Sample Interview Nursing Questions

Describe a situation in which you had to handle a difficult and demanding patient.

*This is used to assess your interpersonal skills and ability to resolve conflict. Possible examples include a patient who is uncooperative with treatment or who resists a prescribed care regime. Highlight your communication skills. Good nurses have excellent communication skills that include both verbal persuasiveness and strong listening skills. They are able to communicate with patients and families to understand their needs, explain treatments and influence their attitudes while displaying empathy.*

Describe a decision you had to take quickly regarding a patient.

*This is looking at your judgment. Take the interviewer through the process you used to evaluate the situation and the criteria you used to make your decision. Show how you are able to rapidly assess the situation and then commit to the most appropriate action.*

Tell us about a time where you disagreed with a colleague over the management of a patient.

*Are you able to work as part of a team? Do you display sufficient maturity in dealing with health care colleagues? What resources did you use to diffuse the situation—listening to your colleague’s reasons, gathering information to make sure you had sufficient understanding of the situation? Focus on what you learned from the experience as a nursing professional.*

What changes have you contributed to established practices to improve patient care?

*Nursing interview questions like this are designed to explore your ability to show initiative and to assess and implement new procedures. It also looks at your motivation to go beyond the routine of your nursing job to think about how you can improve on current patient care protocols. Important skills used would include attention to detail, close observation, critical thinking and judgment.*

Tell me about a challenging problem you faced in your previous job. How did you deal with it?

*This question is designed to explore your ability to analyze and manage problems. Be specific in detailing how you gathered the necessary information to clearly evaluate the situation before coming up with a workable solution. Highlight your critical thinking ability and how you are able to apply previous nursing experiences and knowledge to deal with a difficult situation. Explain what you learned from the challenging experience.*

Nursing work often involves a number of daily frustrations. Tell me about some of the frustrations you have dealt with recently.

*Dealing with daily frustrations is part of most jobs. Your examples should highlight your ability to demonstrate perseverance, reasonableness and common-sense in the face of common frustrations. Prove you are resilient and able to deal with daily frustrations.*
Take me through a typical day in your previous job.

The interviewer is assessing your ability to organize and plan your day, your energy levels, your ability to be flexible and adaptable, and the sort of pressures and challenges you had to face on a daily basis. Before your interview outline a typical day for yourself and be able to answer this question fluently.

How do you manage stressful situations? Give me an example.

Focus on how you are able to maintain emotional stability in the face of traumatic and stressful situations. What resources do you use to do this? Examples include physical fitness, exercise and relaxation techniques.