

# interview questions

The questions asked in a healthcare interview are particularly important, for both the employer and potential employee. Both parties want to ensure a good fit, for both short and long-term needs. The key for each is in preparation and professionalism so that no one leaves the interview disappointed.

**relope**



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# *clinical skills*

## sample questions

1. Share a time you were going to administer medicine to a patient. What did you do when you realized the dosage was incorrect?
2. Describe a time you had to take immediate action with a patient. How did you determine the type of care required and what was the decision process like?
3. How would you handle a patient who is constantly complaining of pain?
4. Tell me about what your day-to-day schedule looks like. Which of your duties made you feel the most confident? What about the least confident?

# why these questions are important

## for employers

Resumes provide a basic overview of what a candidate considers to be his/her skill set, but the interview allows you to dig deeper and see how they act on their feet.

Focusing on clinical skills questions allow you to ask candidates specific questions to reveal their ability to perform in the job. This is your opportunity to see what their motivation is, why they stand out from other candidates, their future goals as well as how they handle conflict and failure.

## for candidates

The interview is your chance to show an employer how polished and professional you can be. Thus, preparation is incredibly important. Rather than just showing up to wing it, take time to consider common questions asked in an interview. Taking time to consider responses and rehearse them will pay off during the interview process.

Preparing in advance also helps reduce the nervousness that commonly pops up in interviews. By tackling questions in advance, you are much more likely to walk into the process with confidence, which is always a trait employers desire.

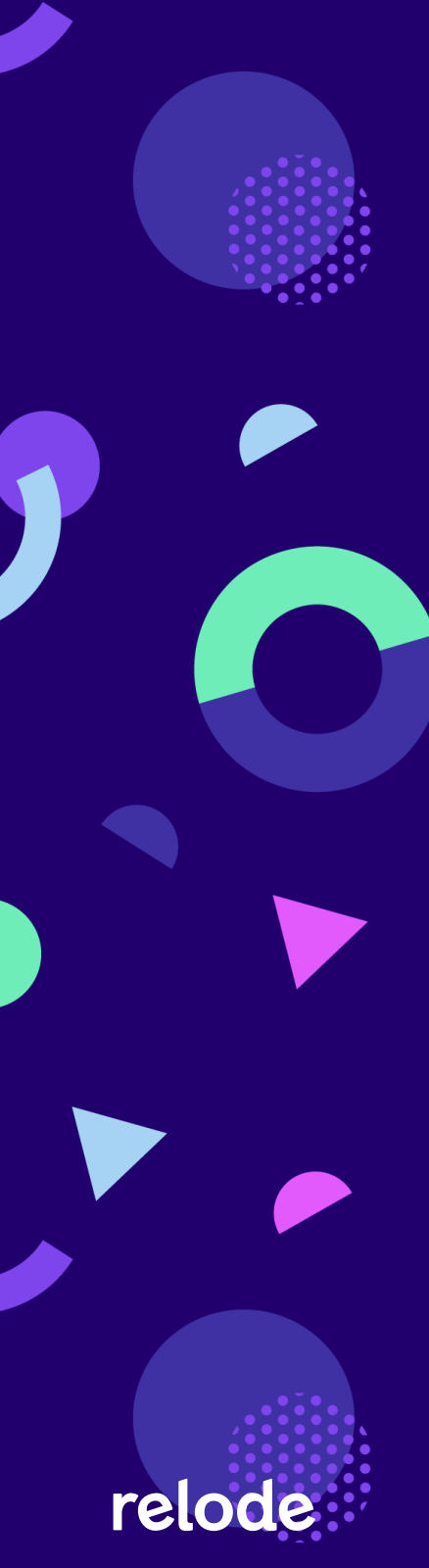
## tips & advice

1. Share a time you were going to administer medicine to a patient. What did you do when you realized the dosage was incorrect?

Mistakes are inevitable and personal failures as an employee are opportunities for growth upon reflection. Employers will want to see how you handle these situations and what you have learned. Use your personal experience to craft a response about your insight from these situations. Remember to keep the emphasis on your quick response to handle the situation rather than the focusing on the mistake itself.

2. Describe a time you had to take immediate action with a patient. How did you determine the type of care required and what was the decision process like?

There are many situations in healthcare that require immediate, on-your-feet thinking. Employers want to understand how you operate in those times and this is a chance to highlight your strengths. Talk about how you reacted and the steps you took in your decision making process.



