs. See if you can identify the different professionals a nurse might work with in a multidisciplinary team for each patient.

Patient 1

Martin has had a chronic mental health problem for several years. A while ago he had been an inpatient in a specialist hospital having treatment for a psychotic episode. He takes regular medication that needs reviewing every six months and is registered with his local GP. Martin now lives in a small flat and meets with his community mental health nurse as part of a care plan he has. Martin is unhappy where he is living and struggles with his money and accessing benefits. This can affect his mental health state.

Provide your answer...

Discussion

In addition to the mental health nurse, the MDT supporting Martin may include GP, psychiatrist, social worker, housing officer, occupational therapist and psychologist.

Patient 2

Nhu is 12 years old and lives with a long-term health condition that affects her mobility and breathing. She is fed through a tube and requires oxygen during the night. Her parents have made adaptations to the home and her bedroom, but as she grows, they are finding it more difficult to help her with her daily activities. Nhu has an older sister who is 15 and who helps her parents to care for Nhu. Nhu has a children's community nurse who visits the family regularly.

Provide your answer...

Discussion

In addition to the community nurse (who may be a children's specialist nurse), the MDT supporting Nhu may include paediatrician, GP, district nurse, physiotherapist, occupational therapist, social worker, housing officer and speech & language therapist.

Patient 3

Ademola is 55 and lives at home with his mum. He has a learning disability and some health problems relating to his epilepsy and asthma. He attends a work scheme three days a week, but would also like to do more activities at home and in his local community. Ademola has a community learning disability nurse who visits regularly to support him with his health needs.

Provide your answer...

Discussion

In addition to the learning disability community nurse, the MDT supporting Ademola may include GP, practice nurse, social worker, occupational therapist, psychiatrist, epilepsy specialist nurse and asthma specialist nurse. There could also be voluntary sector involvement to help Ademola access activities in the community.

Multidisciplinary working means that decisions about care have input from several professionals as well as the person in need of care. If this is a child that may be the family, but the child's views will also be sought if this is possible. Often families and carers may not actually see the different professionals within the multidisciplinary team working together, but they should notice the positive outcomes of effective MDT working. With chronic health conditions or long-term disability, the patient or their carer may work with many professionals over many years in the form of different MDTs, but the essence of each should be person-centred care.

Activity 7 A parent's perspective of the multidisciplinary team

In Video 3, you will hear from Hayley who has a daughter who has Down Syndrome. In the video, Hayley talks about the many professionals she has encountered as her daughter grew from a baby to a child. She relates this specifically to learning about what learning disability nurses do. This is a good example of how parents, carers or the patients themselves may not fully understand the role of professionals within the team until they are directly involved in care.

As you watch the video, think about the number of professionals Hayley may have been involved with during her daughter's early childhood.

Video content is not available in this format.

Video 3



Provide your answer...

Being a nurse means being able to work with other professionals and disciplines for the benefit of the patient, but this also requires a set of skills, knowledge and attitudes to be successful.

Which of the following do you think are important skills and knowledge nurses need to work effectively in a multi-professional team?

- ☐ Communication
- ☐ Team working
- ☐ Time management
- ☐ Understanding the roles of others
- ☐ Contributing to joint decisions
- ☐ All of the above

.....

Discussion

If you thought all of these were essential to good team working you were right.
These are all skills and knowledge needed to work in teams.

Nurses work in teams but are also individually accountable for their own practice.
The next section looks at the work of the regulatory body for nurses in the UK.

5 Regulation of nurses in the UK

Nursing in the UK is regulated by a body called the Nursing & Midwifery Council (NMC), where all registered nurses, midwives and nursing associates have their details held on a database called the Nursing Register. The NMC not only holds the Register but also produces standards of good practice, and a code of professional practice for nurses and midwives called The Code. Additionally, they produce standards for education that all universities who offer nurse education must adhere to.

