# What is my role as professional nurse in guiding students to professionalism?

## Introduction

Professional nurses as role models play an integral part in the clinical learning environment and this is seen as an essential component in preparing students to become professional nurses. Role models are the teachers of professional thinking, behaviours and attitudes and the cornerstones of the profession. Professional nurses are key role players in the development of student nurses and they under-estimate the impact their positive role modeling has on the student’s learning and professional development.

## Aim of the Presentation

The aim of this presentation is to discuss factors related to development of professionalism and specifically to inform professional nurses of their role in guiding students to professionalism.

## Methodology

An exploratory – descriptive, qualitative approach with a non-probability, quota sampling was utilised. Data collection was done by means of “World Café” conversations. The naturalistic paradigm was followed.

## Findings

### ROLE MODELS

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## Discussion

### FACTORS RELATED TO THE PROFESSIONALISM OF PROFESSIONAL NURSES

Professional nurses in the clinical learning environment have to portray an attitude of willingness to assist students during their clinical placement where students can learn the expected behaviours and attitudes of the profession. Perry (2009:243) wrote that the attitude of the professional nurse as role model is reflected to the student through actions, words and behaviours and that influences the nature of the relationships the professional nurse has with the student.

#### Professional attitude and behaviour

- Need for role models
- Values of profession
- Communication

#### Professional role

- Leadership
- Professional support
- Lifelong learning

#### Professional Image

- Professional attitude and behaviour
  - Positive attitude, “you are the one with…”; self-respect; strict but fair
- Values of profession
  - Integrity; clinical competence; empathy; non-judgemental
- Communication
  - Eye contact; willingness to listen; don’t shout and talk down

#### Professional role

- Leadership:
  - Accept responsibilities; lead by example; be involved
- Professional support:
  - Valued; sense of belonging; inspirational; proud
- Lifelong learning:
  - Recognise own learning needs; goal driven; personal motivation

#### Professional image

- Behaviour; quality of voice; knowledge; energetic; self-confidence

## Recommendations

- Address the limited availability of role models, nurse educators must become more involved in students’ clinical education experience.
- Empower students and prepare them as role models in diverse clinical environments.
- Promote an understanding of professional roles and values.

### Student support:

- Nurse educators and professional nurses serve as critical role models.
- Observation of expert role models impact student nurses behaviour throughout their professional development.

## Conclusion

The importance of professional nurses as role models cannot be overemphasised. Important learning happens in the classroom but is best integrated with the skills learned in the clinical setting. The professional nurse has the ability to create a positive teaching and learning environment whereby student nurses can be guided in their journey to professionalism.

### References