3. How would you handle a patient that is constantly complaining of pain?

Nurses and healthcare professional today are the first line of communication in regards to patient care and complaints. Employers are looking for qualities that show your ability to both communicate with the patient and the doctors to ensure that proper care is given.

4. Tell me about what your day-to-day schedule looks like. Which of your duties made you feel the most confident? What about the least confident?

This is a chance for employers to view red flags you may have. Give them specific examples of your professionalism in your field and your talents that are most applicable to the job you seek. As you address the areas that you feel least confident, be sure to provide a solution for how you would approach improving or seeking help as needed.

# *teamwork*

## sample questions

1. Who was your favorite physician and why were they your favorite?
2. What did you do when you had disagreements with a physician?
3. What methods of communication did you use when getting in touch with physicians?
4. Describe a difficult situation you've encountered with a coworker. How did you resolve the situation?
5. Have you ever disagreed with your manager? How did you resolve the situation?

# why these questions are important

## for employers

Teamwork is an essential component of most jobs. As an employer you want to ensure that the candidate works well with others and is a good fit for the overall company culture. This is also a time to ask about expectations the candidate may have of their team and those who manage them.

Conflict among co-workers or with doctors does occur and understanding how a candidate handles it is important. Communication styles vary, but professionalism should be a top priority in all cases.

## for candidates

The employer wants to see if you fit in with the current staff, expectations and culture of the company. It's impossible for a potential employer to see exactly how well you work with a team, but they will want to hear how you feel about teamwork in general. Be intentional with your responses, with clear examples of how you handle stress and disagreements.

Also consider that the interview is a two-way street. In other words, this is your chance to evaluate if the employer and role match your own expectations, goals, and core values.



## tips & advice

**1.** Who was your favorite physician and why were they your favorite?

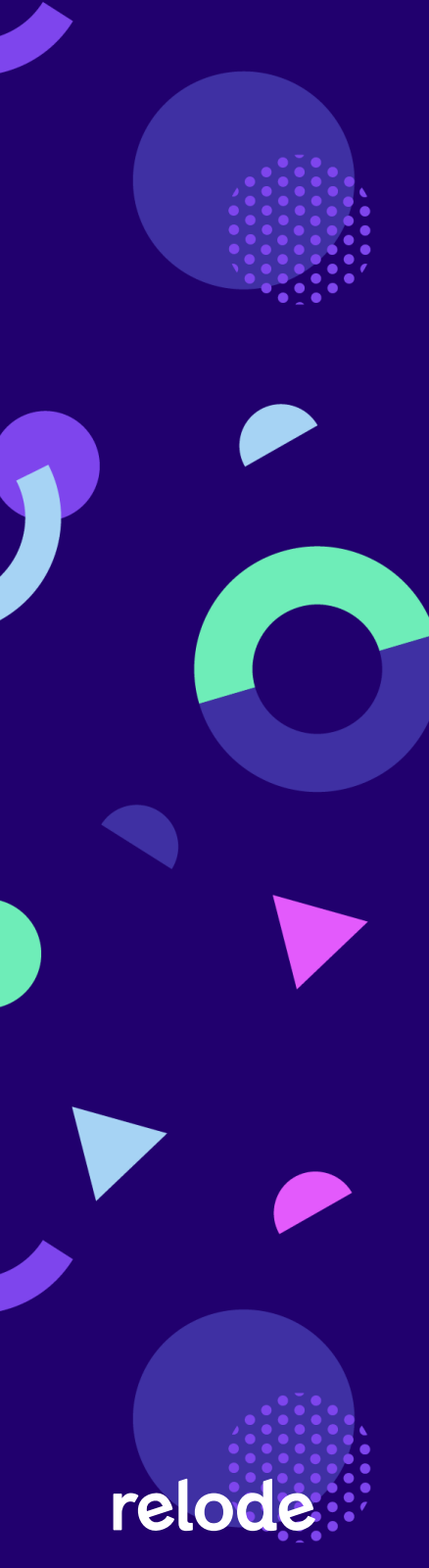
Working well with physicians is an important aspect to any nursing job. Obviously, there will also be a wide range in personalities and characteristics of physicians as well. Answering a question like this will allow you to establish clearly which qualities work best for you.

