

# Teachers' pack

NHS



## A Mile in My Shoes

NURSING

#teamCNO  
#NursingNowEngland  
#NHSLongTermPlan  
#AMileinMyShoes

[www.healthcareers.nhs.uk](http://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk)  
[www.longtermplan.nhs.uk](http://www.longtermplan.nhs.uk)  
[www.empathymuseum.com](http://www.empathymuseum.com)

Nursing now  
England

Empathy  
Museum





# Introduction

Welcome to A Mile in My Shoes: Nursing. This project invites students in England to step into the shoes of nurses, hear their stories, and discover what it's like to be a nurse.

Included in this resource:

- A Mile in My Shoes – a portable, interactive exhibition comprised of shoes, headphones and MP3 players.
- Preparatory activities, follow-up activities, and schemes of work for the classroom.

The activities in this teachers' pack have been designed to deepen and extend students' understanding of the stories they hear in the exhibition. We hope the pack helps teachers support their students' responses to the stories, by examining key ideas around empathy, challenging stereotypes, and exploring career pathways and aspirations. The pack includes short, stand-alone activities (which can be combined), alongside more developed schemes of work, which can be selected depending on the time the class can devote to the project.

All activities offer a wide range of teaching and learning styles, with an emphasis on experiential learning and the teacher as facilitator. Critical thinking, exploring ideas from different perspectives, emotional literacy and career opportunities are all designed to complement the Citizenship and PSHE curriculum for Key Stages 2 and 3.

Each scheme of work is labelled with the following information, for ease of classroom planning and management:

**Timings**

**Learning outcomes**

**Resources required**

**Learning strategies**

Some pupils may require additional support with the activities in the pack. Teaching staff are encouraged to adapt the plans to best suit the needs of individual pupils.





# About Empathy Museum

Empathy Museum is a series of participatory art projects dedicated to helping us look at the world through other people's eyes.

With a focus on storytelling and dialogue, our travelling museum explores how empathy can not only transform our personal relationships, but also help tackle global challenges such as prejudice, conflict and inequality.

For us, empathy is about taking an imaginative leap to see the world from someone else's perspective.

A Mile in My Shoes is one of our projects: a collection of hundreds of shoes and audio stories donated by all sorts of people – from a Syrian refugee to a sex worker to a war veteran to a neurosurgeon. The stories explore our shared humanity through different aspects of life – from loss and grief to hope and love.

Usually housed in a giant shoebox, our collection travels around the world, inviting people to walk a mile in the shoes of a stranger while listening to their story.

For this teaching resource, we worked with NHS England / NHS Improvement to collect ten new stories exploring the realities of modern nursing.

“

The biggest deficit that we have in our society and in the world right now is an empathy deficit. We are in great need of people being able to stand in somebody else's shoes and see the world through their eyes.

— Barack Obama

”





# About Nursing Now

This project is part of a global campaign called Nursing Now, which is delivered in collaboration with the World Health Organisation and the International Council of Nurses.

Nursing Now aims to improve health globally by raising the status and profile of nursing and midwifery.

Since its launch in late 2018, over 80 countries have signed up to the aims of Nursing Now. Activity is building towards 2020, the 'Year of the Nurse', with initiatives like the Nightingale Challenge 2020.

Nursing Now believes that as health professionals closest to the public, nurses should be empowered to use their knowledge, skills and expertise to the full. They should be valued and respected for their pivotal role at the heart of most health teams.

Nursing Now aims to:

- Promote nursing as a positive career choice
- Encourage health promotion and prevention
- Bring global attention to the work of nurses
- Attract more BAME and men into nursing professions

“

Nurses play a vital role in health teams all around the world, and this campaign is doing an important job of raising their status and profile globally.

— Duchess of Cambridge, Patron

”





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# How to facilitate the exhibition

Welcome to A Mile in My Shoes: Nursing.

In the accompanying box you will find ten stories from people who work as nurses. For each story, inside each shoebox, there is an MP3 player, headphones, and a pair of shoes. The shoes belong to the nurse whose story it is.

The exhibition is suitable for a group of ten students at a time.

Each student puts on a different pair of shoes and takes the corresponding MP3 player and headphones.

Turn the MP3 player on and off by holding down the centre power/select button.

The 'AMIMS' track is the only content on the MP3 player, so it should immediately display this track.

Press the play/pause button (above the large centre button) to start/pause the track.

Use the left rewind button to return to the beginning of the track.

If you find yourself on any other screen, press the back button and this will return you to the 'AMIMS' track.

Invite students to go for a walk wearing the shoes while listening to the story. Each story is about ten minutes long.

It's helpful for teaching staff to read the synopses of the stories prior to giving them to students, in order to be aware of the content of each story.

This activity works best outside, where students have space to walk and think, free of distractions. The school hall would also work.

After participating in the exhibition, students can undertake activities in this resource pack while the next group of ten set out on a walk.

