

How Nurses Can Empower Themselves To Gain Support In Their Communities

Grassroots efforts to change nursing involve joining forces and working for a shared purpose. The new website [Fighting Dinosaurs](#) allows guest blogposts from working nurses who want to express their ideas for change, to move the profession forward by informing the public of what they can do to assist nurses to deliver better healthcare to consumers. Here are some empowering steps for nurses to take:

1. Assess your support systems. Who CAN you talk to? Who shares your concerns? Who is a good listener but has ideas to change instead of just griping? Make a list of people to talk to, those who will support you in your efforts. These can be nurses or people outside of nursing.
2. Form active peer support groups that include people outside of the circle of nurses. An active group is different than just a support group. Instead of sitting around and rehashing all the problems, an active group provides ideas and support for actions. Including a few influential members of the public who will advocate for your cause can do a great deal to amplify nurses' voices. Include members of the media, visible community groups, local elected officials, business leaders outside of healthcare, and philanthropists, who can all be valuable members of an active support group.
3. Encourage non-nursing members of these groups to write letters and editorials in the local paper, offer a free public information session where you can discuss concerns with community members, and invite the press. All of these actions will make you more visible and raise public awareness of how what happens to nurses affects the quality of care offered to the public.
4. If you have the means and inclination to get out of a toxic environment, do whatever you can to pursue your dream as soon as possible. Follow your passion, find what it is you love most about the work you do and figure out a way to make that your focus. Ignore the voices of doubt, those who are entrenched in the system and fearful of change. Once you're out, don't forget those you left behind. Be an example to them, shine the light on the way forward. They are fearful, but they also need hope.
5. Remember that the people in power or those who have been in the profession a long time might see things differently than you do. Try to understand why they might not be so willing to accept changes or communicate the way you would like them to. Social media has been around less than a few decades, and institutional change is extremely slow. Talk to the people who seem to be more open to innovation and new technology and ideas.
6. Network and connect with as many people as possible, read other people's posts, articles, and tweets in disciplines tangential to or vastly different from your own. The more you expose yourself to other viewpoints and perspectives, the more you will find creative solutions to problems you have. Instead of re-inventing the wheel, you might find that someone in a completely different line of work effectively solved a problem in a way you could apply to your situation.
7. Stay in touch with past colleagues and co-workers, know what projects they are working on, find out their interests, you never know when you might be able to collaborate on something big.
8. Don't forget to celebrate each day, regardless of your wins or losses. Life is big, and don't get so caught up in trying to solve problems that you forget to enjoy what you have. Some causes are too big for one person to take on. Be realistic in your expectations, and don't take on a burden that is unreasonable.