1 What does it mean to be a nurse?

I became a healthcare assistant on the suggestion of my mother who is also a nurse, and immediately fell in love with nursing. It is my opinion that other professions such as physiotherapy or radiography do not provide the same opportunities to develop therapeutic relationships with patients as nursing does. There is a certain satisfaction gained from caring for people who are often unable to care for themselves and nursing allows me the privilege of caring for those people every day. (Child branch nursing student)

Topics covered in this chapter:

- Why people choose nursing as a career
- What caring means to nurses
- Choosing a particular branch of nursing
- How perceptions of what nursing is change
- Defining what nursing is
- What nursing means to students
- Finding out what to expect from a course
- Coping with a nursing programme
- Finding out about different nursing environments

Introduction

To be able to work in the health service in the UK, nurses must hold a degree or diploma in nursing (a ‘pre-registration’ programme), which will allow them to register with the Nursing and Midwifery Council (NMC), enabling them to practise as a nurse. Pre-registration degrees and diploma programmes are offered in four ‘fields’ of nursing: adult, child (paediatric), learning disability, and mental health. Most often, prospective students need to decide which of the four fields of nursing they wish to train for
before making an application. A few higher education institutions may offer the flexibility of choosing a particular field of nursing after having started the course.

**Why choose nursing as a career?**

*I chose nursing after experiencing the way that nurses can change lives and help to build people's confidence and help rebuild their lives.*

(Mental health nursing student)

*Previous work experience allowed me to view other professions and I felt that nursing was the one for me.*

(Adult branch nursing student)

*It [nursing] is more specific to patient care. I considered medicine but felt I would miss the interaction with patients and lose out on the opportunity to build professional relationships with them.*

(Adult branch nursing student)

*Because I enjoyed patient contact in my work experience and although I was offered places at med school, I felt there was little prolonged patient contact.*

(Child branch nursing student)

*Because I wanted to be able to look after those who were in mental distress, have that close contact that being a nurse enables but having a higher level of input than a healthcare assistant.*

(Mental health nursing student)

*Because I am a caring person who wants to be able to treat both physical problems and mental health problems within my profession.*

(Mental health nursing student)

People often find it difficult to articulate why they choose nursing as a career but key to the above students' insights are that they want to be a nurse, want prolonged contact with people, want variety in their career, and identify that caring is central to being a nurse.

**What does caring mean?**

*Caring in relation to nursing does not just mean providing physical care in the sense of washing and feeding. Nurses should genuinely have an interest in the health and wellbeing of their patients and want them*
WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO BE A NURSE?

to achieve good health, not just go through the motions of restoring physical health. If you don’t care about helping those that need it, then you’re in the wrong profession.

(Adult branch nursing student)

Caring is vital in the nursing profession. It’s what drives a nurse to give good care and make people better. It makes clients feel valued and that they’ve had a positive experience. Caring means having people’s best concerns at heart and demonstrating this by your actions for and towards the person.

(Mental health nursing student)

I think caring almost defines nursing and can be shown in many ways, from providing basic hygiene care to listening to a family member or advocating for someone when necessary.

(Child branch nursing student)

Caring means considering all aspects of the situation. The patient’s wishes, religious beliefs, what is best for the patient, the support needed, supporting the family, providing adequate and understandable information. You must be sympathetic and understanding yet remain professional.

(Child branch nursing student)

Caring means doing the best for your patient. It involves building a relationship with the patient by showing empathy, compassion, and sensitivity. It involves taking a genuine interest in the patient to make them feel important and respected.

(Adult branch nursing student)

‘Caring’ encompasses a multitude of things and actions – talking to patients, understanding their preferences, protecting and promoting their personal dignity, supporting their choices, individualizing your approach to best suit your patient . . . I could go on, as the list would be ever-changing and endless!

(Adult branch nursing student)

Caring means showing empathy, patience, listening, and respecting people. It means always doing your best for the person and sometimes it means allowing that person to make mistakes and support them on their road to recovery. Sometimes those who care the most are the ones that step back and allow patients to make their own choices – whether we agree or not – and be the ones who support them and encourage them to try again if they fail the first time.

(Mental health nursing student)
Caring to me is not only providing an individual with the assistance he or she needs to survive, but to also promote independence, maintain psychological well-being, whilst being a figure of trust, support, and security to all patients.

