

# IMPROVING NURSING'S PUBLIC IMAGE: ONE NURSE AT A TIME!



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**CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY, CHICO**

Thank you **ATI** for inviting  
me to Savannah and thank  
you all for coming!





# Professional Identity and Image



# IMAGE

Can be defined as a reproduction or imitation of something, or as a mental picture or impression of something

**Source:** (Merriam Webster Online, 2018).

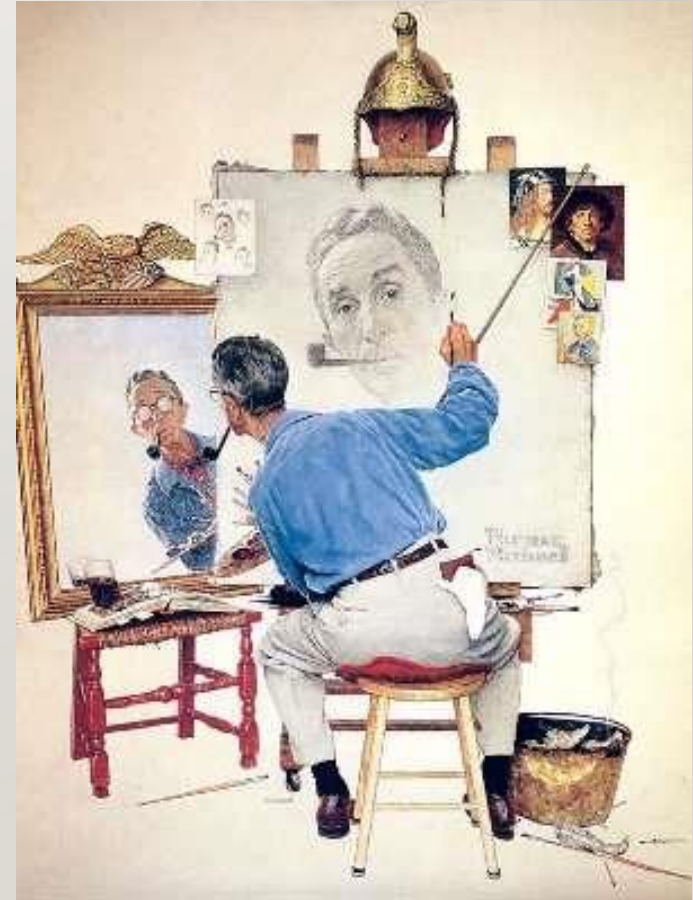
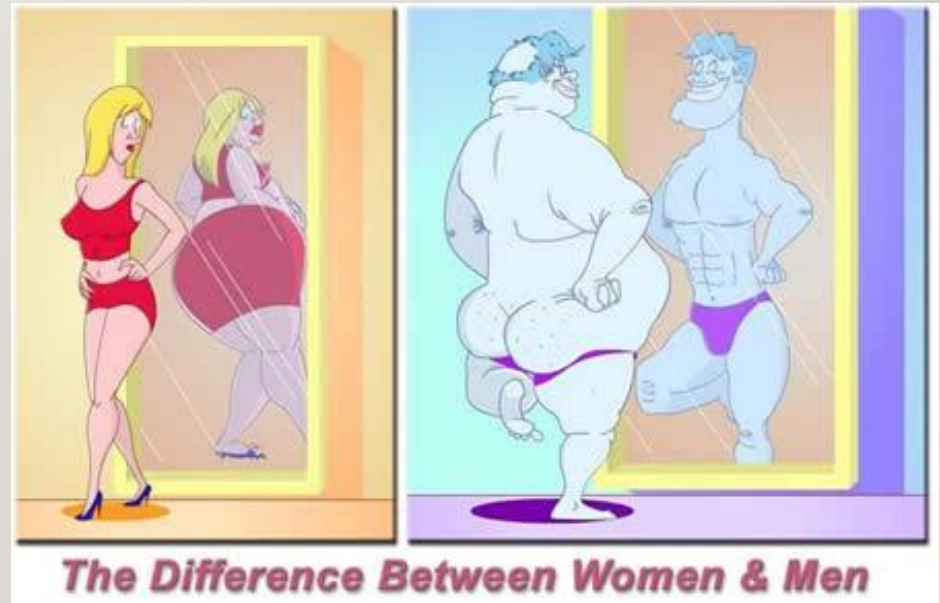
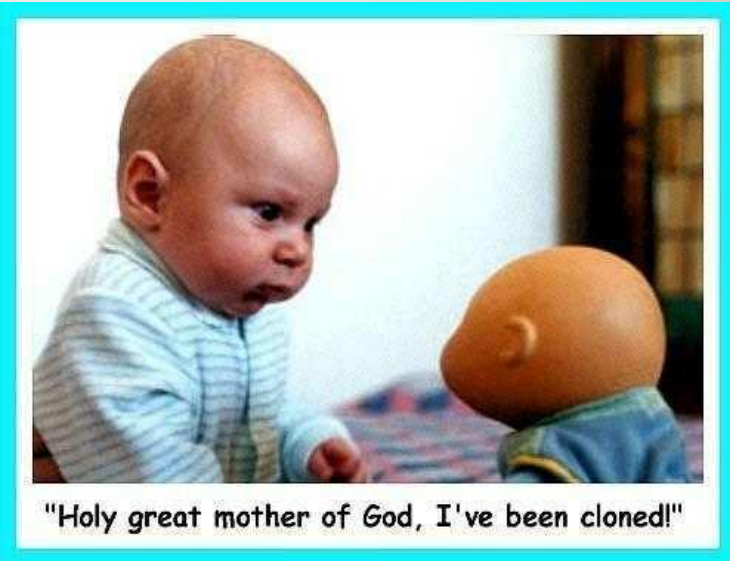


Image often  
has little to  
do with  
reality...



The public image of the nursing profession unfortunately, is often one dimensional and inaccurate.