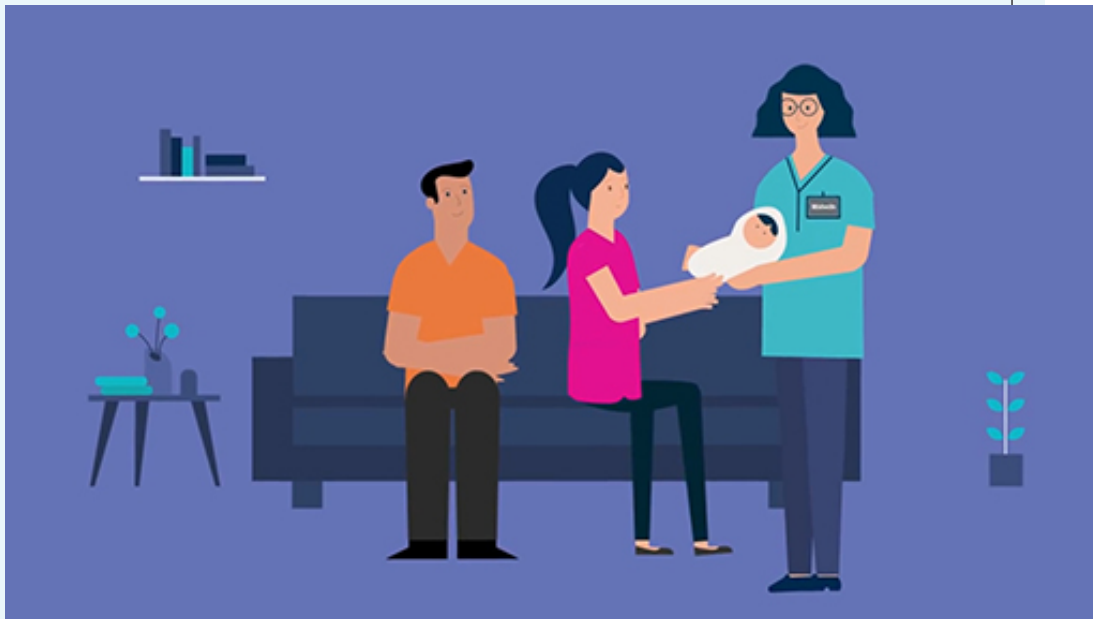
A key role of the NMC is to protect the public and to guide nurses and midwives in their professional practice. If a nurse, midwife or nursing associate is not practising safely, the NMC may investigate to ensure the public are protected.

Activity 8 The work of the NMC

First, watch Video 4 about the work of the NMC.

Video content is not available in this format.

Video 4



Having watched the video, consider why you think it is important to have a regulatory body to protect the public.

Provide your answer...

Discussion

You may have come up with suggestions such as because nurses are working with vulnerable people or because nurses are on a national register. Both of these are true. The NMC holds a register that all registered nurses (and nurse associates) are

part of. In order to protect the public, the NMC monitors the practice of all nurses on the register.

What do you think makes a good nurse?

Provide your answer...

Discussion

You may have included attributes like honesty and patience, but also specific skills and knowledge. A nurse is a combination of skills, knowledge and attitudes, and these are reflected in The Code (Nursing & Midwifery Council, 2018).

Now watch the short animation in Video 5 from the Nursing & Midwifery Council that focusses on one element of The Code.

Video content is not available in this format.

Video 5



Do you think a nurse is a nurse even when they finish their shift at work and go home?

Why do you think it is important that nurses can demonstrate professionalism in both their day-to-day work and outside of work?

Provide your answer...

Discussion

Being a nurse is not just about maintaining professional standards while working. As you saw in Video 5, how nurses behave when they are not in work shapes the

confidence the public have in nursing as a profession. For example, imagine a scenario where someone was breaking the law or being cruel or unkind and you found out that person was a nurse. Would you have confidence in them if you knew they might be delivering your care one day?

The Code guides nurses and their professional behaviour whether at work or not.

6 The importance of studying nursing

The standards for nursing education are set out by the Nursing & Midwifery Council (NMC), which you learnt about in Section 5. This is so that wherever the student undertakes their course across the UK they meet the same standards. In the UK, when student nurses undertake their courses, they study the theory of nursing, the theory of how to care, and theories of the best way to nurse. This theory element makes up 50 per cent of the course, with the remainder taking place in practice or placement settings so students can learn and develop their nursing skills and knowledge whilst on the job.

