

continue to be associated with beliefs about personal responsibility, morality, dangerousness, and trustworthiness. People with SUDs may be viewed through a moral lens, labeled as “drug seeking,” blamed for their illness because of their weakness, or perceived as more difficult or less deserving of care. These attitudes can influence communication, therapeutic relationships, clinical decision-making, and whether evidence-based treatment is offered. Experiences of judgment, discrimination, and mistreatment can undermine trust, discourage disclosure of substance use, and contribute to delaying or avoiding healthcare and addiction treatment.

In a systematic review, Livingston et al (2011), evaluated interventions designed to reduce stigma related to SUDs. This review identifies three types of stigmas associated with SUD: Social-stigma, Structured-stigma, and Self-stigma.

Social-stigma relates to the general public. This is stigma that an individual has because of their own experiences

of knowing someone; a relative, family friend, or any relationship they may have experienced with someone who has an addiction. Social-stigma can be decreased by communicating positive stories about those who have a SUDs.

Structured-stigma is related to health care professionals, and health care students. Structured-stigma can be decreased by providing didactic education, clinical experiences and contact with those who have SUDs.

Self-stigma is stigma that the person with the SUD has about themselves. They may feel that something is terribly wrong with them, that they themselves are weak and without willpower; or they may seek help only to feel poorly judged by the person to whom they have gone for help. Self-stigma can be decreased by a person experiencing therapeutic interventions and evidenced-based education about addictions.

Nurses have regular contact with people who have addictions. We strive to de-

liver evidence-based care, to have empathy, and to offer hope to people who have illness that can be treated. This is certainly a framework and a practice that all nurses can deliver when working with those with addictions.

Self Reflection:

What are your attitudes toward people with SUD?

What can nurses do to identify and decrease stigma in the healthcare setting? ■

Livingston, J.D, Milne, T., Fang, M.L. & Amari, E. (2011). The effectiveness of intervention for reducing stigma related to substance use disorders: A systematic review. *Addiction*, (107),39-50.

The CO Advanced Practice Psychiatric Nurses (CAPPN) meet virtually the first Wednesday of each month, at 6:30 PM. See the CNA website to receive the link.

Nine Things to Know When Applying for APRN Jobs

Krista Estes, DNP, FNP-BC

Applying for jobs can be stressful. They take time and commitment, and you want to make sure you're applying for a job that fits you and your skillset. But where do you begin? What are employers looking for? Dr. Krista Estes, the Assistant Dean of Master's Programs (MSN) at the University of Colorado Anschutz College of Nursing, explains what you should know as you start looking at roles to advance your nursing career.

Know When to Start Looking for Jobs

You should start looking for jobs about six to nine months before you graduate. Look at what's available and what catches your eye, then start applying about four to six months before graduation.

It's a Lengthy Process

Keep in mind that the hiring timeline can be lengthy, with multiple interviews, credentialing, and other steps. Every single interaction you have with an employer is part of the interview.

And you can get hired before your certification. We've had students secure positions, but it's contingent on graduation, passing their certification exam, obtaining their state license, and obtaining prescriptive authority. Some organizations recruit students before they graduate, so you must communicate your timelines with your potential employer.

Start Networking Now

The entire time you're in school is networking time. Every interaction with faculty,

peers, and your preceptors at clinical rotations is considered networking because they provide you with connections.

Your clinical rotations are almost like interviews. I've had people call me years after a student graduated to say, 'I had this student, and now we have an opening, they were really impressive, and we'd love to have them apply.' And, since many CU Anschutz Nursing faculty work clinically, potential employment opportunities can come through us.

You can also network through professional organizations (nursing or non-nursing) or by attending conferences. LinkedIn profiles are important: make sure you keep your profile up to date and highlight your clinical interests and scholarly work.

The Roles You're Applying for Are Different

You should be applying for roles that align with your specialty and scope of practice. For example, a family nurse practitioner sees patients throughout the lifespan and is outpatient-focused, so they wouldn't be applying for an inpatient ICU position, which is within the scope of an acute care nurse practitioner role. Strong employers will respect the advanced practice nurse role and scope boundaries.

Keep Your Resume Current

On your resume, you'll want to keep things concise and very role specific. Highlight your clinical rotations and hours, the patient populations you've seen, your certifications, any leadership roles, scholarly work, and your technology skills.

Don't undersell your RN experience; it strengthens your clinical reasoning, leadership, patient management, and communication skills. It also highlights different clinical environments you've been in.

And finally, look at your resume format. ATS, or Applicant Tracking System, is the big thing right now because companies use it to scan resumes. So use clean formatting and strong action-oriented language.

What to Prioritize

This first job after becoming an advanced practice nurse is your launch point. When you're looking for that new role, I think it's important to prioritize strong mentorship, a strong work culture, growth opportunities, and reasonable patient expectations [like patient load]. Sometimes those are more important than seeking roles with the highest salaries, because high salaries don't always indicate a strong support system.

What Employers Look For

Employers are looking for potential when hiring new graduates. They know you're not coming in as an expert in the field.

They're looking for these qualities:

- Clinical judgment and patient interactions
- Safety awareness
- Professionalism and communication
- Strong clinical evaluations
- Collaboration
- A lifelong learner

Prepare for a Transition Period

It's normal to go through a transition period when starting a new advanced practice nursing role because you're going from an RN role to a provider role. You get that exposure as a provider-in-training during your clinical rotations, but in any role, you will go through transition periods as you adjust to your new responsibilities.

Make Sure It's a Right Fit

Interviews go both ways: employers are interviewing you, but you're also interviewing them. What really matters is making sure the job is a great fit for you. You'll want jobs that will help guide you in this advanced practice nursing role and offer strong mentorship. Pay attention to the culture, the onboarding process, and the support you'll get. All of these things matter just as much as compensation.

As advanced practice nurses, we bring a unique lens to healthcare: we focus on prevention, education, and person-centered care. The best organizations understand and respect both that and an advanced practice nurse's scope of practice. ■

About the author: Dr. Krista Estes serves as the Assistant Dean of Master's Programs and is an Associate Professor at the University of Colorado Anschutz College of Nursing. She actively practices as a Family Nurse Practitioner and previously held the role of Family Nurse Practitioner Specialty Director for eight years.

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