When you've finished with the exhibition, please charge the MP3s using the charger provided. Then pack the shoes, headphones and MP3s in the correct shoeboxes and place them back in the shelves. Close up the box ready for collection.





# Synopses of nurses' stories

The following synopses are for teachers to read in advance of their students listening to the audio recordings. With an expert understanding of students' interests and backgrounds, you may choose to select certain stories for particular students.

## Andrea

Andrea is a matron for the Emergency Department at UHCW in Coventry. She talks about the challenging nature of the work, how frustrating it is to be criticised for waiting times – but also the support that she receives from her “emergency department family”. She values the feeling that she can have such an impact on someone's life in a short space of time. She talks about her journey into nursing, via being a St. John's Ambulance Cadet and volunteering in older peoples' homes, and the skills she has developed as a nurse. She also talks about a run-in with Rihanna at a music festival!



## Colette

Colette – or “the Road Runner” as she's known for her speed on the ward – is a nurse consultant for children and young people. As a child growing up in rural Ireland, Colette experienced ill health and spent extended periods in hospital, often with just one visit a week because her parents' farm was so far away. Because of Colette's poor health, her family doubted her ability to become a nurse herself and she moved to London to work in a bank. Her sister, however, was training as a nurse and Colette envied the support the trainee nurses gave to each other. When Colette retrained as a nurse, she didn't have any particular career ambitions. The experiences she'd had in hospital as a child, feeling scared and alone, motivated her to create a happy and welcoming atmosphere in the wards where she worked. Colette developed a close relationship with a teenager with asthma who she worked with over four years. When the girl died, Colette was inspired to become an asthma nurse. She recently won a ‘Nurse Leader’ award for her work with children and young people.



## Jemma

Jemma has been working as a learning disabilities nurse for 15 years. She started volunteering at a playscheme when she was 16, partly because she had experienced a period of ill-health and missed a lot of school: she knew she needed to get out and do something. Initially it was overwhelming and she was worried she wouldn't be able to understand the people with learning disabilities and autism who came to the playscheme. She soon learned to be observant and to see the different ways in which people communicated. Jemma felt like she related to this because during the time she had been ill, she had struggled to communicate with the people providing her care. She says being a learning disabilities nurse is quite hard to describe because it's so multi-faceted, working across physical and mental health, in the community, in children's services and advocating for people with learning disabilities to live independently, as well as ensuring their needs are met. It can be difficult for people with learning disabilities to access services: a coffee shop can be challenging, let alone a complex environment like a hospital. Currently Jemma works at policy level, changing these systems to be more inclusive of people with learning disabilities.

## Lia

Lia is frustrated by the incorrect perceptions people have of nursing – that it's just for women, that it's just holding people's hands – when actually it's a highly skilled job involving influencing and decision-making. Lia grew up in the Philippines and didn't know what she wanted to do as a career. When she was 15, she moved to a village in Lincolnshire, in the UK. She found that very hard. She has worked in neuro-theatre as a scrub nurse (putting drains in to ensure that fluid doesn't accumulate on the brain) and in A&E. In A&E, she deals with people who are feeling vulnerable and angry; she has to remind herself that they're angry because they are ill and/or feel helpless – that it isn't about her. It is often hard to find the balance between showing compassion and having a professional face that gives hope; if you are too upset, patients may think you have given up. She says that when you stop being affected emotionally by what happens, it's time to do another job.





## *Mair*

Mair works as a community midwife. She initially did a degree in politics and worked in marketing for a construction company. She wasn't satisfied – her parents were both teachers so she had grown up with the idea that work was about more than paying the mortgage. She considered retraining as a midwife, picturing the high drama depicted in television series. She met some community midwives while considering this career change, and was surprised that they weren't wearing scrubs. She almost felt disappointed. It wasn't until she had her own daughter that Mair experienced what a community midwife did, and its importance. After retraining, Mair worked for three months in a hospital as a midwife but didn't enjoy it. For her, midwifery is very social, it's about preparing people for their own families and leading the pregnant person's care. It's very hands-on – literally. She says it's joyful but there are also the times where things go wrong and a baby is stillborn – you remember every detail of those cases. Mair works part-time, combining her career as a community midwife with caring for her own children.



## *Ofrah*

Ofrah started in paediatric nursing when she was in her early twenties. She wasn't encouraged to go into nursing when she was at school – it wasn't perceived as a job that could lead to other opportunities. When she was about 14, Ofrah's mother became sick and Ofrah went with her to medical appointments to act as a translator, English into Arabic. She also visited her mother in the hospital and had very positive experiences with the staff. Later on, Ofrah became a nurse and her sister became a doctor, informed by the experiences that they'd had. Ofrah enjoyed the three years she spent as a student nurse, making friends and learning. Her father still wasn't keen but he changed his mind when he saw her Sister uniform and realised she had a position of responsibility. For Ofrah, a sense of inquisitiveness is central to being a nurse – it's important to ask the right questions so that you can understand different patients and their different personal and cultural needs.