The theory element of nursing study may take place at a distance, face to face, or a mixture or blend of both. The subjects studied on nursing courses are specifically applied to care and build the knowledge nurses need to deliver good care.

They include:

- Anatomy and physiology
- Psychology
- Sociology
- Nursing theories
- Politics and social policy.

6.1 Nursing theory study

You will take a look at each of the five subjects covered in nursing theory study in turn next, and consider how each links to nursing practice.

Anatomy and physiology

Anatomy and physiology is the study of not only the structure of the human body but also the functions. It includes an understanding of the disorders associated with each function and structure of the body.

Example

Structure:

The respiratory system

Function:

Respiration including gaseous exchange.

Health condition:

Asthma.

So, this might seem a logical theory to underpin nursing practice, but our wellbeing is also linked to how our minds work so let us have a look at psychology.

Psychology

Psychology is a science that, like other sciences, can be studied outside of nursing. Elements of psychology theory underpin nursing practice. For example, under-

standing behaviour including health behaviour, emotional responses, communication, self-awareness and decision making.

Example

Psychological theory:

Health behaviour.

Nursing intervention:

Supporting smoking cessation.

Understanding the reasons why people make the choices they do in relation to their health, and the psychological theories behind this, can inform nurses when offering support with behaviours such as smoking cessation.

Sociology

Sociology is also a science often studied as a separate topic, but when applied to nursing it can help nurses to understand many aspects of health. For example, in society, in relation to family dynamics, culture.

Example

Sociological theory:

Labelling theory is an example whereby the label attached to someone then shapes their behaviour and how people around them see them. Labels in nursing might include, sick, disabled or mentally ill.

Nursing intervention:

Offering non-judgemental/anti discriminatory care.

Understanding the nature of labelling and how these labels might change interaction and/or expectations of those who have this label attached can support nursing interventions.

Nursing theory

There are specific theories of nursing that underpin nursing practice. These often relate to models of care and frameworks for the delivery of care.

Example

Theory:

Orem's self-care theory. This theory identifies aspects of self-care and the importance of the patient having control.

Nursing intervention:

Supporting the patient to manage their own health and wellbeing.

Politics and social policy theory

Nurses work in a political landscape; health is a key aspect of all societies political and social policy agenda. Understanding the context in which nurses work is important for all nurses.

Example

Politics and social theory:

An example might be the development of a new policy for dementia care. This policy will not only shape the development of services for people with dementia, but will also offer guidance for those working in those services.

Nursing intervention:

The nurse working with the person with dementia and their family understands what services might be available now and in the future.

In the next activity, you will look at how a student nurse can go on to apply this theory in a practical situation.

Activity 9 Using classroom learning in practice

In the following case study, Harry is a student nurse in the final year of his nursing course and is visiting a family with his mentor as part of his community placement. As you read, think about some of the theory Harry might have been studying at university to help him to understand his patient's needs.

Harry is visiting Mrs Kowalczyk, an 83-year-old woman who lives with her daughter and their family, a husband and two teenage children. Mrs Kowalczyk recently had a fall and fractured her hip. She has returned from hospital following a hip replacement and is physically healing well. Her daughter tells the nurses that she is worried that her mother is still unsteady when walking and she may need some adaptations to the house so that it is safe. She is happy her mother is living with them, however, has noticed her mother has become very forgetful and has started to speak in her native language, Polish, when she is upset. Mrs Kowalczyk's daughter also tells them that her children are struggling to understand why their grandmother can't remember their names and is so confused, and they have started to spend more time round at friends' houses.

Provide your answer...

Discussion

Harry will have been studying a range of subjects on his university course including anatomy and physiology, sociology and psychology. He will have also studied health

and safety and will understand how nurses may need to help patients and their families to access different services.

In this scenario, Harry will be using his anatomy and physiology knowledge to understand what has happened to Mrs Kowalczyk's hip, the surgery and how this is healing. He will also have studied sociology and will be aware of cultural diversity and family dynamics. In addition, from studying psychology, he will have an understanding of health behaviours and the impact of illness on a family not just the patient.