(Adult branch nursing student)

Caring is being dependable, trustworthy, and understanding what an individual wants and needs and helping them to obtain it or achieve it.

(Learning disability nursing student)

Caring is an essential component of nursing with nursing being a complex and unique relationship between patient and nurse (Sumner 2001). It involves feeling on the part of the nurse, which can make the nurse feel vulnerable just as a patient can feel vulnerable (Henderson 2001). Nurses can become emotionally engaged with patients and need to know how to balance caring and involvement with being a professional nurse. This is what you need to learn throughout your nursing programme, observing the nurses you work with to help you to interpret for yourself what makes a caring, compassionate but professional nurse. McCormack and McCance (2006) identify four important aspects in delivering care to people, the first of which is the personal attributes of the nurse. McCormack and McCance (2006) also highlight that in order to care you need to be committed to the nursing role, have good interpersonal skills, be empathetic, have good social skills, and have an awareness of yourself as a person.

**ACTIVITY 1.1**

Think about your own personal attributes.

- Do you possess these personal attributes?
- How can you work on/develop these?
- How will awareness of yourself help you to decide which branch of nursing to choose?

**Why choose a particular field of nursing?**

*I researched the different branches to find the one which I felt suited my personality and career goals.*

(Adult branch nursing student)
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I have always enjoyed working with children and also working in the community. Children's nursing seemed a good way to combine those.  
(Child branch nursing student)

I thought it would be too hard to see children ill and even worse dying, so I opted for adult nursing. However, after experiencing nursing I have learnt that it doesn't matter what age or their circumstances – it's still hard to see.  
(Adult branch nursing student)

I have worked with children and adults with learning disabilities and mental health problems in other settings within healthcare and would like to work with a variety of different people now. I imagined that if I chose the adult branch I would work with the whole mix of people, which so far has been true.  
(Adult branch nursing student)

I have been working in learning disabilities for the last few years, and want to make a difference for the people I have met along the way.  
(Learning disabilities nursing student)

I visited a range of open days and researched the areas I could work in within each branch. Although very interested in child nursing, I opted for adult as I felt my skills best met the requirements of an adult nurse and felt excited by the range of areas I could work in once qualified.  
(Adult branch nursing student)

I've got people in my family who suffer from mental health issues … Also, I find there is a stigma against people who suffer from mental health problems, which I don't agree with and I want to be one of the nurses who tries to break the stigma.  
(Mental health nursing student)

I have always been interested in people. I watched how a nurse helped a teenager I knew, over the course of a few months and wanted to be able to make that sort of a difference to people's lives.  
(Mental health nursing student)

Through babysitting for many different aged children, volunteering in primary and secondary schools I knew I wanted a career working with children. A great sense of achievement can be gained through helping someone and providing support to overcome something. Personally I feel I can gain much more from working with a family unit which is what children's nursing involves.  
(Child branch nursing student)
Key elements that the above students identify include:

- researching the different fields of nursing;
- having previous experience of healthcare;
- variety of work;
- personal experiences.

Researching which field is right for you is really important. You need to find out what nurses in each field do to make sure it is what you want to do. For example, some individuals think that the child field involves simply looking after children and babies but as one student explained, it is about looking after the family unit, not just the child. However, your own personal experiences or prior experience in healthcare settings can also help you to identify what is right for you. All fields of nursing offer an incredible variety of experiences and opportunities, and the Nursing and Midwifery Council (NMC 2010) recognize that most skills that nurses need to acquire are the same for each of the four fields. Hall and Ritchie (2009) asked qualified nurses what each field of nursing is about, see Chapter 7 of their book for more information.

How do students’ perceptions of what nursing is change with experience?

**Before finding out what mental health nursing involved specifically I was quite ignorant to the job role. The stereotype of a nurse working on a medical ward was what I envisioned when I heard the term.**

(Mental health nursing student)

I realized that the focus of nursing between the branches is very different. Clearly in mental health nursing, nursing skills in the form of addressing physical health problems are still vital and utilized in practice, but the focus was on forming therapeutic relationships with people and spending time with them rather than the job being so task-orientated.