## Peter

Peter is a cancer nurse and Associate Director of Nursing in the North East. He says people always assume that working on a cancer ward must be very sad – it is but there's also a lot of joy. Laughter comes at the most unexpected moments. Peter gets to know the patients and when they feel at home in the hospital, it doesn't feel like a hospital. When he left school, Peter applied to join the police force but was turned down so got a job in an elderly nursing home. He remembers helping a woman put her make-up on (which he'd never done before) because it helped the woman feel proud of herself when her husband came to visit. For Peter, making a difference is a tangible thing – it's about making someone happy and talking to them on their level, about whatever they want to talk about. When Peter was first working as a nurse, there were

very few other male nurses. He didn't particularly mind because it meant the others mothered him. But it does irritate him that there are perceptions around gender, sexuality and nursing, which are perpetuated by films like *Meet the Parents*. Peter's son tells people that his dad is a doctor rather than a nurse, although Peter thinks that these days it might be because Thomas knows it'll wind his dad up! For Peter, being a nurse is about being a caring individual and it doesn't matter what background you come from. Peter gets very emotionally affected when patients tell him that his actions have helped. On reflection, he thinks he'd have made a terrible policeman because he's too soft-hearted and probably would have just let everyone off.



## Stephen

Stephen is a senior lecturer on children's nursing. He's worked in various nursing capacities in the UK and Australia. During his career, Stephen has been struck by how sleep deprivation works: at work he is fine and functioning well (even on a demanding 12-hour shift), but as soon as he takes his uniform off, he's falling asleep – including on the walk home. Stephen's parents were both nurses but he didn't intend to follow them into the profession. While working in the intensive care unit in Melbourne, he was put in charge of a new machine and a child who was its first user; that child's family came to refer to him its 'intensive care dad'. Stephen has chosen not to have children himself; he feels that he has seen so much go on with other people's children and – although he knows it's statistically unlikely – he wouldn't want this to happen to his child. In the pediatric ward, death is not quite so present, but it is always there. He tries to leave it behind him when he takes off his uniform but the images remain in his brain.







## Malachi

Malachi is a recently qualified nurse working in trauma at one of the big trauma centres in London. He's a self-confessed adrenalin junkie and gets a kick out the pressure and responsibility that comes with his job. In the trauma centre, they get people with gunshot wounds, stabbings, people who have fallen from heights, and serious road accidents. Malachi himself rides a motorbike and so it's the motorbike and cycling accidents that make him grimace, especially the road-rash, which is what happens when a motorcyclist comes off their bike and skids along the ground. The youngest person Malachi has cared for was a 13-year-old who had been stabbed. The hospital had decided

not to put him in the pediatric ward because they didn't want to expose other children to the people who'd come to visit him. Malachi found this hard – in some ways people like this have experienced so much but in others they are still children who need looking after. Malachi chose becoming a nurse over being a doctor because of the amount of contact time he would get with patients: up to 13 hours a day. No-one in his family works in healthcare and he is grateful for his parents for allowing him the freedom to find a profession that he really wanted to do.

## Ada

Ada is a mental health nurse and sociologist, currently working as a researcher and lecturer. Working with mental health patients can be traumatic but also humbling. Listening is important – Ada remembers a patient who was very distressed and went and lay in the middle of a road; Ada went and sat with her and listened to her and after a few hours the patient felt like she could get up. Some moments are hard, like when a patient she'd worked with for some time – and was her own age – died suddenly. Ada didn't realise that working in mental health was an option until she was training. She was a quiet, shy child and still has moments of being surprised that she is a lecturer who can stand up and talk in front of hundreds of students. Entering academia was not easy for Ada: she felt it was a very different world to the working-class environment she grew up in. Her research is into identity and belonging, often working with people from marginalised and under-represented groups.





# Introductory activities

These initial activities are designed to introduce students to the ideas underpinning A Mile in My Shoes: Nursing.

They are short exercises which can be done in class prior to students participating in the exhibition. The activities are split into those which explore empathy and those which explore nursing. We advise doing a mix of both with your students before they listen to the stories.

The introductory activities can also be used by teachers as a holding activity for the class while an allocated group of ten students walk in the nurses' shoes in another space.





# 1. What is empathy?

## Introduction

These discursive, introductory exercises allow students to give shape to their own feelings, experiences, and ideas. Explain to the class that each student will be taking part in an activity called A Mile in My Shoes: Nursing, where they listen to an audio recording from a real nurse while walking in that person's shoes.

## Activity steps

a) Write the following phrase on the whiteboard and ask students in pairs to consider what they think the phrase means:  
*Before you judge a person, walk a mile in their shoes.*

b) Hear responses from students and write key words and thoughts from their discussions around the phrase. Deepen their responses with the following questions:

## Reflection questions

Why is it important to imagine walking in someone else's shoes?