# Terms Often Used to Describe Nurses

- Nice
- Hardworking
- Caring
- Thoughtful





Not enough people, however, would use the terms “highly educated,” “bright,” “powerful” or “independent thinker” to describe a nurse.



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Eileen Patterson



# Gallup polls on honesty and ethics consistently place nurses at the top of the list.

**Source:** “Survey says: Nursing is the most ethical profession. (2018). Strategies for Nurse Managers. com. Retrieved June 5, 2018, <http://www.strategiesfornursemanagers.com/content/73908/5627.cfm#>



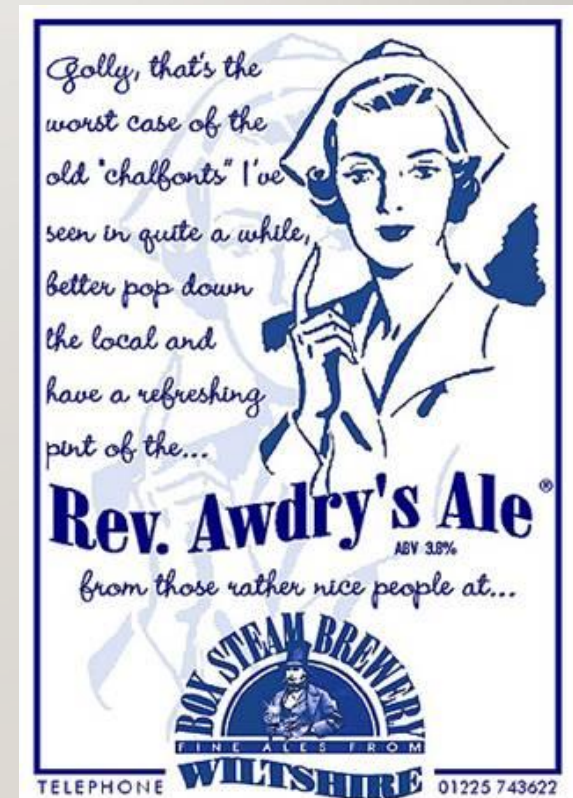
# Firefighters ranked first, however, in 2001.

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It is a strange dichotomy that faces the nursing profession:

The public respects nurses and admires them, but likely does not consider the profession highly prestigious or understand what nursing is all about.





How would  
most people  
describe a  
nurse?



# And what would they say nurses do?

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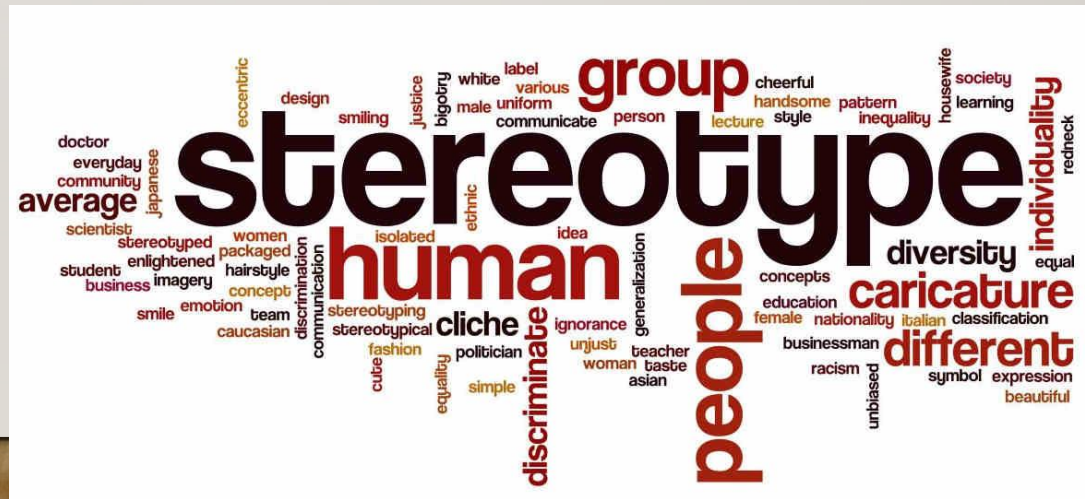




Other images  
are also likely.

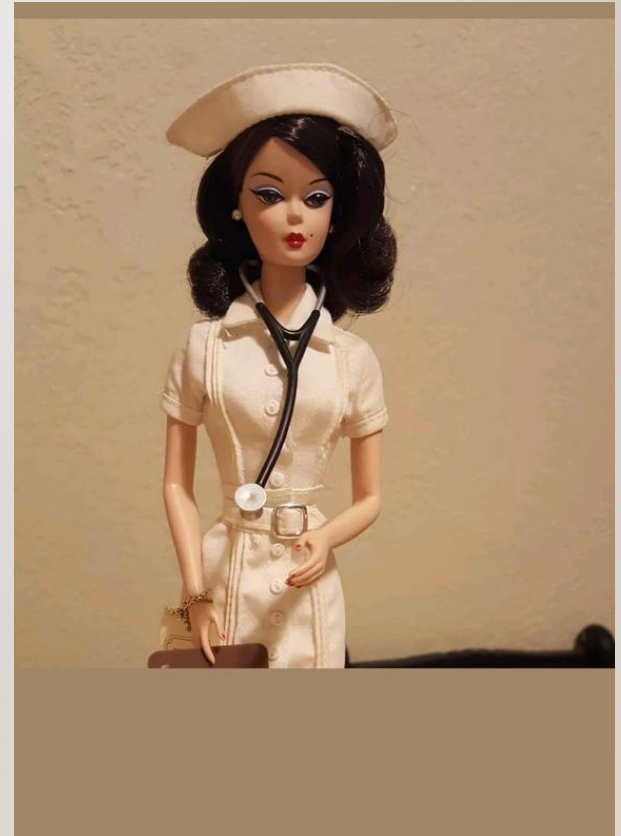


A stereotype is a generalized belief applied to a group of people with a common characteristic and it often involves simplification or distortion.