(Mental health nursing student)

**Helping adults in diverse settings to improve/safeguard their health. It’s a lot tougher emotionally than I realized. There is greater diversity of roles than I imagined, even within the same care setting. I had been prepared for it to be hard, unglamorous, physical work, and it is!**

(Adult branch nursing student)

I thought nursing was about caring for patients with varied health backgrounds in either acute care or critical. I thought nursing was about
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administering medications, and liaising with doctors on further care they may need. My perception changed a lot. I didn’t realize the amount of paperwork a nurse had to do, how much was documented and the amount of responsibility the nurse actually has.

(Adult branch nursing student)

I never imagined just how hard nurses have to work. Twelve and a half hour shifts and they are on their feet for almost twelve of those hours on some of the wards I’ve worked on. It is very tiring.

(Adult branch nursing student)

Supporting individuals to lead positive lives. That it is going to be a tougher job then I expected to make a difference.

(Learning disability nursing student)

I didn’t really realize how many different things nurses had to organize, i.e. social sort outs and referrals. I didn’t realize how many members of the MDT [multidisciplinary team] there are. Naively, I truly believed it was about just caring for sick patients.

(Adult branch nursing student)

I realized there was more than just caring for a poorly patient – it was how everything I did had an impact on them, their families, carers, friends, other nursing staff but, most importantly, I never realized how important it was as a nurse to care for yourself while caring for others both mentally and physically.

(Mental health nursing student)

I realized the full range of skills required to be an adult nurse and the fact that the nurse cares for the patient, their family and their loved ones, not just the patient. Additionally, I learnt quickly that the nurse is an advocate for the patient and is required to understand a real breadth of theory to enable them to provide evidence-based care.

(Adult branch nursing student)

Talking through people’s problems, giving them medication, taking them out and helping them to learn skills to cope. My perception did change because I felt I went into nursing thinking it was a lot easier than it was – I didn’t realize how clever you had to be and how many skills you needed to deliver effective patient care.

(Mental health nursing student)

I realized I would be dealing with a variety of illnesses but also that, with an ageing population, there would be a lot of elderly care and the illnesses and conditions specific to an older age group.

(Adult branch nursing student)
Caring for not only children aged 0–19 but also for their parents and siblings. Although daunting at first, my placements have been very rewarding. While carrying out routine observations on an 8-year-old boy he asked me to explain how I could feel his heart beat, so while counting his radial pulse I explained to him that I was feeling the strength of his heart and counting how many times it was beating. I then showed him how to feel it – his face lit up when he did. He then went on to try and find his mum’s pulse. This small experience made my day as I felt that not only had I gained but he also had learnt something and was smiling and happy even though he was in hospital.

(Child branch nursing student)

Providing nursing care for adults of all ages, I knew this would sometimes include patients with either mental health conditions or learning disabilities with either surgical or medical admissions. I thought of nursing as providing basic care, as well as giving out medications and working with doctors and other healthcare professionals to meet specific goals for each patient. Most of it was what I had expected, but I was surprised how different two wards could be. I realized that even for qualified nurses they are still continuously learning new skills and methods of providing care.

(Adult branch nursing student)

It’s not as glamorous as television programmes make out!

(Adult branch nursing student)

I thought that the majority of children I worked with would be critically ill but during the course you get to work in respite homes, medical wards, surgical wards and out in the community. The types of children you come into contact with varies between placements; they could be disabled, have learning difficulties, mental/psychological problems, long-term medical conditions, self-inflicted injuries – the list goes on.

(Child branch nursing student)

It is clear from the above comments that, while the main focus of each of the fields may differ, all fields of nursing involve physical, psychological, social, and emotional support and care for both the patient/service user and the significant people in their lives. Nursing involves a lot of hard work and is not the glamorous profession that is portrayed in the media at times. When caring for patients it can be emotionally and physically draining and you need to care for yourself. To do this you need to have good support mechanisms both within and outside the profession, ensuring you look after yourself both physically and emotionally. However,
nursing can be an extremely rewarding profession that involves:

- responsibility;
- the importance of documenting care;
- being a team worker alongside other members of the healthcare team;
- the need to acquire theoretical knowledge in order to deliver effective nursing care;
- the need for health promotion skills to enable people to make informed choices in their lives;
- the need for lifelong learning about nursing to ensure your care delivery is up to date.

These are all key elements that help to identify and define what it means to be a nurse.

