Health care is moving away from ‘professionals know best’ to a more person-centred model.

In some parts of England there is a shift towards a ‘realistic medicine’ approach, where patients are kept fully informed and have input into decisions about their care and treatment.

This is a big change for patients to get used to and necessitates a new way of working for healthcare staff: putting patients at the centre of their own care and involving them at all stages.

It is easy, especially during a busy 12-hour shift, to assume you know what your patients’ needs and wishes are, but how often do you check?

Sometimes as nurses we are guilty of telling our patients what to do, but collaboration involves working together towards an agreed plan, so it is essential that you involve your patients in setting aims for their care.

This approach may appear time-consuming but often involves only simple changes to your mindset, the way you communicate and the language you use.

**Expert opinions**
A good initial step is to start viewing your patients as the experts. Though they may not have in-depth medical knowledge, they do know how their health is affected and what is important to them.

Nurses often use motivational interviewing with patients. This is a well-established style of conversation that is used to elicit healthy behavioural changes.
How to work collaboratively

However, there are four principles (known collectively as RULE) that can be used in any healthcare situation and will help to promote a more collaborative approach between nurse and patient.

**RULE principles**

- **Resist the ‘righting reflex’**: as a nurse it is natural that you want to help your patients and ensure they have the best treatment possible, but be careful not to influence them with your own opinions.
- **Understand your patients’ motivations**: a motivated patient is more likely to be proactive and take control of their health. As individuals, we all place value on different things, so use open-ended and non-judgemental questions to engage with your patients.
- **Listen**: you should view listening as an active process, which involves focusing on what your patient is saying, how they are saying it and what might be being left out of the story.
- **Empower**: your role is to offer guidance and information, but you should also allow your patient the freedom to decide what is best for them.

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**Island life is calling: make the move to Guernsey**

The island is looking to recruit nurses from the UK, and applicants who have strong leadership skills are particularly welcome

By Erin Dean

The island of Guernsey has plenty to offer: beautiful countryside, miles of beaches and mild winters. But, like mainland UK, it finds recruiting nurses a challenge.

Adult community services service manager Fiona Robertson says the island can offer fantastic opportunities for nurses, particularly those wishing to work with older people with mental health problems and complex conditions such as dementia.

Ms Robertson says that the state-funded health system offers excellent facilities for patients and staff: ‘We don’t have any junior doctors on the island, so nurses have to be far more vociferous in terms of advocating for their service users, and they must manage patients’ complex care more autonomously.’

‘We are looking for individuals with strong leadership skills, who are prepared to challenge the traditional medical model. For example, in our service, medication for people with behaviours that challenge is not the first choice.’

Experience is less important than passion and a commitment to the needs of older people, she says.

The island’s health service follows Agenda for Change pay scales, but newcomers can receive enhanced