What does the word 'empathy' mean? What is the opposite of empathy?

Do you think you can learn to be more empathic – to better imagine things from someone else's perspective? How?

Are there times when students don't show empathy towards each other? What would school be like if everyone showed empathy towards each other at all times?

Why is it frustrating when someone can't see something from your viewpoint?

## Extension activity

Ask students to consider a time in their lives when they wished someone could see something from their perspective – when that person could have been more empathic. It might be a friend, family member or someone in the street. How did they feel in that moment?

### Time required

30 minutes

**Learning outcomes** Begin to identify what can positively and negatively affect emotional health • Reflect critically on moments from our lives • Propose ways to manage relationship conflicts successfully • Resolve differences by looking at alternatives • Listen to others' feelings and opinions

### Resources needed

Whiteboard, whiteboard pens.

### Strategies

Pair discussion, full class discussion

## 2. What can you see? What can't you see?

### Introduction

This activity allows students to examine their own preconceptions and the way they formulate opinions about others. It allows them to relate this learning to their own lives and sense of identity.

### Activity steps

a) Ask classmates to draw around each other's hands on a blank piece of paper.

b) Inside the hand, students write down all the things that someone might be able to conclude just by looking at them – for example: age, religion, lifestyle choices...

c) Around the edge of the handprint, students write all the things that someone wouldn't know by looking at them. They might be things that are surprising or things that matter to them that they don't often talk about – for example: memories, thoughts, surprising facts, their beliefs and values. Ensure students know that these will be shared with their classmates so to only share information they are happy for other people to hear.

d) Stick all their handprints on the wall and look each other's work. What have they found out about their fellow classmates which they didn't know before?

### Reflection questions

How often do we judge people by what we see on the outside?

What is the danger of judging someone by what you see alone?

Have you ever been judged by your appearance? How did it feel?

How can we develop empathy towards people we don't know?

### Time required

20 minutes

**Learning outcomes** Reflect how images do not always reflect reality • Begin to understand the nature of discrimination • Recognise and challenge stereotypes • Understand how our actions affect ourselves and others.

### Resources needed

Paper, coloured pens.

### Strategies

Pair work, art and design, self-reflection.

# 3. Empathy detectives

## Introduction

This activity allows students to reflect on their own lives and the different people they come into contact with. Through imaginative role play, they try to imagine themselves into the shoes of a specific person and then reflect on that experience.

## Activity steps

a) Ask students to think through today so far. They are going to imagine stepping into the shoes of two people they came into contact with – people they don't know particularly well. It could be a person in a newspaper, someone they spoke to on the phone or someone on TV. For example: the bus driver, the person who served them in corner shop, a child from the year below, someone on the news.

b) With each person, students will be asked to imagine themselves into the shoes of that person as fully as possible, thinking about what life is like for them. Pointers to help their discoveries could include:

*Where were they?*

*What could they see / hear / smell?*

*What might they have been thinking?*

*How were they feeling and why?*

*What did they want in that particular moment, or for their day as a whole?*

*Were they having a good day or a difficult day? Why?*

c) Ask students to write their responses in the first person (for example: "I can see... I can hear...") and then share who they were exploring and their writing with the class.

## Reflection questions

How easy or difficult did you find the task?

How fully could you step into the shoes of someone else?

How did you decide whose life to step into? What did you remember about them – for example: body language, voice?

What circumstances can make imagining life from someone else's perspective difficult? For example: being late, recently having had an argument, being from a different cultural background..

## Extension activity

With confident students, hot seat the student in-role as their chosen person, answering questions from students and staff. How fully can they step into the shoes of that person? They can say "pass" if there's a question they can't answer. This could also be modelled by a member of teaching staff.

“

Could a greater miracle take place than for us to look through each other's eyes for an instant?

– Henry David Thoreau

”

## Time required

20–30 minutes

## Learning outcomes

Recall and apply knowledge creatively in novel situations • Examine empathy and understand verbal and non-verbal communication • Respond to a wide range of feelings in others • Recognise and challenge stereotypes • Use descriptive writing to explore other people's feelings and identity.

## Resources needed

Paper, pens.

## Strategies

Creative writing, hot seating, role play.



## 4. What is a nurse?

### Introduction

These introductory activities will enable students to explore their own understanding and preconceptions about nurses and nursing as a career. All reflections are to be encouraged, as teachers can build on students' initial thoughts after they have listened to the audio stories.