**Defining what nursing is**

*Nursing is aimed at making the lives of people who are in need better. It is about helping people while they are ill, helping them throughout recovery, and helping them maintain their health. It’s about assisting people achieve better health and a better quality of life through using their knowledge, skills, and compassion.*

(Mental health nursing student)

*Nursing to me is a way to help others, not only heal people both inside and out but an opportunity to use one of life’s greatest skills – communication – to help put a smile on someone’s face, to helping them deal with terminal illness and great losses.*

(Adult branch nursing student)

*Nursing is not a glamorous job but hardworking and [you] need to be dedicated in providing the best possible care. At times you are surrounded by challenges, lack of time, and lack of resources. An attempt to help heal the ill and wounded in diverse situations everywhere you go. Stepping in to people’s lives and offer support advice and educate when needed.*

(Adult branch nursing student)

*Caring for people of all types in an educated, non-prejudicial, and informed way to provide the best outcomes for them. Not just in hospital but in numerous places within communities.*

(Learning disability nursing student)
Nursing has never been just a job, it is no longer a vocation; it is, however, a profession. A profession that requires commitment beyond that of any other, and one which provides the greatest of rewards.

(Learning disability nursing student)

Nursing is about being there for your patients. It is about working professionally and using the best evidence-based research to care for each patient. It is about seeing each patient as an individual and tailoring care to suit their needs. It is about providing the BEST care possible.

(Mental health nursing student)

It is a holistic approach to medicine involving the care of the physical and psychological wellbeing of patients.

(Adult branch nursing student)

Caring for a person who is in need, looking at them holistically. Caring can be to look after someone with the goal of making them better, or it could be through to death to try and make it a comfortable and peaceful one.

(Adult branch nursing student)

Nursing, in paediatrics, is the care of a child and his or her family, whoever that may be – mum, dad, grandmother, uncle, teddy, family friend, and wherever that care may be required – hospital, school, at home, in the park, so that the child and his or her family may thrive to his/her full potential.

(Child branch nursing student)

Nursing is not just about dishing out tablets and helping people wash. Yes, it is helping people to help themselves get better and caring for those who can’t care for themselves, but it is also being there for your patients in any way you can when they need you.

(Adult branch nursing student)

To be part of the nursing profession requires a caring, compassionate approach in which the care delivered needs to meet all patients’ needs as well as the needs of their family members/significant others. The above students refer to helping patients towards recovery or through to a peaceful and dignified death. There are more official definitions of nursing. The International Council of Nurses (2011) define nursing as follows:

Nursing encompasses autonomous and collaborative care of individuals of all ages, families, groups and communities, sick or well and in all settings. Nursing includes the promotion of health, prevention of illness, and the care of ill, disabled and dying people. Advocacy, promotion of a safe environment, research,
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participation in shaping health policy and in patient and health systems management, and education are also key nursing roles.

The students’ comments within this chapter reflect this definition of nursing well. Within the UK, the Royal College of Nursing (RCN 2011) define nursing as:

the use of clinical judgement in the provision of care to enable people to improve, maintain, or recover health, to cope with health problems, and to achieve the best possible quality of life, whatever the disease or disability, until death.

These definitions of nursing bring together a lot of the students’ observations about what nursing is and highlight the underpinning principles of what it means to be a nurse. Nursing is a challenging undertaking requiring full commitment on the part of individuals who want to be part of the profession.

What does being a nurse mean?

It means striving to do the best by and for the patient, trying to act as if it were my family member in the bed daily. I was unprepared for the sense of responsibility and the amount of trust placed in you by both the patient and their family.

(Adult branch nursing student)

It means being a professional with an important role to play within healthcare. It means being accountable for my practice. It means providing the best available care for my patients.

(Adult branch nursing student)

Everything, it is so pleasurable to me knowing I have made a positive impact on somebody else’s lifestyle. I feel I give myself respect and trust at the same time when helping or caring for somebody.

(Mental health nursing student)

It means having an opportunity to support people in a way that really makes a difference to their lives. It makes me feel that I am very fortunate and privileged to be a part of people’s lives for a while during the most difficult and tragic times they will go through.

(Child branch nursing student)

It means helping people to move on. To maybe not become someone different, but accept all of their mental health issues and learn to live
Key points the above students highlight include:

- helping people;
- being trustworthy;
- taking responsibility;
- being accountable for your actions.

As a nurse, you need to be honest and trustworthy. The people you nurse are often vulnerable individuals who are dependent on you to act in a caring, compassionate, and professional manner. As a nurse, you also have to take responsibility for providing effective nursing care for your client group and the profession provides a lot of guidance for nurses in how to behave and what their responsibilities are (see further reading list at the end of the chapter).