**2.** What did you do when you had disagreements with a physician?

Demonstrating that you know how to communicate well is crucial for managing misunderstandings and conflict. Employers want to be sure you have a handle on how to do this effectively. Also, there may even be times when you have the responsibility of ensuring that the right decisions are being made. Explain your plan of action for when there is disagreement and use a real-world example if possible.

**3.** What methods of communication did you use when getting in touch with physicians?

Even in the best environment, there are sometimes roadblocks between physician and nurse communication. Improving this is paramount for effective patient care. Thus, many employers are looking for nurses who utilize email, electronic health records and possibly even text messaging as means for overcoming language barriers and other communication pitfalls.

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4. Describe a difficult situation you've encountered with a coworker. How did you resolve the situation?

Similar to the previous question regarding conflict with physicians, employers want to be sure you understand the value and importance of teamwork in your role. Unlike other jobs, nurses cannot just put their heads down and go about their business. Interacting with all members of the team is essential. Thus, a great story to share is one that focuses on your willingness to be flexible (yet firm), cooperate and find common ground for the good of all.

5. Have you ever disagreed with your manager? How did you resolve the situation?

Again, keep the focus on your traits, skills and experience that might have helped you diffuse this situation. Explain the situation in a respectful and positive way that highlights your ability to communicate in a disagreement. Also, don't be afraid to admit if you were wrong! Being able to learn from past mistakes is an important quality for any professional.



# *education & certification*

## sample questions

1. Share with us which certifications you have, and which ones you want to obtain.
2. What are your plans for continuing education?
3. How do you stay updated on the latest trends in your industry?

# why these questions are important

## for employers

Naturally, certain roles will require specific designations and certifications. Those will be listed on the candidate's resume. Instead, use the interview as a chance to discuss potential growth, education or professional certification goals of the candidate. This should provide some insight into his or her long term interest in the position for which they are applying as well as what they seek in the future.

## for candidates

Your resume will have the basic information about your education and certifications. When a potential employer asks about it during an interview it's your chance to explain why you chose your profession and what you learned through your education and past experiences.

This is also the time to share your career goals, particularly if they involve additional certifications, specialization and education. Candidates expressing interest in continued education regarding their industry are much more likely to stand out against those with no specific plans to stay up to date.

## tips & advice

1. Share with us which certifications you have, and which ones you want to obtain.

Potential employers are looking for more information than what you provided on your resume. Give a full description of each certification and why it's relevant to the job. If you have non-job related certifications don't omit them but emphasize how they could be useful anyway, or how the experience of attaining it taught you certain valuable skills that could cross over.

As for explaining about the certifications you want, employers are looking to see goals within the industry. This is also a chance to explain that you feel additional certification is an opportunity to tackle new challenges, letting the interviewer know you are open to expansion.

2. What are your plans for continuing education?

Healthcare evolves rapidly and healthcare employees have to be prepared to stay on top of current trends and major changes. Explain how improving practice skills and knowledge will help you continue quality care and patient outcomes.

3. How do you stay updated on the latest trends in your industry?

Continuing Education is only one way to stay up to date in your industry. With today's technology there are apps, blogs and professional organizations that also provide tools, tips and insights. Be sure to share any that you participate in that keep you successful in your career.



# *general questions*

## sample questions

1. Share a time you made a critical mistake at work? How did you handle the situation and how was it resolved?
2. Tell us about a time when you had to deal with a patient's difficult family. What issues did you have and how did you resolve them?
3. What is your favorite part of your job? Your least favorite?
4. What do you find most difficult about being a nurse?

# why these questions are important

## for employers

General questions give you a chance to peek into a candidate's overall personality. Again, these should be used to assess whether or not someone is the right fit for a particular role or for the company as a whole. Different roles and specialties involve different personality types and this is great way to explore how a candidate handles both the highs and lows of a position.

## for candidates

General questions give you a natural place to highlight your understanding of the skills you have that make you good at your job. Interpersonal skills are especially impressive here: think about the patience, compassion and attention to detail needed to successfully interact with clients, doctors and fellow employees.

Be sure to emphasize your strengths, but never lie about your weaker areas. Instead, keep the focus on ways in which you continue to learn from the challenges you encounter.