Harry will have studied nursing assessments and dementia and will be aware that the qualified nurse may suggest an assessment to check for dementia. He knows also that the nurse may refer to other professionals, such as the physiotherapist and occupational therapist for assessments on mobility and skills within the home.

These are just a few examples of how Harry will be using his knowledge of the theory to inform his practice as a nurse and understand the decisions he will be making when he is a qualified nurse.

What are your reflections on how Harry has used his knowledge of theories?

7 The role of service users in health care

Service users are a key part of the NHS. Often in groups, they provide a resource to inform service improvement, and offer their views to make decisions and changes within organisations.

All four UK nations have service users at the heart of their health planning and health services. The role of the carer or service user in the NHS has been growing for over a decade now. This has led to carers and users of health care services having input at all levels, from policy making to advising on service improvements at ward or unit level.

Many services within the NHS have specific routes for service-user involvement through committees, groups and tools like satisfaction surveys and patient feedback.

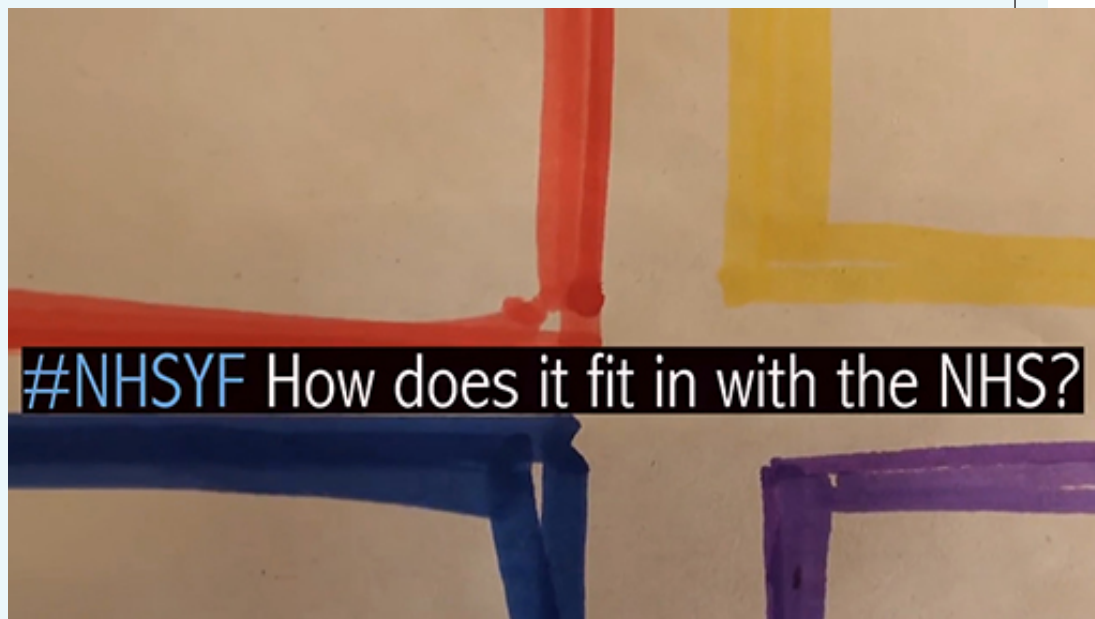
Activity 10 The voices of carers and service users

Watch Video 6 and reflect on the following questions.

- Why do you think it is important for carers or service users to have a voice?
- How do you think service-user involvement can help nurses to deliver better care?

Video content is not available in this format.

Video 6



Provide your answer...

Discussion

The young people in this video have opinions about the health service and how they would like to see it changed and shaped going forward. The forums have enabled this to happen.

For nurses, listening to what patients and service users want, and their experiences of the services, helps to shape and develop good quality care.

8 The four fields of nursing

Nursing, as you learnt in Section 1, is made up of four fields: adult, mental health, children's and learning disability nursing. When you are choosing nursing as a career you will also need to know which field you would like to study.

