



What makes an Ideal Nurse?

Teens and children's perspective

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Introduction

Hello, my name is Zainab, I'm 17 years old and have been a member of ACTIVE at Addenbrooke's Hospital for 3 years. Active is the "Children and young people's board" for 8-18 year olds, who work together to improve care at Addenbrooke's Hospital. During my time at Active, I was given the opportunity to attend 2 workshops at Anglia Ruskin University in which we discussed the title "what makes an ideal nurse". After the meeting I decided I wanted to document the points raised so that they would be beneficial and accessible to all nurses. I wanted to make sure that everyone was involved so that young people in hospital were given a voice and were heard and also so that I could create something that represented all young people.



This booklet summarises the 5 key qualities that young people believe are the most important for a nurse to possess. It will also include ways in which nurses can put these qualities in to the day-to-day care of young patients.

I believe that this perspective would be more beneficial to nurses as no one knows how young people want to be treated better than themselves.

Contents

Confidence

Being sure of yourselves and of the tasks you carry out so that we can feel more relaxed.

Approachability

Ensuring that simple introductions and welcoming body language is not forgotten.

Being Relatable

Letting us know that you're there for the non-medical side of treatment too.

Being Transparent

Keeping us fully involved in our recovery and understanding that we want to know what's going on.

Mirroring patient's emotions

Having the skills to detect and understand our emotions and to then respond accordingly.



Confidence

“A nurse having confidence is absolutely crucial”

Being in hospital can be a very nerve racking experience. Think about it... You’ve been left in a huge place surrounded by machines, noise and other ill patients.



This leaves us feeling very vulnerable and we find that we need someone to rely on.

A lot of the time we don’t have our parents around and so we need to turn to someone else. Nurses having confidence helps achieve this. If we are reassured that this person knows what they are doing and is going to take care of us it can really help us feel more at ease and makes it easier for us to trust them. Many young people agreed that if a nurse is confident it makes them feel much more comfortable and calm.

When asked ‘what would you like nurses to know whilst communicating with you’ one person answered ‘if you’re calm, I’m calm’.

Confidence

It would be nice if the nurses could come prepared with all the equipment they need for the check up so that they're not faffing around and looking for things in front of the patient as this can make us feel even more anxious.

Making sure you act professional during any small procedures or check ups can really help re assure us that this person knows what they are doing and we don't have to worry about something going wrong.



When asked 'what is the most important quality for a nurse to possess 20% of young people said confidence.

When asked why do you confidence is the most important quality?' One response was "If they appear confident it can allow you to feel confident in their ability to treat you."

You're in good hands here...

Approachability

Just remember a smile can go a long way...especially when we're not feeling too well.

Being in a new and daunting environment can really upset us and so your body language and facial expressions can really make a difference. Even a quick smile whilst walking past our beds can really brighten up our day. It makes us feel like we're not forgotten and there is someone here who cares about us. It's also good to let us know that you're here for emotional support as well which is why it is really important to build a strong rapport. If people don't feel that a nurse is approachable then they could be failing at properly monitoring the patient as the patient will be less forthcoming with info about how they're feeling. Therefore we believe that approachability is one of the most important qualities.

Young people agreed that it is important for nurses to make sure that smaller issues are also dealt with too, such as hydration and comfort of bed and clothing.



Approachability

We need a familiar face around the ward and so it's really important that you introduce yourself clearly.

A lot of the time people are so preoccupied ensuring all the medical side of the care is correct that a simple introduction is forgotten. All we need to know is your name so please don't forget to tell us it, even if it's already written on your badge!

When asked 'What is the most important quality for a nurse to possess?' 77.5% of young people chose approachability.

When asked 'What would you like nurses to know when communicating with you?' one young person answered 'to be normal. Don't try and force conversation. Just be natural and



Being Relatable

Being ill is nothing to be ashamed of, however sometimes, we feel as though it is.

Feeling weak is not nice and sometimes we can feel as though we're the only person in the world going through this.

Forgive us please... we're at the age where the world seems to revolve around us and us only!

It's easy to lose hope and feel helpless.



Being Relatable

A way in which you can help us to overcome these feelings is by being relatable.

- **Sharing personal experiences of being in hospital with us can really make a difference.**
- **Even sharing stories of other patients who have recovered can give us hope and help the anxiety to disappear.**

It makes us feel like we are not alone and can sometimes even make us feel less embarrassed about it and we find that it becomes easier to accept our physical or mental condition.

It's important to take time out to talk to us about other things that are not related to our illness or treatment however we also agree that staying professional is important.

Don't let us know if you've had a bad week and don't let it show as this can really rub off on us!!



Being Transparent

Sometimes it's hard for people to remember that we are intelligent.

We want to know what's going on at all times. It's okay to talk to us in medical terms, as long as everything is explained clearly. Try not to use too much jargon though!

It's better to be honest with us, even if its bad news, just make sure that there is someone around if our parents aren't there to support us at the time.

There's no need to be patronising or assume that we don't care, when it comes to our health we'll make sure that we're paying attention.

It's also important to understand that sometimes we prefer it if things were directly said to us rather than our parents.

Remember, we're the patients, not them!

Plus we really don't like secrets so try not to keep anything from us.



Being Transparent

It's hard to open up to someone we don't really know which is why its super important to be transparent about yourself.

We find it easier to open up to someone we know and therefore will enable you to get more information out of us. However sometimes young people can still find it hard to explain how they feel, especially if were under the age of 16, so if we want our parents to do a bit of talking please understand!

When asked the question 'how do you suggest that a nurse puts this quality into practice' one response was "Being honest and upfront".



**This is what's
happening with
your health...**

Mirroring Patients Emotions

Sometimes it's really hard for people to understand us.

Being a young person has its own difficulties and (especially as we grow older) our hormones are all over the place. Our mood is constantly changing and it's important for you to have the skills to detect our emotions and act accordingly.

If we're in a bad mood or you can sense that we're not in the mood to talk, please don't rush in and act cheery.

Sometimes it's just best to mirror our emotions and act a bit less lively.

We don't want to be cheered up all the time and sometimes its just best to leave us alone so that we can think things through.

Likewise, if we're in a good mood and are acting cheery please don't walk in with a frown because you've had a bad morning, it really won't help us at all and can put us in a bad mood as well.