# COMMON NURSING STEREOTYPES

- Angel of Mercy
- Nurse as a Love Interest  
(particularly to physicians)
- Naughty Nurse or Sex Bombshell
- Nurse as Handmaiden
- Nurse as Battleaxe
- Male Nurse as Homosexual,  
Effeminate, or Sexually Predatory



# **STEREOTYPE:** **THE NURSE AS ANGEL OF MERCY**



Primary roots  
found in the  
1930s.





Depicts nursing almost as a holy vocation.....

THE MOST COMMONLY CITED  
“ANGEL OF MERCY”-  
FLORENCE NIGHTINGALE



*Florence Nightingale*

(From the "Portrait Gallery of Eminent Men and Women.")



Suggests that nurses are compliant, willing, caring, and dedicated.....







And that pay does  
not matter.....

## The Nightingale Pledge

*I Solemnly pledge myself before God and in the presence of this assembly to pass my life in purity and to practice my profession faithfully.*

*I will abstain from whatever is deleterious and mischievous and will not take or knowingly administer any harmful drug.*

*I will do all in my power to maintain and elevate the standard of my profession, and will hold in confidence all personal matters committed to my keeping and all family affairs coming to my knowledge in the practice of my calling. With loyalty*

*I will devote myself to the welfare of those committed to my care.*



*Florence Nightingale*

**Source:** Florence Nightingale. (n.d.). *The “Nightingale Pledge.”*  
from <http://www.countryjoe.com/nightingale/pledge.htm>

This stereotype is  
sometimes  
unconsciously  
promoted by nurses  
even today—in the  
Nightingale Pledge,  
for instance.

The Center for Nursing Advocacy suggests that the image of the "angel" or "saint" fails to convey the college-level knowledge base, critical thinking skills, and hard work required to be a nurse.





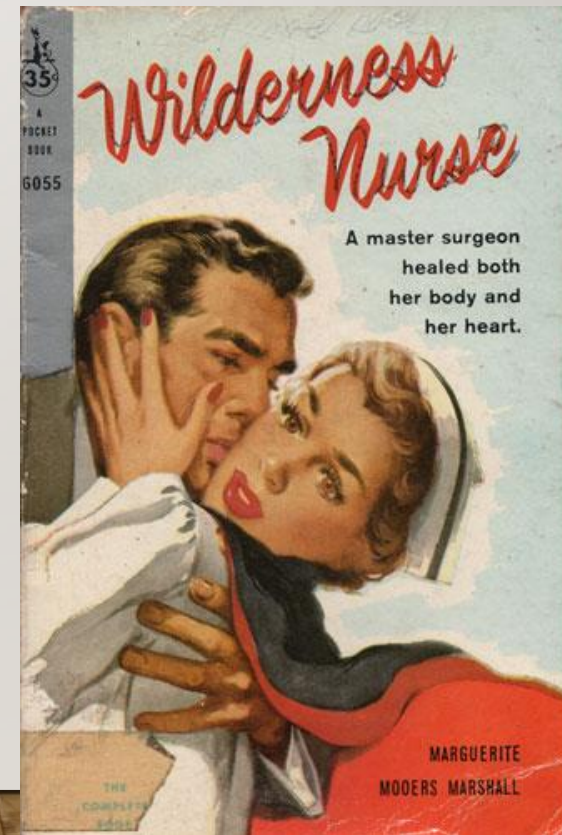
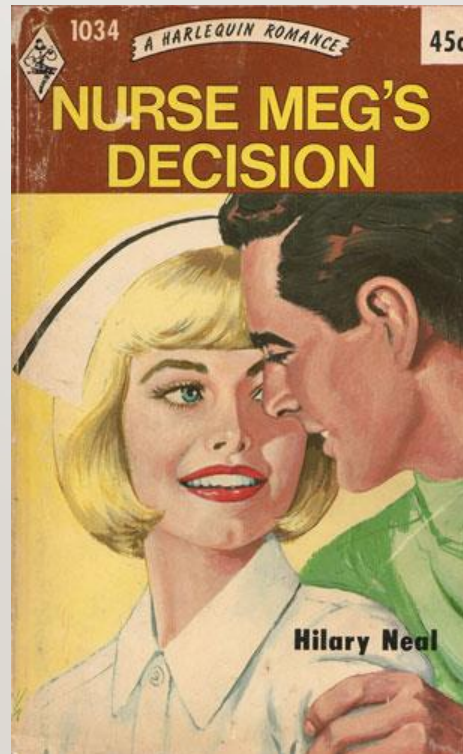
And it may suggest that nurses do not require reasonable working conditions or adequate staffing, and that they do not want to play a significant role in health care decision-making or policy.