During your nursing programme, you will be supervised and during this time you need to learn as much as you can from the staff you work with in practice. In addition, you need to have a good knowledge and skills base that will help you learn to make the right decisions about patient care as well being able to deliver that care safely. This is why the practice element of the course is so important. As a nurse, you also have to be accountable for the care you deliver, which means being able to explain why you chose a specific action and what evidence base you used to decide on that particular action in a given situation. This is something you will learn to do during your nursing course with the help of your lecturing staff and practitioners you work alongside.

**Finding out what to expect from a course**

*I found out through a friend that was planning on entering the profession. I also found out by researching the job role of a mental health nurse. I also looked at the university’s course prospectus.*

(Mental health nursing student)

*Open days and my interview – but I don’t feel like I knew what to expect until I started the course.*

(Child branch nursing student)

*I undertook an access to higher education course at my local college, which helped to prepare me for the course.*

(Adult branch nursing student)
WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO BE A NURSE?

Speaking to others within the healthcare settings; however, I don’t think anyone can really prepare you for how demanding this course can be on your life for the three years it takes.

(Adult branch nursing student)

The university website, talking to people who had recently done the course or who were already doing it.

(Learning disability nursing student)

Online at NHS.uk and at the university website.

(Adult branch nursing student)

I attended open days, which provided me with the opportunity to speak to current students, past students, current health professionals, and lecturers. I looked on the student room forum to see comments from other students as well to gain a larger picture.

(Child branch nursing student)

It is obviously useful to find out about what to expect from a course. Nursing programmes are not like other university courses. At the end of your programme, you will have both an academic degree as well as a vocational qualification. This means the course is extremely demanding and, as the students identify, it is difficult to prepare yourself for how demanding it can be. Make sure you find out as much as you can before you commit yourself, as undertaking a nursing programme, although extremely rewarding, is a real challenge. Most university courses are solely academic programmes, requiring attendance at university for lectures with the rest of the time available for studying and other activities. A nursing programme requires you to spend time in practice learning to look after patients/service users, as well as time in university learning to be effective in practice. In addition, nursing students must have competed 2300 hours in practice and 2300 hours in academic study. The academic element will involve attending university for classes as well as self-directed study. The practice element, on the other hand, will involve practice experience in diverse clinical settings that expose you to all parts of the patient’s journey through the health and social care system.

Coping with a nursing programme

It’s a very steep learning curve, especially while trying to be a student nurse, get the work done, earn some money, and have as good and as normal a ‘student life’ as possible. It probably didn’t hit me until I got my first mediocre result and then I realized, but you just have to be able to
discipline yourself and learn what you can cope with and work within those limits.

(Child branch nursing student)

With difficulty. Dedicating time to university work is important, but setting aside time to relax and forget about it is even more so. It can take over your life if you're not careful.

(Adult branch nursing student)

It can be tough juggling all the requirements that this course throws at you as well as managing life away from Uni. As a mature student, I have a mortgage and bills to pay, which requires some very careful financial planning!

(Adult branch nursing student)

To be honest, I think just about cope is accurate!! I am a mum of three, so balancing home work and study is vital. I don’t do any housework that isn’t very necessary until the holidays. I make use of any spare moment at work to write up or research for the outcomes. I make sure the children get time with me each day and I study every weekday even if only for half an hour, just to keep a routine!

(Mental health nursing student)

Take advantage of all the support networks that are made available … from a chat with my mum to a deep discussion with a tutor.

(Adult branch nursing student)

I found it very difficult to begin with. This was mainly due to having an unidentified learning need throughout the first year. Since having this diagnosed, I have accessed student support and received the appropriate help. I now have very good coping strategies for completing assignment work.

(Adult branch nursing student)

Organizing, making sure I know when things need to be done by, asking the people around me to support me, letting them know what I need to achieve my goals and how they can support that.

(Learning disability nursing student)

I’m still getting to the grips of adjusting in some ways and I don’t think I ever will fully adjust. It’s an extremely testing course, but worthwhile in the long run. I tend to focus on my goal of achieving and somehow get through that way.

(Mental health nursing student)
WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO BE A NURSE?

I think I have learned to cope with the help of other students. We are quite close as a group and there is always someone to help, by letting me moan or by giving me a kick up the backside when it is needed.

