

Things I wish I knew before the first day of nursing school.

Setting up your work space

- Think about your education in terms of 'something you will be doing often' for the next 2 years and plan accordingly. How can you re-arrange your bedroom, living room, kitchen or office?
- A bookshelf, desk, and printer are necessary.

Getting Organized

- Create a list of school supplies, not only based on school recommendations but truly put effort into laying out the materials in a way that makes it yours.
- Get your books early. Skim through them over the summer or on breaks. Match pages from your syllabus and create tabs for easy reading and reference.
- Keep in mind the syllabus is modified each semester, so a previous syllabus, while helpful, will not be 100% accurate. You'll utilize this later when studying and making concept maps, etc.
- Create a binder for each class to keep materials organized. They are a nice tool when reviewing for finals.
- Erasable pens, highlighters, basic calculator, (which may be used for the math competency test), oversized backpack all make student nurse life easier.

Taking care of yourself and family

- Meal prep – take time to prepare ahead, stay healthy.
- For those working but still needing to make home cooked meals, invest in a programmable crockpot. You'll be glad you did and it will pay off in the course of 2 years.
- Get a do not disturb sign for your door – even a dry erase board. Write a time you 'can' be disturbed, to avoid studying too long.
- Ask family to leave encouraging messages for you to read when you're done studying. They'll feel more involved and you'll feel less guilty for taking time for yourself.
- Invest in a good pair of nursing shoes and wear them now to break them in before clinical!

Using Technology

- A cellphone DOES come in handy for studying. We almost always have our phones with us these days. Use it to watch videos, take practice quizzes, etc.
- Create separate folders for pictures, videos, notes to review later.
- Use Bluetooth in your car or while waiting in your car for takeout, picking up the kids, etc.
- If you are a digital learner, download apps on your iPad.
- Some helpful apps to try before starting class are Notability, Davis Drug Guide and some students find even copying power-points into a word document and typing their notes onto them makes a nice study guide.

Forging a relationship with an Academic Coach

- They really can be a lifeline and true source of support you. From workshops and placement with tutors, to study tips, to organizing your 'to do' list, coaches are just that!
- Don't be shy, become the best student you can be and learn how to work those brain muscles in the most efficient ways, tailored just for you!

Using the Library

- Use the Library for online information & resources. Chat with librarians to answer your questions.
- Schedule a meeting early in the semester to discuss your EBP. Seek support finding your article. Do yourself a favor and don't leave this until mid-semester.

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Getting Organized

- Make sure you get your books as early as possible; this will save you time and unnecessary trips to the bookstore
- Create a space in your home designated solely to studying and **NOTHING** else; equip your space with a printer, dry erase board, studying signs (to alert family when you are studying), sticking notes/ notepads and schedule you can visualize easily.
- Soft sided cooler to bring lunch to campus – don't know what kind of food options will be available in the Fall

Forming a support system

- Don't be afraid to make friend and bond with other students, they are the only ones who know exactly what you are going through.
- These relationships may become a source of strength and comfort during the hard times. Trust me, they become like family!
- Tutors are available and willing to help you become and remain successful in your nursing courses, be sure to sign up for tutoring as soon as schedules become available.

Technology

- Make sure your iPad is updated and well set up
- Download all the apps recommended by the professors, including the evolve book app (which gives you access to your books even when you aren't around internet).
- Download Exam Soft before school starts.
- Set up auto passwords on your iPad for accounts, that way you have easy access to your resources.
- Learn how to navigate blackboard and starfish before school begins, that will save you time and worry/ stress.
- Learn how to access and navigate the online library (nursing tutor can show you)

Communicating with Professors

- When you get assigned to a clinical professor, be sure to email him/her and introduce yourself. Ask the professor which way is the most convenient way to access him or her if you have questions.
- Be professional when communicating with a professor via email. Be sure to address them correctly by their names/titles, identify yourself by name and school ID number before proceeding with your message.
- When things go wrong, you are confused or you feel frustrated, don't hesitate to contact your professors and address the issue in a respectful and dignified manner.
- Know the chain of command, that way your questions/ concerns can be answered/ resolved efficiently and effectively (currently working on creating a flow chart for students).
- Your professors or the nursing department are best and most reliable source of information,
- Make sure that you represent yourself and CCRI with pride and dignity!!

Online resources to download

[Crash Course](#) – Anatomy, Physiology

[SimpleNursing.com](#)

[Quizlet.com](#)

[Nursing.com](#)

[RegisteredNurseRN.com](#) – Nurse Sarah

[Level Up RN](#) – Cathy Parks

[Khan Academy](#)

Clinical Expectations – Tips from a nursing professor!

Understanding your role as a nursing student

You are not supposed to:

- Know it all – in fact, it's OK not to know it all!
- To be perfect.
- You are supposed to build on previous knowledge and to think critically.

Getting organized

- Perform a test drive to your clinical site to know the commute time, traffic patterns, parking.
- Come to clinical prepared – don't leave equipment or paperwork in the car, at home, etc.
- Stay up to date with Castle Branch. In fact, stay 2 weeks ahead.

Professionalism

- BE. ON. TIME. ALWAYS!
- On-time means personal gear put away, bathroom needs done, coffee down, and ready to go.
- All this is done at least FIVE (5) minutes before the start of clinical
- Absences are allowed. Try to avoid an absence, but they do happen for unavoidable reasons such as an illness, not social commitment.
- A make-up clinic is expected via an assignment, or attending another clinical with a different instructor/day, or filming and submitting yourself practicing lab skills.
- Read and follow the dress code. Don't try to "get away" with not following the dress code. Wait until the professor gives expectations – then see if allowances are permitted.

Communicating with Professors

- All professors are different; what was allowed in one clinical might not be allowed in another.
- Get in the habit of just following the rules to remove any questions/doubt.
- If a professor makes an exception to a rule, then you may use an exception.
- Never ask if the class is leaving early.

Textbooks

- PATHO BOOK – If you are having trouble understanding a concept in your text, a good rule of thumb is to go back and review the pathophysiology, use either text or Khan Academy, YouTube.
- MEDICAL DICTIONARY – If you come across a word in your readings that you don't know, look it up at that time and write down the definition.
- LAB BOOK – Get in the habit of correlating labs with disease processes

Syllabi

- Check/review it first before you ask your professor a question. There is a good chance it has been answered already within the document
- Syllabi from a previous semester is fine – it's a good place to start and review, but it will change, and you must be aware of those changes
- Sometimes those changes happen mid-semester

Evolve

- Make sure Masteries are completed in the correct section in order to get credit.