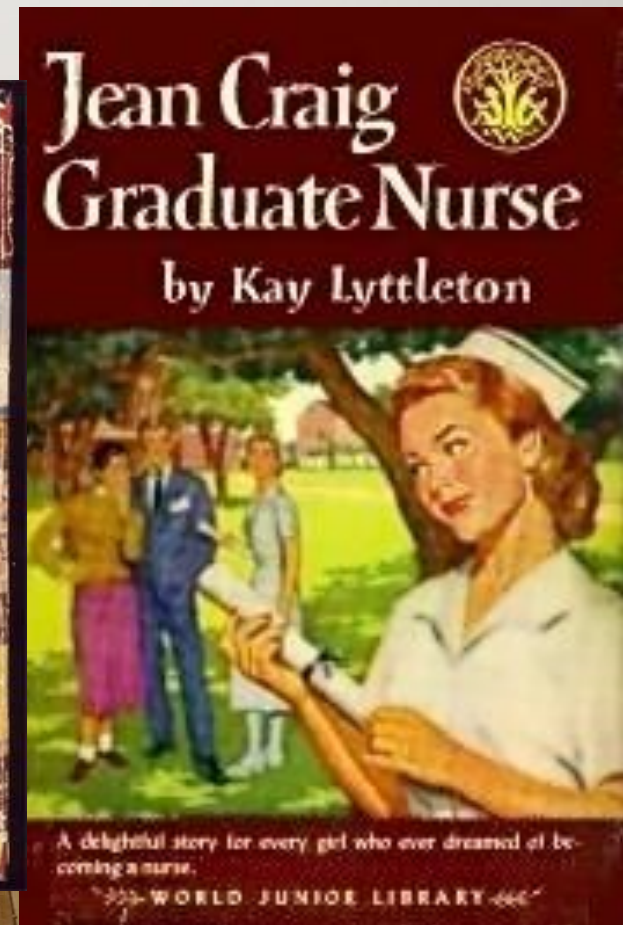
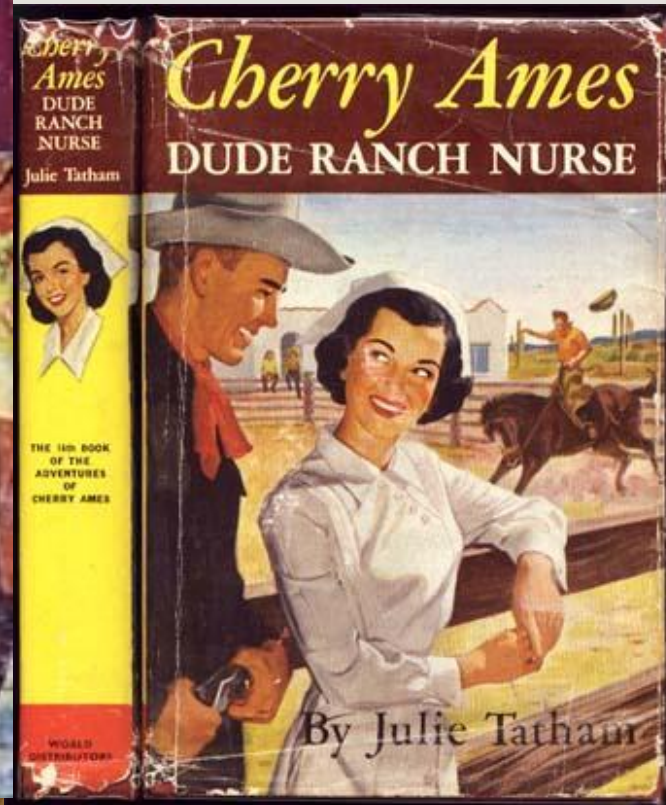


# STEREOTYPE- THE NURSE AS A LOVE INTEREST (PARTICULARLY TO PHYSICIANS)

Doctor and nurse romance novels first appeared in the 1930s and '40s.

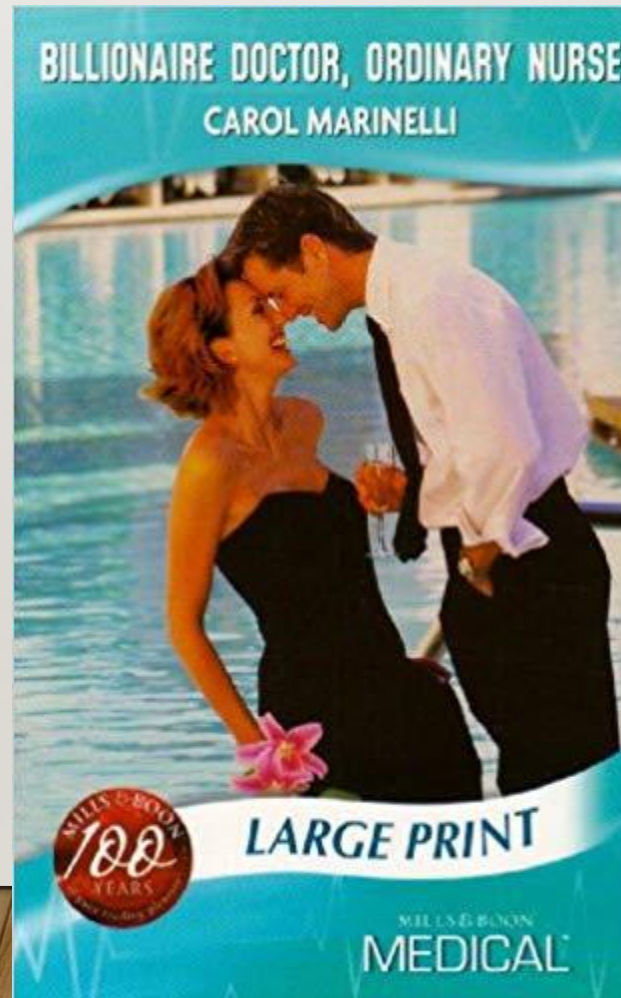
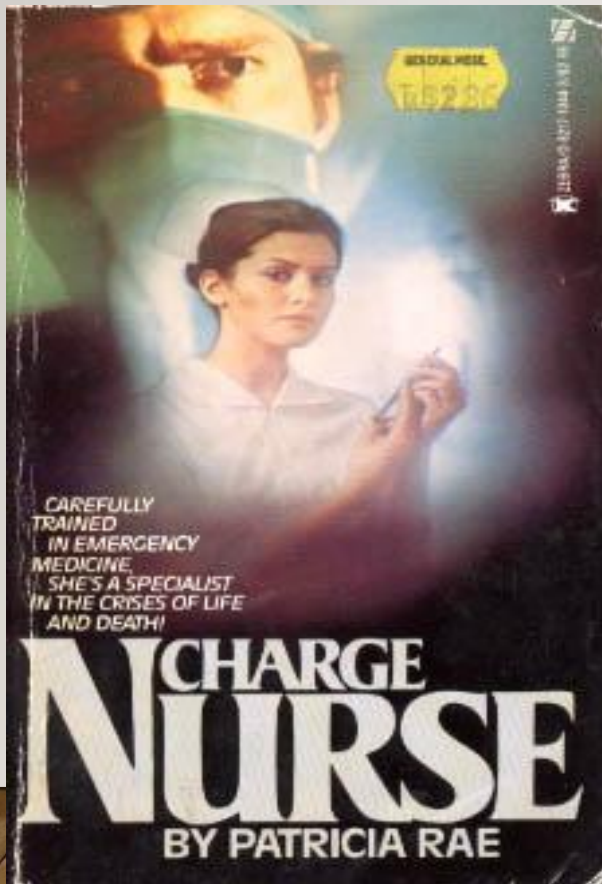