For many people, their choice of field will be based on past experiences, both personal and work, and what they see themselves doing as a nurse in the future. In this section, you will explore each field of nursing in turn to help you consider which field you may be most suited to.

If you apply to do a nursing course, you will need to be able to demonstrate why you have applied to the field that you have, as well as show an understanding of the other fields of nursing. Even if you think you have decided which field of nursing you are interested in, watching all the videos in the sections that follow will help you to develop an understanding of all of the specialisms.

8.1 Mental health nursing

Mental health nurses work in a range of settings to support people who experience common problems such as depression or anxiety, as well as conditions such as eating disorders, schizophrenia and dementia.



Mental health nurses are also focused on supporting mental wellbeing and the promotion of positive mental health. As a mental health nurse, you might work with adults or children and adolescents, in hospitals, clinics, assessment and treatment centres, education, social care settings, or within the home. Sometimes people with mental health problems face discrimination and stigma and, as a mental health nurse, a key part of your role would be to advocate for those that you work with.

Watch Video 7 about mental health nursing produced by the Royal College of Nursing. In the video, Kiran Jnagal speaks about her career in mental health nursing.

Video content is not available in this format.

Video 7



8.2 Children's nursing

Children's nurses work with children and young people in hospitals, community, schools and clinics, as well as with children and families in their homes and respite care. They nurse children from birth through to adolescence. You may work with healthy children supporting and promoting health, such as tackling childhood obesity, through to children with very complex needs and/or life-limiting disorders. Children's nurses will work with the whole family to support the child's health and wellbeing.

Watch this video about children's nursing, which shows nurses sharing their experiences and values in this field of nursing.

Video content is not available in this format.

Video 8



8.3 Learning disability nursing

Learning disability nurses may work in any setting where people with a learning disability live, work or learn. This may be in 'community teams', residential settings, schools, workplaces, clinics and in hospitals, helping people with a learning disability to access the services they need. Many learning disability nurses work with multidisciplinary teams in local communities, supporting those with a learning disability to live their lives to the full. In this field, nurses could work with children or adults helping them to become as independent as they can be and live fulfilled lives. Often people with learning disabilities are discriminated against and nurses may need to advocate for the people in their care and their families.

Watch Video 9 that shows some of reasons why people might choose learning disability nursing.

Video content is not available in this format.

Video 9



8.4 Adult nursing

Adult nursing, which used to be known as general nursing, is the field of nursing the public see portrayed in the media the most. Whether you are watching a hospital drama or a tv programme showing nurses in the community, adult nurses work in a wide variety of settings. Hospitals, clinics, community, prisons, cruise ships, and large businesses are all places where you will find nurses caring for people with a variety of health needs. These needs can vary from minor ailments to chronic and lifelong conditions, as well as palliative care when someone is dying. Like all fields of nursing, adult nurses also focus on maintaining health and wellbeing and promoting health and healthy lifestyles

Watch Video 10 which shows a newly qualified registered nurse working with asylum seekers.

Video content is not available in this format.

Video 10



8.5 Which field of nursing am I suited to?

Now you have watched videos for each field of nursing, what interests you most about each field and why? Does one field interest you more than the others?

Listen to Audio 1 and hear from Open University students explain what inspired them to want to become a nurse and why they chose to study with The Open University.

Audio content is not available in this format.



Audio 1

Conclusion

In this course you have explored nursing in the UK, the four fields of nursing, how nurses train, what they study and how they are regulated. You have also looked at the values that underpin nursing practice and what it means to be a nurse across the globe.

We hope this course has given you the opportunity to find out a little more about nursing and whether you feel it could be the career for you.

You should now be able to:

- identify the opportunities and key roles undertaken by nurses in the UK today
- summarise some of the key challenges nurses face and establish what makes a great nurse
- understand the differences between the four fields of nursing and the different ways to become a Registered Nurse in the UK.

This OpenLearn course is produced in association with Open University courses in [Nursing and healthcare](#).

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Acknowledgements

This free course was written by Dr Nicky Genders. It was first published in April 2022.

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Audio/Video

Section 2, Activity 2, Video 1: Courtesy: Nursing and Midwifery Council www.nmc.org.uk
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