### Activity steps

- a) Remind the class that the stories they hear in the exhibition are real stories told by nurses from the UK. Each student will be stepping into someone's shoes and hearing about a nurse's life and work from very different perspectives.
- b) Begin by asking the class who and what they imagine when they think of a nurse.
- c) In small groups, give them a big piece of blank paper and coloured pens. In the middle, they should draw what they think a nurse looks like. Take ideas from the whole group. Particularly focus on:  
*What they are wearing.*  
*What gender they are.*  
*What objects/instruments they carry and use.*
- d) Then, around the edge of the picture, ask the group to thought shower all their ideas about what a nurse is like, considering:  
*Personality.*  
*Education.*  
*Day-to-day jobs.*  
*Skills.*  
*How they are depicted in movies, books and historically.*
- e) Have a look at each group's work and allow students to observe the similarities and differences between what the groups have imagined.
- f) Stick their work on the wall and explain that you will revisit their ideas once they have completed their audio adventures.

#### Time required

20–30 minutes

#### Learning outcomes

Learn about different work roles and career pathways, including clarifying their own early aspirations • Examine preconceptions and images portrayed in the media.

#### Resources needed

Big sugar paper, coloured pens.

#### Strategies

Group discussion, presentation, group decision-making, art and design.

## 5. Nursing: empathy in action

### Activity steps

- a) Based on the work the class have already explored around the idea of empathy, ask them to consider whether empathy is an important skill for nurses to have. Why?
- b) In pairs, ask them to imagine a scenario where a nurse might need to show empathy towards someone in their working day – for example: a colleague, a patient, a member of the public.
- c) Ask the groups to create a frozen picture (or tableau) showing this moment. They should think about their use of body language, facial expressions and space to show the status and emotions of the people involved.
- d) Once this has been practiced, encourage the students to give the image a title. For more confident pairs, students could bring the scene to life for a few moments by each adding two lines of dialogue. If possible, take photos of the freeze frames to revisit after the exhibition.
- e) Explain that once they have all heard a story in the exhibition, they will reflect on whether any of these scenarios were depicted in the real life stories they heard.

### Time required

25 minutes

**Learning outcomes** Imagine different types of employment and careers • Identify skills needed for certain jobs and how they are used • Explore communication, planning and team working.

### Resources needed

None.

### Strategies

Freeze frame, improvisation, presentation skills.

## ***Follow up activities***

These activities are for students to undertake after listening to the nurses' stories. They can be started while their fellow students are walking in the shoes, and then completed as a whole group in later classes.







# 1. Inside the mind of a nurse

## Introduction

The pair work involved in this exercise will encourage interview skills and active listening among partners, building on their exploration of empathy from earlier exercises. However, this activity can also be done individually if that works better for classroom management.

## Activity steps

a) Once the first group of ten have finished walking in the nurses' shoes, split them into pairs.

b) With the help of their partner, each person is going to put themselves back inside the mind of their nurse in order to create a mind map. Ensure students know this isn't an exercise in memory – it is to see what thoughts were sparked when they listened to their nurse's stories.

c) Ask the partners to label themselves A and B.

A is The Listener

B is The Speaker.

Explain to The Listener (A) that they will need to practice active listening skills for this activity.

Encourage the students to consider what makes an active listener and also reinforce the following:

**Pay close attention. Look at who is talking. Listen without interrupting. Visualise what is being said. Ask questions.**

d) A will ask B questions from the sheet (Additional Resource 1), along with their own questions. While A listens, they write or draw responses in the head outline (Additional Resource 2) for their partner. Don't worry about using full sentences as this can be tricky when listening to someone – they can write key words or draw pictures based on what they hear. Ensure that The Speaker (B) knows they can answer "I don't know" to any of the questions, if needed.

e) Present the mind map back to their partner, discussing what they've done, and then swap roles.

### Time required

30 minutes

### Learning outcomes

Further develop the communication skills of active listening • Negotiate, ask questions and listen to others • Understand how to formulate questions and recall knowledge • Think about the lives of others • Understand different skills and occupations.

### Resources needed

Set of questions (Additional Resource 1), blank mind maps (Additional Resource 2), pens

### Strategies

Pair work, interviewing, active listening.

## 2. Presenting your nurse

### Introduction

This activity will allow students to present their insights from the different stories they heard with their classmates. Once every person has listened to a nurse, there should be between two or three people who heard the same story. It might be helpful to have the synopses to hand, in order to jog students' memories about the names and jobs of their nurse, especially if there's been some time since walking in their shoes.

### Activity steps

a) Ask students to arrange themselves in their 'nurse' groups. When assembled, they can share their mind maps with the other students in their group. What different things did they recall? What similarities? Remember, it isn't an exercise in memory – everyone will have responded differently to the stories they heard.

b) Explain that in their groups, they will create three frozen pictures (or tableaux) based on their observations. They should imagine these are photographs from the nurse's life which are kept in their locker at work. For this exercise, it is okay to use their imaginations for one or two of the freeze frames, if that is helpful.

c) Once they have practiced their freeze frames, give each image a title and write this title on a piece of paper clearly, preceded by:

#### *THE MOMENT WHEN...*

d) Ask each group to present their favourite photograph to the whole class (or all three if time), holding up their sign before showing the image.

e) Once each group has shared their photographs, take a couple of further thoughts about what they learnt about their nurse from their fellow students and teaching staff.