Nursing was often viewed a means to getting a husband (particularly a physician).....





# NEWER DEPICTIONS OF NURSES IN BOOKS....



# STEREOTYPE- THE NURSE AS A SEX BOMBSHELL/ NAUGHTY NURSE

For at least 40 years, nurses have been portrayed as sex objects on both television and in the movies.







ANC

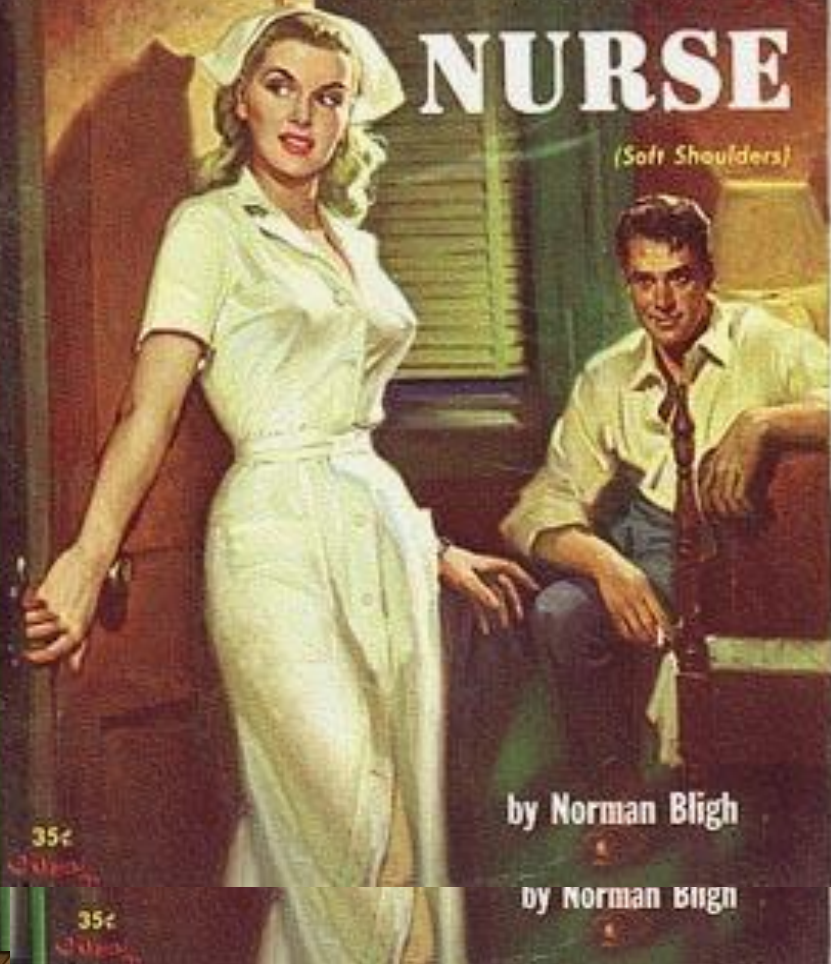
**VENUS BOOKS**

186

A private nurse learns the naked truth about men!

# WAYWARD NURSE

(Soft Shoulders)



