

Acting responsibly

Nicola Davies offers tips to newly qualified nurses on how to meet the challenges of increased accountability

Students often discover that the later stages of evolution to registered nurse status are among the most challenging times in their career. A tested method of smoothing the transition is to accept responsibility in readiness for qualification.

Understanding the responsibilities that come with qualification and registration can help newly qualified nurses to prepare for the move. Here are some preparatory steps that can be taken:

- ▶ Make independent decisions. After three years' training, the qualified nurse is probably confident in his or her capabilities and talents, but making decisions independently will be a new

responsibility. Research suggest a discrepancy between the skills and capabilities of qualifying nurses and their ability to make independent decisions. They should be prepared to think for themselves, trust their own judgements and their decisions to seek guidance.

- ▶ Be accountable. Closely tied up with the ability to make independent decisions is the willingness to be accountable for actions. The newly qualified nurse will be furnished with workplace policies and will be held responsible for adhering to them.
- ▶ Be aware of, and practise, evidence-based care. Make a commitment never to become a nurse who tolerates or perpetrates poor practice.
- ▶ Make time for reflection on development. How far are new responsibilities and experiences being addressed?
- ▶ Build networks. Talk to peers to understand how they cope with challenges. This helps build an understanding of new responsibilities.

Accepting responsibility is a vital part of qualification. Being well prepared can help ease the way into a new vocation **NS**

Nicola Davies is a health psychologist based in Bedfordshire

RESOURCES

RCN resources for newly qualified nurses
tinyurl.com/RCNQNs
 Regulation in Practice
tinyurl.com/NMCRAiP

Be prepared

Grab every chance to learn, says Craig Alvin Martins



The journey from student to registered nurse can be both demanding and rewarding. Here are some tips for the trip:

- ▶ Good attendance shows dedication. This is an opportunity to learn. Use it.
- ▶ Participation enhances communication skills, elevates confidence and improves social skills.
- ▶ Find out what disability services and support, if necessary, are available and develop coping strategies while studying and on placement.
- ▶ Discuss your schedule with family. If needed, investigate day care provision and ask family and friends to help.
- ▶ Find out about any financial entitlements and learn how to budget.
- ▶ Prepare for your exams and assignments early. Get to grips with correct referencing. Ensure that all necessary documents are completed. Support is available for those who experience exam stress.
- ▶ Be enthusiastic and proactive when on placements and look out for those who are good at what they do. I learned to be patient by observing a healthcare assistant who excelled in this aspect.
- ▶ Be compassionate, empathise with service users and smile. Remember that every day may not be good, but there is something good in every day.

Craig Alvin Martins graduated recently from the University of Hertfordshire

Staff who are about to qualify need to start making decisions



JIM VARNEY