#### *Three photographs:*

*A key story from their life*

*A difficult or challenging moment*

*Something they love*

#### **Time required**

40 minutes

#### **Learning outcomes**

Further develop and rehearse the skills of team work including objective setting, outcome planning, cooperation, negotiation and compromise • Develop presentation skills • Understand more about different careers and the skills involved.

#### **Resources needed**

Completed mind maps, paper, coloured pens.

#### **Strategies**

Group discussion, presentation, freeze frame, interviews.



# 3. Perceptions of nursing

## Introduction

This activity will allow students to more deeply explore nursing as a career and to understand the scope and opportunities offered within the job.

## Activity steps

a) Begin by revisiting the drawings and ideas you collected around the preparatory activity 'What is a nurse?', from before students heard the stories. As a class, discuss whether your opinions of nurses have changed since doing the exhibition. If so – how?

b) Organise the class into groups of 5–6 and explain that they are 'nursing thinktanks', finding out about a certain area of the nursing career to share back with the class. Each group should be given a different provocation about nursing to explore and a big piece of paper to write on.

## Provocations

- All the different types of nurses there are (for example: working with children, adults...)
- All the different places a nurse can work (for example: festivals, care homes, conflict zones...)
- Being there for people at the start and end of their lives (for example: midwives, hospice nurses...)

c) Encourage students to begin collecting thoughts based on their own understanding, from having walked in the nurses' shoes and their own ideas.

d) Encourage them to use the internet and library for additional research. Students could include printed photos, diagrams and video links in their research.

e) Invite students to present their findings back to their class and discuss what they've discovered.

## Extension activity

### *IF I WERE A NURSE...*

Following the presentations, ask students to imagine themselves as nurses – what useful skills do they already have and what would they need to develop? What would they find interesting and what might they find challenging?

On the grid provided in Additional Resource 3, ask students to write a response to 'If I were a nurse...' considering the following:

*WHAT SKILLS DO I HAVE?*

*WHAT WOULD I NEED TO WORK ON?*

*WHAT WOULD I FIND INTERESTING?*

*WHAT WOULD I FIND CHALLENGING?*

### **Time required**

50–60 minutes (could run over two classes)

### **Learning outcomes**

Identify own strengths, interests, skills and qualities including value for future employability • Clarify own early aspirations • Explore different work roles and career pathways.

### **Resources needed**

Paper, access to computers for research (if appropriate), pens, big paper, 'If I were a nurse' skills grid (Additional Resource 3)

### **Strategies**

Group work, different types of research.

# 4. Year of the Nurse

## Introduction

2020 has been designated 'Year of the Nurse and Midwife' around the world, in honour of the 200th anniversary of the birth of Florence Nightingale – one of the world's most famous nurses. With the following activity, students are able to build empathy and compassion by putting their research and inquiry into a cause that needs advocating.

## Activity steps

a) Explain to the class that to celebrate the Year of the Nurse, NHS England would like them to design a poster letting the wider public know about the event.

c) Display the results in the classroom and send them to NHS England at:  
england.nursingnow@nhs.net

b) In small groups (or individually) they are to design a poster which will encourage the general public to celebrate this event, by helping them think about:

*What life is like as a nurse.*

*Why they are so important for society.*

*Why more people should go into nursing.*

*Why we should celebrate their work.*

Each poster should include:

*A central dynamic image.*

*A punchy strapline.*

### Time required

40 minutes

### Learning outcomes

Recall and apply knowledge creatively and in novel situations • Develop the ability to communicate ideas, arguments and thoughts effectively to a wider audience • Team work • Recognise the role of different people and careers in wider society • Become active citizens.

### Resources needed

Art materials, paper, computers for research.

### Strategies

Art and design, group work.

# 5. Approaching the line

## Introduction

This activity is designed to build understanding and empathy through movement, questions and self-reflection. It is important to set the exercise up safely at the beginning so students feel comfortable and happy to express their thoughts and feelings.

## Activity steps

- a) Place a line of masking tape down the middle of the classroom or school hall.
- b) Divide the students into half, about three steps from each side of the line.
- c) As facilitator, read a selection of statements ranging from less to more personal. If a student agrees with the statement, they take a silent step towards the line. No-one speaks but they observe their classmate's movements and responses. They then step back for the next question.
- d) Continue reading 10–15 statements.

## Example statements

*I love football.*  
*I play a musical instrument.*  
*I've had to stay overnight in a hospital.*  
*I've lived in another country*  
*I sometimes feel sad.*  
*I worry about the future.*  
*I speak more than one language.*  
*I know what job I want when I'm older.*

## Extension activity

Students could also co-create their own prompts, encouraging them to consider things they would love to know about their fellow classmates.

### Time required

20 minutes

### Learning outcomes

Begin to understand and identify the causes of discrimination • Develop empathy and compassion for others • Recognise and respect the views of others.