by Norman Bligh

by Norman Bligh

35¢

35¢

# MALE WARD

A Frank Story of Nurses and the Men They Serve

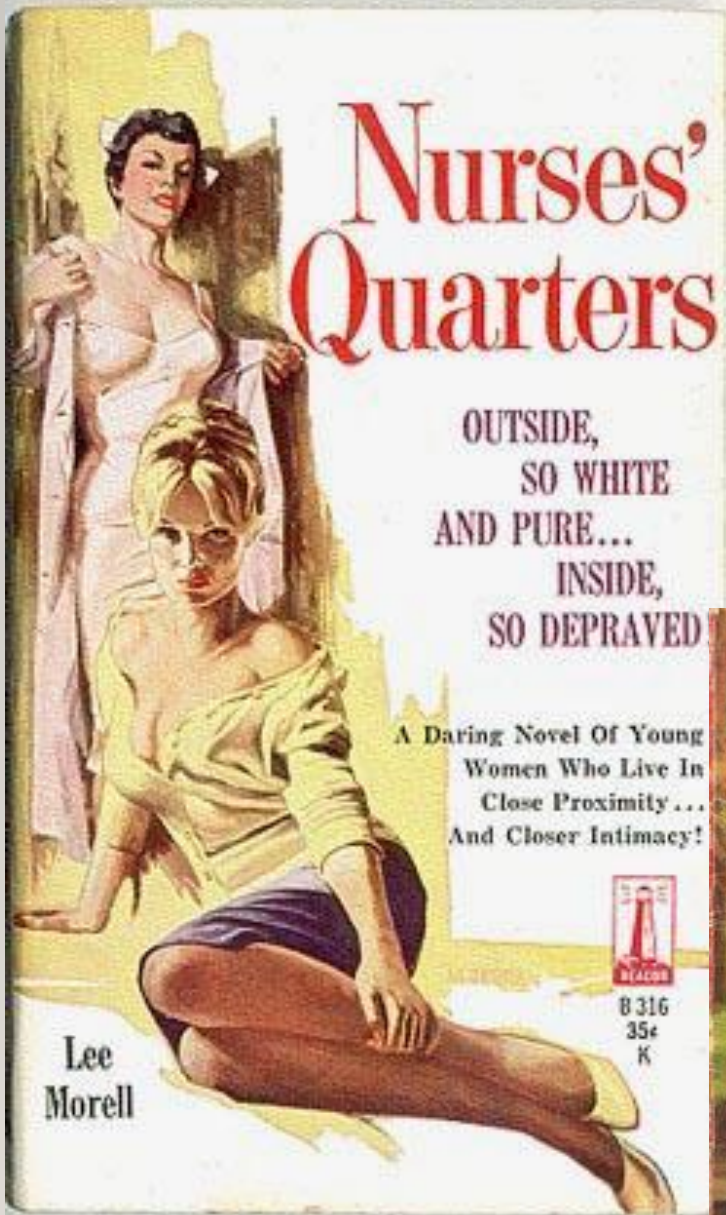
by Mitchell Coleman



No. 170

35¢





# Nurses' Quarters

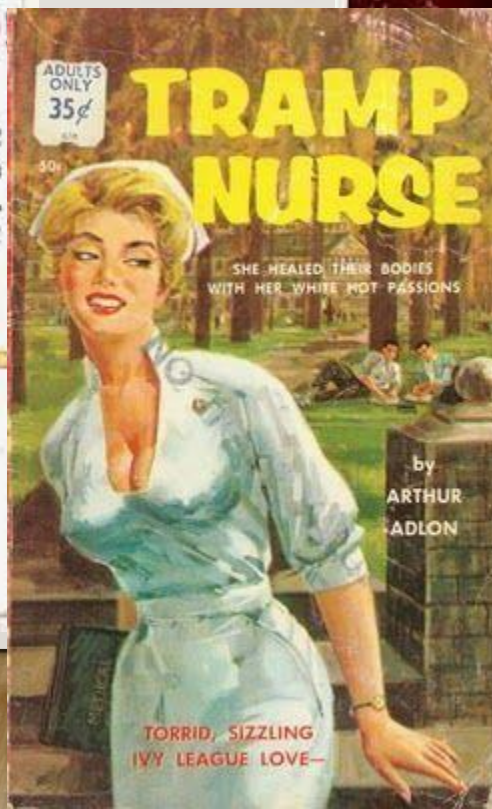
OUTSIDE,  
SO WHITE  
AND PURE...  
INSIDE,  
SO DEPRAVED

A Daring Novel Of Young  
Women Who Live In  
Close Proximity...  
And Closer Intimacy!