## tips & advice

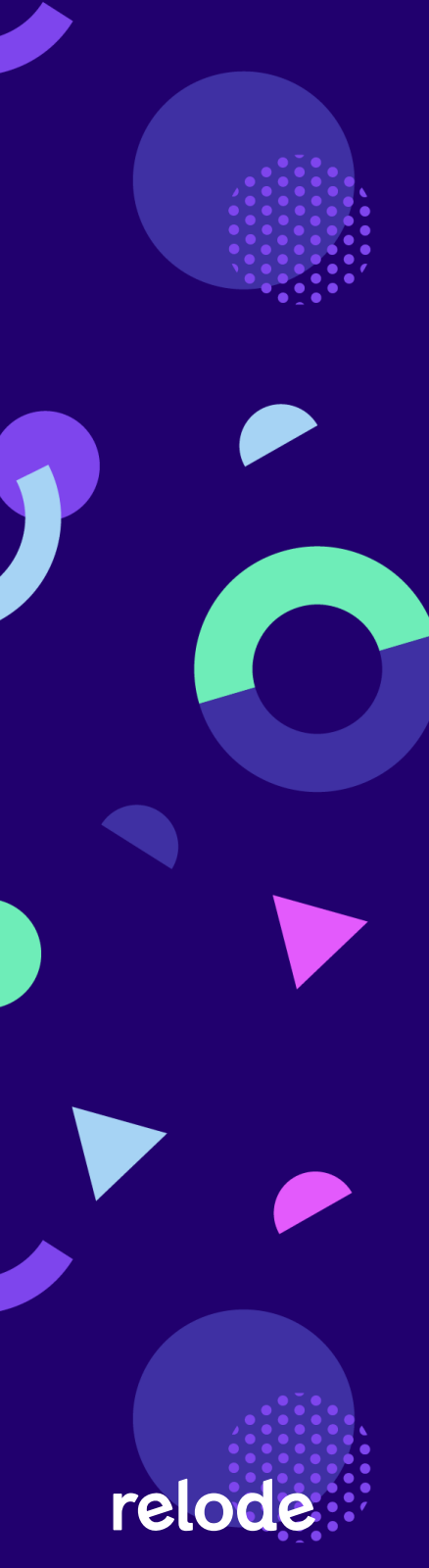
1. Share a time you made a critical mistake at work? How did you handle the situation and how was it resolved?

The key here is to answer honestly. Everyone makes mistake and no employer expects you to be perfect. Rather, focus on lessons learned, taking responsibility for your part in the error and how you handled it professionally.

2. Tell us about a time when you had to deal with a patient's difficult family. What issues did you have and how did you resolve them?

Nurses are often caught in the crossfire with unhappy families. They may challenge your knowledge as well your compassion. An employer is assessing your ability to handle these kind of tough situations. Allow yourself a moment to pause before responding. Your response should reflect your personal and professional values as well your ability to maintain control in these difficult situations.





3. What is your favorite part of your job? Your least favorite?

All jobs have aspects that employees enjoy more than others. Pick your favorite parts that also line up with your strengths and weave that into your answer. For example, maybe you love working with people because you've always been good at communication. Or maybe you can keep a clear head in stressful environments like the ER. Though the interviewer is also looking for a negative response with the "least favorite" part, this is not the time to list every complaint you had about your last job. They are asking to gauge how satisfied you would be in the position you applying for so you will want to incorporate a positive attitude in your response. You can focus on tasks themselves without getting into company culture. For example, you could say your last job lacked growth opportunities.

4. What do you find most difficult about being a nurse?

This is the perfect opportunity to flip the question into something positive. You can start by acknowledging the intent of the question with a response about the a specific challenge that nurses face. Instead of dwelling on that challenge and difficult it is, this is a great time to share what you find most rewarding about being a nurse. Perhaps it's a love of helping people while they face recovery and challenging times themselves. Maybe you enjoy working with children because you love interacting with them.

# *industry specific*

## sample questions

1. Share with us a time when you had a stressful situation working with a child patient.
2. What did you do to relieve that child's stress?
3. What successful outcomes came from that?
4. Share a situation when you had to work with that child's parents. What issues did you have?
5. How did you overcome the parent's concerns over the child's health?
6. Describe a situation with a family where you had issues with poor communication. How did you resolve the situation?

# why these questions are important

## for employers

Industry specific questions give employers the opportunity to see how much experience a candidate has in that specific area. This a good way to see if the candidate stays up to date on changes and trends within that industry, as well what they would bring to that position.