(Adult branch nursing student)

I didn’t. I had a wealth of experience working with children, but I was so busy with A levels and then ‘volunteering’ up to a week before my course started I didn’t give myself enough time to prepare for what the course might be like. Fortunately, I loved it, but I can see why so many people drop out.

(Child branch nursing student)

I think it definitely helped to have some healthcare experience before the course, as the shift patterns can be a big shock to those who’ve never worked in healthcare. Also, the more basic tasks such as washing a patient and being with them in their final hours can be daunting to people fresh into healthcare.

(Adult branch nursing student)

I had no experience whatsoever in the field of nursing or healthcare. I was a civil servant for 15 years and then a stay-at-home mum. I went into nursing with very little knowledge. I feel that maybe some healthcare work prior to starting the course may have helped, but I’m doing just fine without it, so it’s not essential.

(Adult branch nursing student)

Yes, I knew more what to expect at the basic level of care provision, understood some of the terms used, understood it wasn’t going to be a walk in the park, that there would be a lot of work and that it would be physically and mentally challenging.

(Learning disability nursing student)

I had personal experience of being with a mental health nurse in the community, however I wasn’t prepared for it at all. It came as a shock to the system, but the support you receive is enough to settle you in and calm you down if you’re anxious!

(Mental health nursing student)

From the above quotes it is clear that prior experience can help in some ways. However, as other students point out who didn’t have previous experience, they coped well with the demands of the course. The main things to bear in mind are what nurses have to do on a daily basis and the fact that you will need to find time to study and write academic assignments, as well as the need to have a social life.
Key points to think about include:

- the need for self-discipline in terms of balancing your personal life with academic and practice demands;
- time management is essential – deadlines for assignments mean you need to plan and organize your time, not leave things until the last minute;
- support – take whatever support is offered. Support systems need to include your family, friends, other students, and the lecturing staff. Don’t be too proud to ask for help or leave asking for help until you reach crisis point.

Earning some money to supplement the financial help available while on the course is an option most students have to take. However, you need to balance additional work with meeting the demands of the course and this is something that all students need to think about before starting a nursing programme. In addition, some universities provide guidance about how much paid work students should undertake outside their programme of study. As will be clear from the students’ comments above, this can be especially difficult for those with dependents, who will experience extra demands on their time and finances, such as for child care.

**Finding out about different nursing environments**

*I was always aware of health visitors and school nurses just through my experiences in younger life, but I had never considered that placements like these would make up such a huge proportion of my practice placements.*

(Child branch nursing student)

*During the course and from speaking to other students after their different placements.*

(Adult branch nursing student)

*Internet and friends.*

(Mental health nursing student)

*Health and social care ‘A level’ covered the different roles and health settings of a nurse.*

(Child branch nursing student)

*I found that the biggest difference was that I was used to being independent when working, and when I went on placement I was supervised at all times doing things that I had been competent at for some time.*

(Adult branch nursing student)
WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO BE A NURSE?

By working in them! You have no idea how wide the scope of nursing is until you start being sent to placement areas you hadn’t even considered.

(Child branch nursing student)

I already had a good understanding of the services out there, but the course website, open days, and reading were all helpful.

(Learning disabilities nursing student)

The settings in which nurses are required to deliver care are diverse. Settings include:

- inpatient care (e.g. in a hospital);
- community care (e.g. in a patient’s own home, a GP surgery or day centres);
- charitable services (e.g. hospices or working with the homeless);
- private care services (e.g. nursing homes, private hospitals or private community services);
- social care settings (e.g. residential care).

Nursing offers many opportunities to you. If you are considering nursing or are already on a nursing course, make the most of all the learning opportunities on offer. As part of your programme you need to have experience of, and insight into, the pathway through the healthcare system that the patient experiences. You will have placements in diverse health and social care settings that will enable you to explore the role of a nurse in a particular setting. Your practice experiences will also provide you with an understanding of how different health and social care workers contribute to effective care for patients, and how important it is for all professions to work collaboratively for the benefit of patients using the health service.

Key points covered in this chapter

- Students’ perspectives on why they chose nursing as a career
- Students’ views on what caring means to a nurse
- Things to consider about which field of nursing to choose
- Students’ perspectives on what nursing means for them
- Definitions of what nursing is
- Things to expect from a nursing course
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Further reading

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