Lee  
Morell



B 316  
35¢  
K



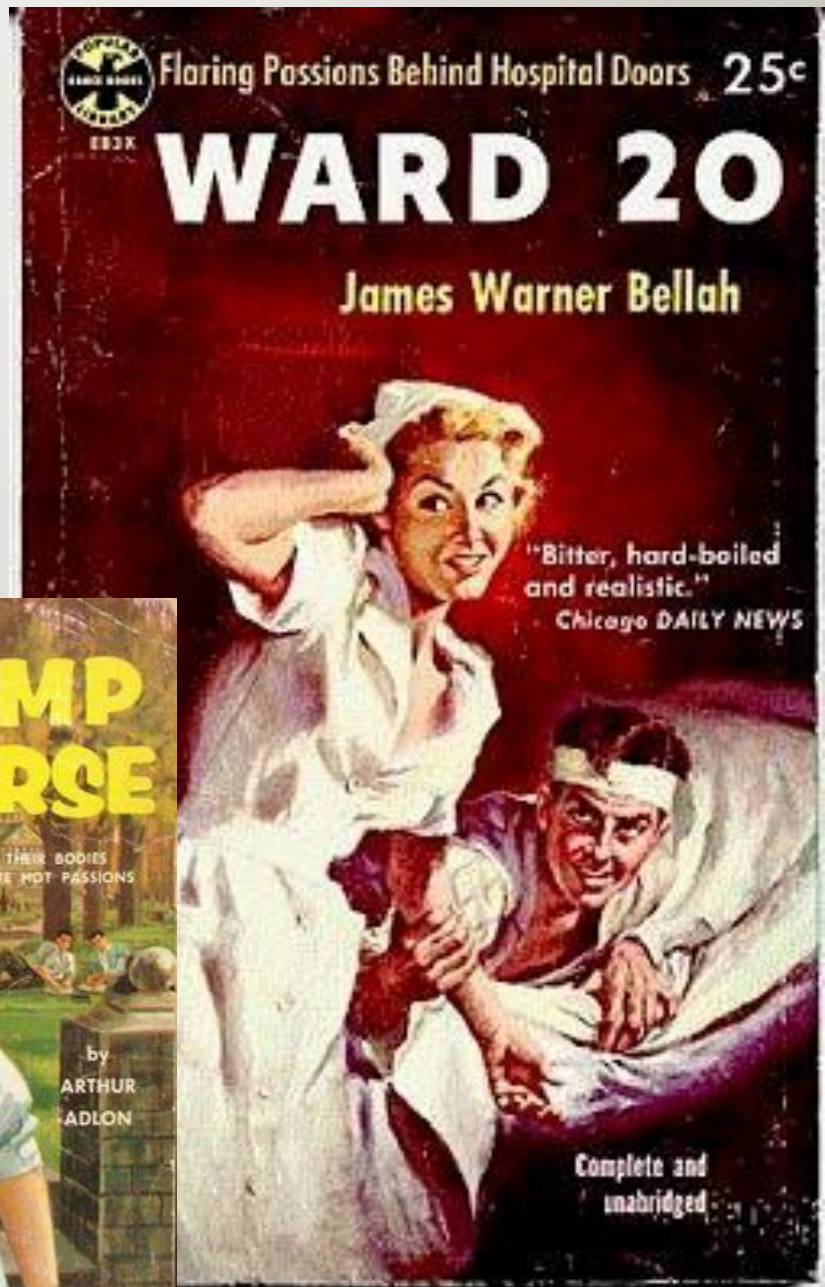
ADULTS  
ONLY  
35¢

# TRAMP NURSE

SHE HEALED THEIR BODIES  
WITH HER WHITE HOT PASSIONS

by  
ARTHUR  
ADLON

TORRID, SIZZLING  
IVY LEAGUE LOVE—



Flaring Passions Behind Hospital Doors 25¢

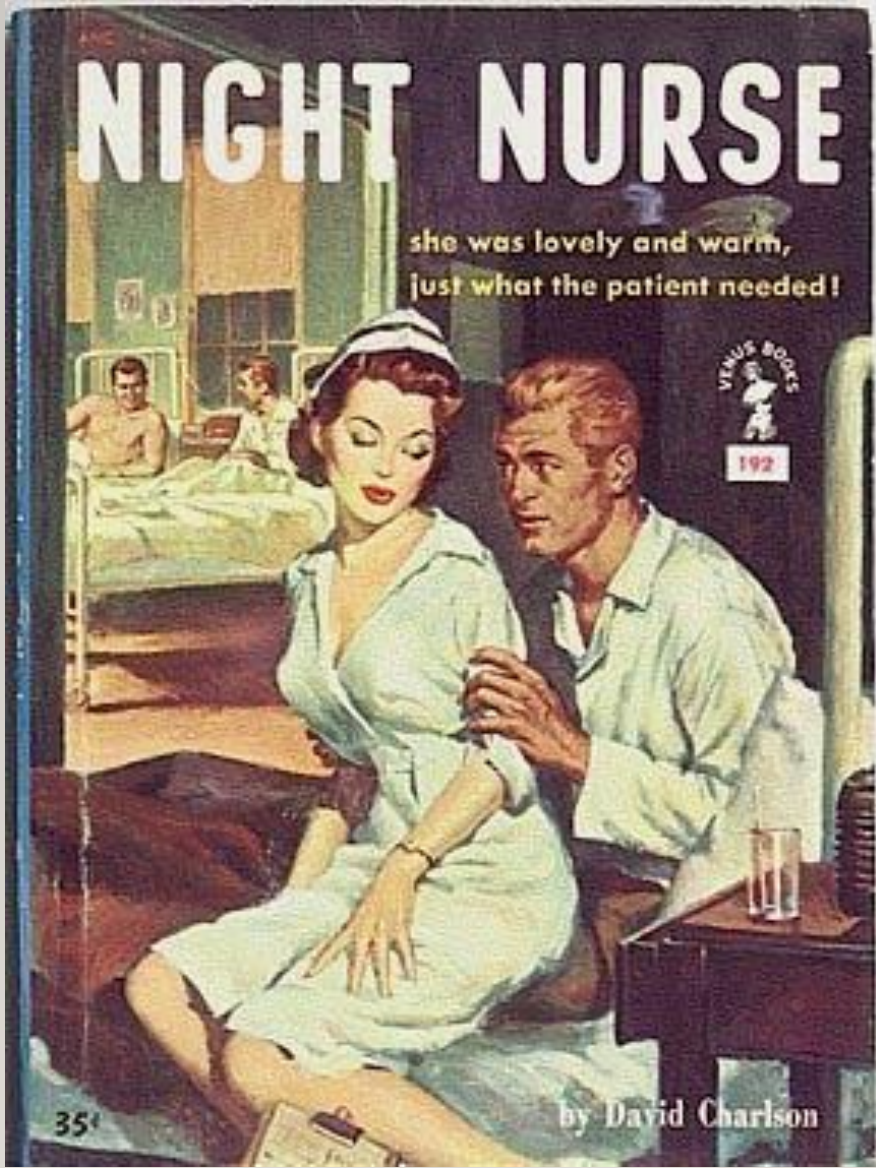
# WARD 20

James Warner Bellah

"Bitter, hard-boiled  
and realistic."  
Chicago DAILY NEWS

Complete and  
unabridged







Sexual stereotyping by the sex/pornography industry is not a significantly publicized or discussed phenomenon within nursing.



THE TYPICAL  
“NAUGHTY  
NURSE”



Some authors have suggested even nursing uniforms were designed to look like a maid's or housewife's apron...

“tight around the waist accentuating the hour glass figure, and extenuating the female aspects of the role.”



Credits: [www.data2.collectionscanada.gc.ca/e/e092/e002283119.jpg](http://www.data2.collectionscanada.gc.ca/e/e092/e002283119.jpg)



THE CLAIROL  
HERBAL ESSENCE  
NURSE!!

*P&G*



# CADBURY SCHWEPPE'S CANADA

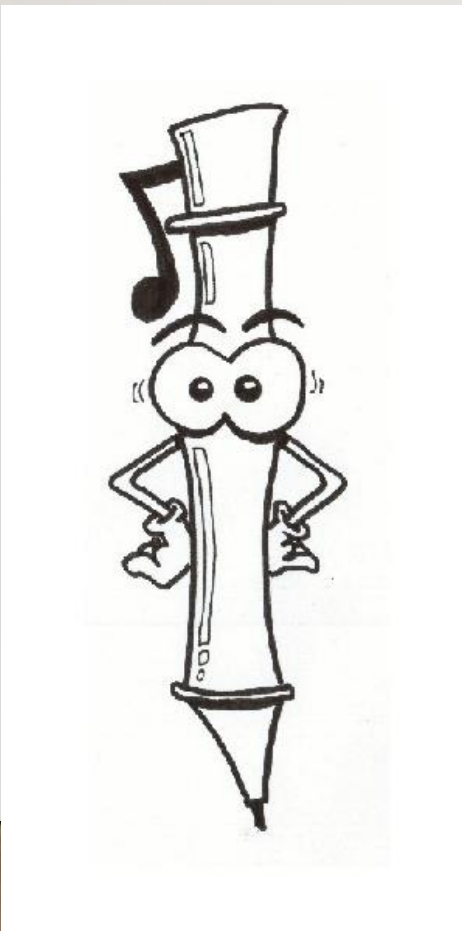
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## “GET FRESH” CAMPAIGN



# LETTER WRITING CAMPAIGNS DO WORK!

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We're writing to make a difference  
and here's who we've contacted!