Also, each industry will require its own special set of skills or qualities to perform a job well. For example, nurses working in pediatric facilities will interact differently with patients than those working in skilled nursing facilities.

## for candidates

Healthcare is changing rapidly and employers are always on the lookout for candidates who are proficient and experienced in handling common tasks and challenges that arise in their industry.

This is a chance for you to also demonstrate creativity and innovation. Use industry specific questions as a chance to share how your work has helped you or the organization stand out and stay on top of these changes.

## tips & advice

1. Share with us a time when you had a stressful situation working with a (child, elderly, high risk) patient.

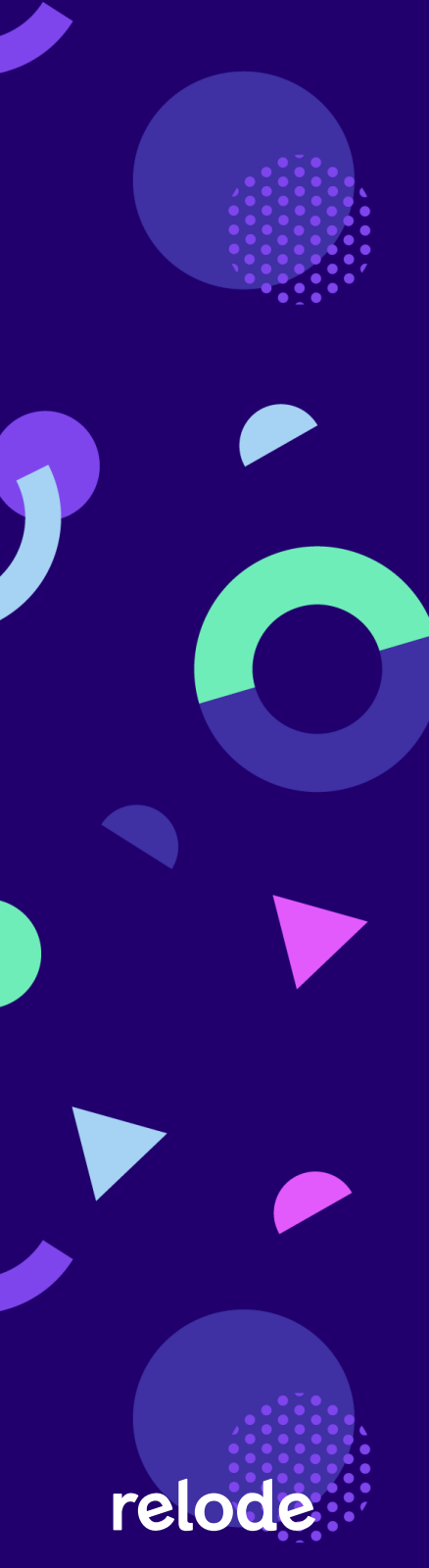
The patient care and satisfaction of specific nursing roles will be unique to that industry. Address how you stand out as a nurse in your understanding of meeting the particular needs and difficulties within your chosen area.

2. What did you do to relieve that patient's stress? What successful outcomes came from that?

Again, the stress of each patient in a specific industry will vary. The stress of a child will be handled far differently than that of a senior citizen. Demonstrate techniques you've utilized that address this and how those skills provided successful patient care and satisfaction.

3. Share a situation when you had to work with that child's parents (or senior's adult children, etc). What issues did you have?

An employer wants to be sure you understand the distinct needs of the patient's family in your industry. Parents dealing with sick or injured children may have intense fear around the overall well-being of their child and require gentler communication. Adult children dealing with aging and unwell parents may also have to consider long-term changes to living conditions and care. Your answer here should reflect your experience in working with the families in the most appropriate way possible.



4. How did you overcome the family's concerns over the patient's health?

An employer wants to see how you reduce the anxiety of the patient's family. Speak to your ability to listen to their concerns and how you helped educate them throughout the process. Highlight your ability to remain calm, composed and positive under these circumstances.

5. Describe a situation with a family where you had issues with poor communication. How did you resolve the situation?

Employers understand that effective communication is paramount to patient success and satisfaction and extends to interaction with families as well. This a chance to show you understand that too and to discuss particular obstacles you have overcome in this area. Focus on your empathy and ability to be sensitive to the family's perspective. Address if the communication issues were solved by finding solutions to language barriers, unmet expectations or disorganization. Be sure to explain your value in helping find solutions to resolve the conflict.



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