Write for us
If you are thinking of writing for publication, choose one of RCNi’s ten journals. Our experienced editorial and administration teams will ensure your article is handled professionally from time of acceptance to time of publication. rcni.com/write-for-us

Nurse Suzanne Rankin says that since she became a chief executive, many colleagues have told her it has given them a real boost. ‘They say it’s made them think about their own careers.’ rcni.com/nurse-ceo

CONTINUED

Enthusiasm after years in nursing

» so try to take on something new every now and then, such as speaking at a conference or writing for a nursing journal. The size of the challenge isn’t important, as long as you step outside your comfort zone. Facing your fears can be liberating.

» Share your experiences: No nurse was born with the ability to take charge of a ward or break bad news. Though you may think younger colleagues pick up new skills or technology quickly, they may wonder how on earth they will ever know as much as you do. Be as open and honest as you can, sharing experiences and vulnerabilities. Showing that you don’t know everything can help to break down any barriers that age may seem to form.

» Listen to your body: You have been around long enough to realise that you won’t get rewarded for being a martyr. So watch your energy levels and look after yourself. If long shifts are taking their toll, see if there is a flexible option. You won’t ever feel valued if you don’t value yourself.

Mandy Day-Calder is a freelance writer and life/health coach

Grow your own career

When asked to write an article 30 years ago, Caroline Shuldham had reservations. Now, writing is a big part of her career. She explains why you should keep an open mind to similar offers

By Caroline Shuldham

I recently read an advertisement with the headline ‘Goodbye job, hello career’. Although it was for an accountancy course, the same message could easily apply to nursing.

A crucial aspect to developing a career is how you take advantage of opportunities. For example, an incident with a patient may alert staff to a problem that needs remedying, and being involved in service improvement in this way can be inspiring, challenging and fulfilling. Not only can it benefit patients, it can enhance the field of practice, become the subject of a paper and be a springboard for further initiatives.

It is worth volunteering to take responsibility, by leading changes based on research, or joining a working group. Though it may not be clear at the outset where it will lead, often we do not know what we are capable of until we try.

Bigger picture
In addition to accepting projects at work, it is important to take a wider view of nursing and to understand what is happening outside your immediate workplace. This can be helped by attending conferences, teaching or writing for publications.

If you are interested in writing, a good idea is to talk to colleagues, a manager or a mentor, as this will
3,700 learning disability nurses work in the NHS, according to Health Education England. That’s about 35% of the total number of registered learning disability nurses in the UK.

Looking for a new job?
If you’re newly qualified or seeking a change of direction, register now for RCN Bulletin Jobs Fair. For details of the upcoming events in Manchester, Birmingham, London and Glasgow, go to rcnbulletinjobsfair.co.uk

help you generate ideas and support. Working with an experienced writer who can read a draft or introduce you to an editor is great, and collaborating on a joint project can be a wonderful way to get started.

You could think about writing for RCNi, which publishes several specialist journals and Nursing Standard. It can seem daunting, but everyone has a story to tell, and the editors and editorial team are always happy to hear from new writers.

A wider audience
Publication can take a nurse’s knowledge and experience to a national and even international audience. It is a means of highlighting debates you might already be having with colleagues, or communicating the results of a project, so that others can learn and adapt for their patients.

Nowadays, this can be achieved via online discussions and forums as well as publications. Be aware there may be guidance on this at your workplace, and always let your manager know what you are planning in case there is a process to go through before pieces appear online or in print.

Activities such as writing will require you to commit your own time and believe in your own abilities, but remember that these contributions spread good practice, contribute to personal development, provide evidence for revalidation and add to your CV. This will boost your job prospects and help you have a successful nursing career.

Caroline Shuldham is chair of the RCNi editorial advisory board

60-SECOND INTERVIEW
‘Don’t be afraid to push at doors’
Try different options to find the right career pathway for you, says professor of children’s nursing Alison Twycross

Alison Twycross started her nursing career in 1981, volunteering at a local hospice while doing her A levels. A registered adult, mental health and children’s nurse, she has worked in nurse education for 21 years and is professor and head of children’s nursing at London South Bank University. Ms Twycross has edited three books on research related to managing pain in children, and is the editor of the RCNi journal Evidence-Based Nursing. 

What are your main work responsibilities?
Managing and leading the children’s nursing department, maintaining relationships with stakeholders and improving the student experience.

Who are your clients/patients?
Students and hospitals and other organisations that provide clinical placements for our pre-registration children’s nursing students.

What is your top priority at work?
Maintaining and improving the student experience to ensure our new registrants, or those completing our CPD and master’s provision, have the skills to provide evidence-based care.

How have you developed your skills in this role?
I have been on a Florence Nightingale Foundation/Council of Deans of Health scholarship for aspiring deans.

What is the best lesson nursing has taught you?
That to succeed we need to work as a team.

What career advice would you give your younger self?
When you come to a crossroads in your career, don’t be afraid to push at doors and see which ones open. This will help you find the pathway that suits you best.