### Resources needed

Masking tape, prompt statements.

### Strategies

Whole class activity, sharing ideas and opinions.



# 6. Standing in your shoes

## Introduction

This is an analysis and movement exercise. It would be good to encourage students to partner with someone they don't know exceptionally well. The exercise would work best in a school hall with instrumental music underscoring the activity for focus.

## Activity steps

a) In pairs, ask one student to find a comfortable, normal standing stance. Their partner is going to undertake a comprehensive analysis of them, trying to understand what it is like to stand in their shoes. Encourage the students who are observing to really move around their partners and start their analysis from their feet up. No detail is too small for this exercise. How observant can they be?

Offer prompts – for example:

- Where do they place the weight in their body?
- Where are their hands, chin, eyes positioned?
- What can they see from where they are standing?
- Are there clothes affecting how they stand?
- What do you think is going through their head?

b) Once completed, the analysing partner takes the exact position of their partner's standing stance in the space. Giving a "3,2,1 FREEZE" might help with focus. Afterwards, ask partners share what the experience was like for both parties – being observed and then seeing yourself reflected in the body of someone else.

c) Swap over and run the exercise again. Follow up with a discussion as a whole group. What was it like to imagine yourself into the shoes of someone else?

### Time required

15–20 minutes

### Learning outcomes

Develop empathy and compassion for others •  
Examine body language and how it affects behaviour •  
Understand alternative viewpoints and perspectives •  
Develop critical self reflection skills.

### Resources needed

Music, space (school hall or large classroom)

### Strategies

Movement, analysis of non-verbal body language and communication.

# 7. Our stories

## Introduction

This activity strengthens the idea that sharing stories can be a powerful way to create empathy – often the people we see everyday can be the easiest for us to overlook. Through this exercise, students can discover more about each other.

## Activity steps

a) Students continue working with their partner from the analysing exercise on the previous page.

b) Each partner thinks about a memorable journey they have been on. Where have their feet taken them? It doesn't have to be a massively adventurous story (although it can be). Sometimes a simple trip to the corner shop can create a real moment of discovery. Perhaps it is a moment when something very unexpected happened to them – a surprise meeting or an exciting experience you weren't expecting.

c) Each pair begins by drawing around their partner's footprint on a piece of paper.

d) Inside their own footprint, draw a moment from their memorable journey, imagining it as fully as possible – as though it is a still from a film. This activity isn't about artistic quality, it is about detail and remembering specific elements of the story. Their final picture could look more like a map than a beautiful picture.

e) Ask pairs to share their pictures with their partners. They will use the picture to tell the story behind the image and the partner listening will use active listening and questioning skills to understand the story as fully as possible.

Prompts to questions for partners could include:

- What could you see from where you were?
- What were you thinking?
- How were you feeling?
- What did you want or hope for?
- Who else was there? How did you feel about them?

f) Ask partners swap their sheets, so they now have each other's story and picture.

g) Set up the classroom with half the room in a circle holding their partner's picture and the other half as visitors to the exhibition.

h) People walk around and look at the pictures and hear stories. Remind students that this is an exercise in empathy – can they share their partner's story with as much compassion as they would their own? Can they listen to each other's stories with focus and understanding?

i) Ask pairs to swap over, then discuss with the class what it was like to share someone else's story.

### Time required

40 minutes

### Learning outcomes

Recall and apply knowledge creatively in novel situations • Active listening, empathy and communication • Collaborate with others • Explore different perspectives and identities.

### Resources needed

Paper, coloured pens. A larger space like school hall might help.

### Strategies

Storytelling, art and design, pair work, interview and discussion.

# 8. Improving empathy in the classroom

## Introduction

After discovering more about each other through the different activities in this pack, the following activity will allow students to consider why empathy is important among their classmates and within the school as a whole. It will also give them an active role in deciding how they can further develop empathy and compassion in their classroom environment.

## Activity steps

a) Explain that together the class is going to write an 'Empathy Action Plan'. This is a practical set of tasks and activities which the class will do every day to improve how empathic they are towards each other.

b) Either individually or in small groups, ask the class to consider how they could improve their empathy skills towards each other. What daily activities could they do which might make them more understanding towards their classmates' feelings and perspectives?

Ideas for the action plan could include:

- A morning activity to encourage empathy towards others – for example: a feelings check-in at the start of each day.
- An activity that students do and then report back on – for example: supporting someone who needs help in some way.
- Something students bring in from the wider world which they can talk about – for example: a story that struck them, a TV show, a book where they empathised with the character.

c) Explain that they will be having an 'Empathy Week' in the classroom where their 'Empathy Action Plan' will be put into practice. Stick it up somewhere prominent in the classroom for that week and keep checking in on the class' progress. Are some days better than others? Why is that? What positive changes have they seen thanks to their action plan?

