RN TRANSITION TO PRACTICE · FREE RESOURCE

New Grad Interview Prep Workbook

Walk into your first nursing interview prepared to speak clearly about your judgment, growth, and readiness to learn.

Use this before you apply. Set aside 30 minutes to name your strengths, collect examples from clinical, and prepare thoughtful questions. You do not need to sound like an experienced nurse. You need to show that you are safe, coachable, curious, and ready to contribute.

Your story in three parts

1. Why nursing?

Choose one honest reason that connects your values to patient care.

2. Why this unit?

Name what you hope to learn and how the setting fits your next step.

3. What do you bring?

Think beyond technical skills: reliability, communication, follow-through, empathy, or calm under pressure.

4. What are you growing?

Pick a real learning edge, then describe how you ask for feedback and practice.

PREPARE YOUR EXAMPLES

Build four STAR stories

Use the Situation, Task, Action, Result structure. Keep the focus on what you noticed, what you did within your role, who you involved, and what you learned.

A time you handled a challenge

Situation and task

Actions you took or escalated

Result and what you learned

A time you worked with a team

Situation and task

Actions you took or escalated

Result and what you learned

A time you received feedback

Situation and task

Actions you took or escalated

Result and what you learned

A time you protected safety

Situation and task

Actions you took or escalated

Result and what you learned

LEAVE WITH CLARITY

Questions worth asking

- What does strong support for a new graduate look like on this unit?
- How are preceptors matched, and how is feedback shared during orientation?
- What helps new nurses build confidence here in the first six months?
- How does the team approach asking for help when a patient’s condition changes?

Interview-day check

Before

- Review the role and unit
- Bring questions and a copy of your resume
- Practice your opening story out loud

During

- Pause before you answer
- Use specific examples
- Be honest about what you would escalate

One final reminder: A good interview is mutual. You are also looking for a team where you can ask questions early, receive useful feedback, and build safe habits.

Educational resource only. Follow the hiring process and policies of each employer.