



A Day in the Life of a PRACTICE NURSE

'A Day in the Life of' is a series written by experienced community nurses for student nurses to see what life in the community is like.

Personal details

Name: Sinead Rylance
Job title: Practice Nurse
Location: Salford

1. What's a typical day for you?

A typical day for me is generally quite varied, and no day is the same! But it often includes childhood immunisations, taking cervical smear samples, sexual health screening and contraception and chronic disease management including diabetes, CHD, asthma and COPD. Around all of these issues there is a big emphasis on patient education and empowering patients with knowledge to understand what is happening what might be the outcomes and what role they themselves can play in this. The community I work in is varied and diverse, our practice provides primary care services for ex-offenders who have been temporarily housed and for asylum seekers who are new to this country. It is our job to work through any barriers to ensure that all members of society are able to access services no matter their situation or background.

2. What has been your proudest moment in nursing so far?

I would say an ongoing quality I am proud of is the relationships I have built up over my time in practice nursing with patients and their families. This allows me to get to know them, help them feel valued and not like someone who is just processed through the system and rushed out of the door, it helps me understand who needs what and importantly helps me support people when they really need it. That support is invaluable to people in times of need, and it is a privilege to be able to provide it.

3. What skills set would you expect a student nurse to bring to the role of community nursing?

Communication and approachability, an intuition around time management some patients may need more whilst others are fairly straight forward, good listening techniques, an ability to see a patient holistically. Whilst many patients come in for physical health problems there are often so many different factors in their life that impact upon their health and it is essential to see that person as a whole.

4. What do you wish you'd known before you started working in the community?

The independence and autonomy you have as a practitioner, how you can help direct a patient's journey. Having that independence to be able to engage in decision making alongside the patient and other team members means you have an opportunity to really influence change and to see patients get to a better place because of your input and to help prevent deterioration or admission to hospital. Preventative healthcare has a reputation for being slow paced, but if you truly engage in the possibilities available there is real potential to innovate and have your say in the direction of patient services.

5. Any advice for aspiring community nurses?

Believe in yourself! There is an abundance of opportunities in primary care, lots of different paths to follow and lots of different training available, so don't be afraid to go for it and enrol in training, challenge yourself. The transition from working in the hospital to coming into community nursing can seem like a big one and a lot of newly qualified nurses and students may think they will get more experience in hospital, however, that is not the case and they will get a more varied amount of skills and richer experiences working in the community and in a much shorter timeframe. There is a lot of room to specialise in the community and going into it early will mean you can have a long and varied career ahead of you.



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