### Time required

20–30 minutes

### Learning outcomes

Understand how the class is a community • Support and understand how others are feeling • Make decisions about how to affect change in the community.

### Resources needed

Big paper, pens.

### Strategies

Whole class work and decision-making.

# *Credits*

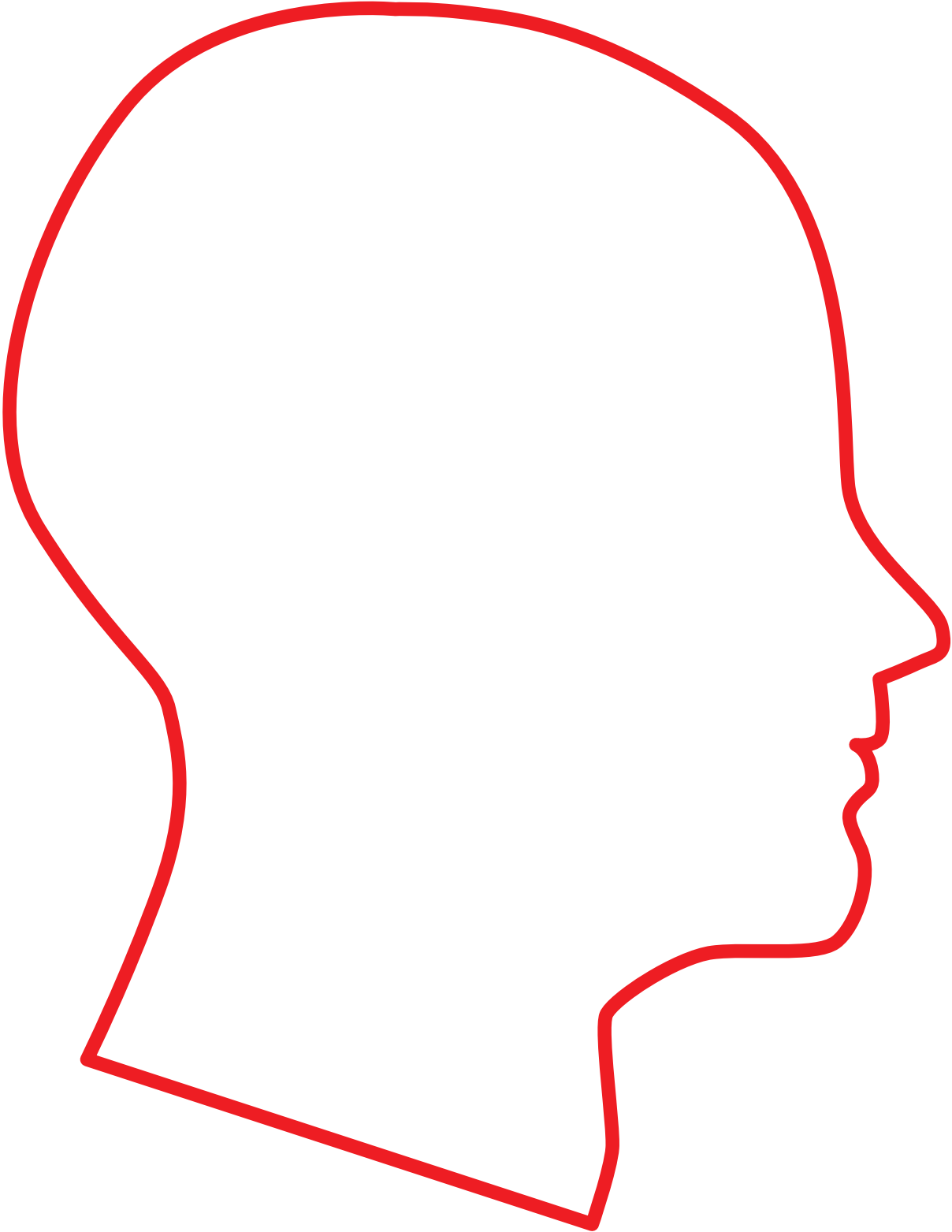
Content by Emma Higham  
Audio story production  
by Andrea Rangepcroft, Cicely Fell,  
Eloise Stevens, Melissa Viney,  
and Rose de Larrabeiti



# ***Additional Resource 1: Inside the mind of a nurse***

- Can you describe your nurse in three words?
- Can you remember a story from their day?
- Can you describe what their job is?
- What do they love about their job?
- What were the challenges of their job?
- What skills do you think they have?
- How did you feel listening to them speak? Why?
- How would you describe their personality?
- What did you relate to in what they said? Was there anything from your own life it made you think of?
- What are they proud of?
- What sacrifices have they made?
- What question would you like to ask them?

***Additional Resource 2:  
Inside the mind of a nurse***



**Additional Resource 3:**  
***If I were a nurse...***

<p>What skills do I already have?</p>	<p>What skills would I have to work on?</p>
<p>What would I find interesting?</p>	<p>What would I find challenging?</p>







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