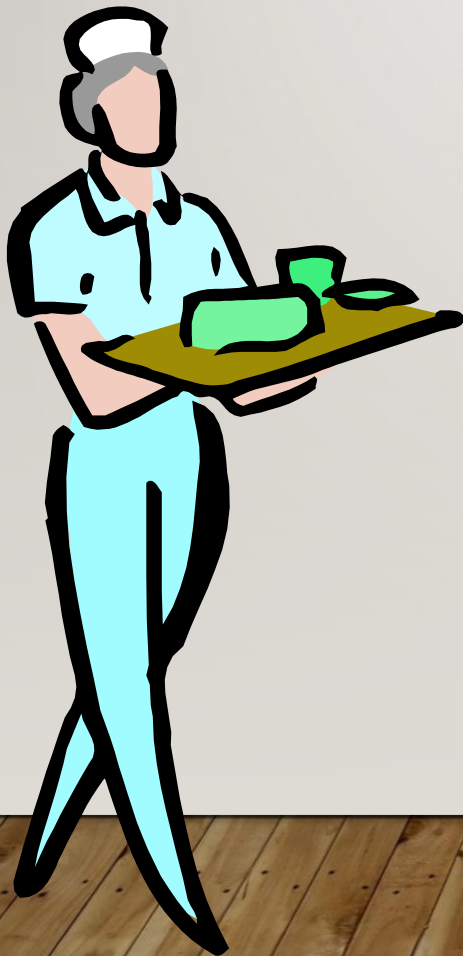
# THE HEART ATTACK GRILL IN ARIZONA

The Grill's owner Jon Basso said that he feels the grill "glorifies nurses as physically attractive and desirable instead of as some old battle ax who changes bedpans for a living" (Waitresses Dressed as Naughty Nurses, n.d., para 7).



# STEREOTYPE-THE NURSE AS HANDMAIDEN TO THE PHYSICIAN

Perhaps the most pervasive stereotype of nurses....



The nurse simply serves as an adoring backdrop to the physician, demonstrating little if any independent thought or action.





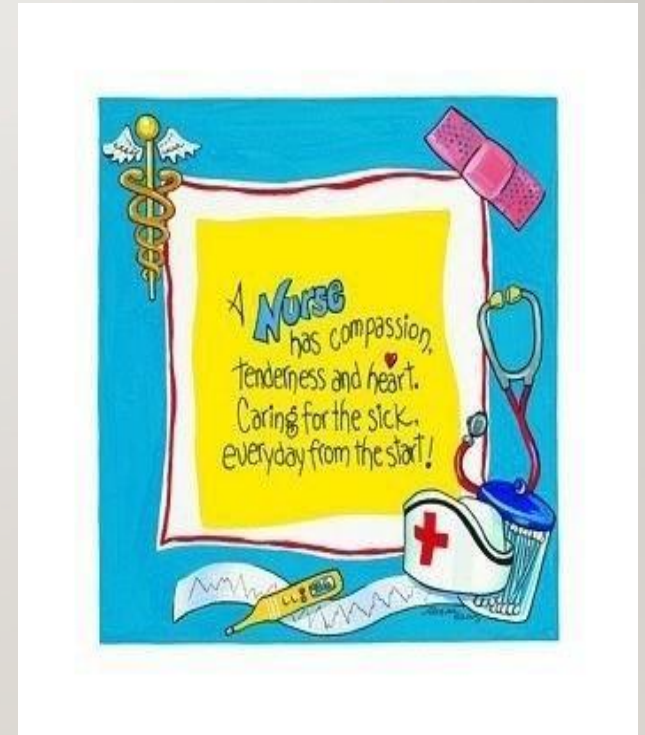
# ANGELA MOORE JEWELRY

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"NURSE  
NANCY"  
BRACELETS  
AND  
NECKLACES

...."Here's a special theme to celebrate the wonderful women who promote health and make us feel so much better. Talented, terrific and leaders to love!"



February 24, 2017

Nobel Prize winning  
economist Paul  
Krugman suggested that  
nurses were one example of  
those who perform  
“menial work dealing with  
the physical world.”





# STEREOTYPE- THE NURSE AS A BATTLE AXE

“An overweight, authoritarian senior nurse who struts around with an air of self-importance, making the junior nurses cry and the patients quake under the sheets.”



“Mean, Mean Josephine”



Battle axe stereotypes hit their peak in the 1970s and 1980s.



And we all remember Annie Wilkes  
from the novel and movie  
“Misery” .....







"The morning shift would like a word with you!"

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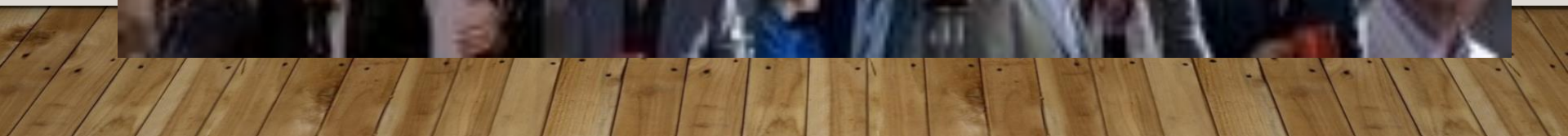
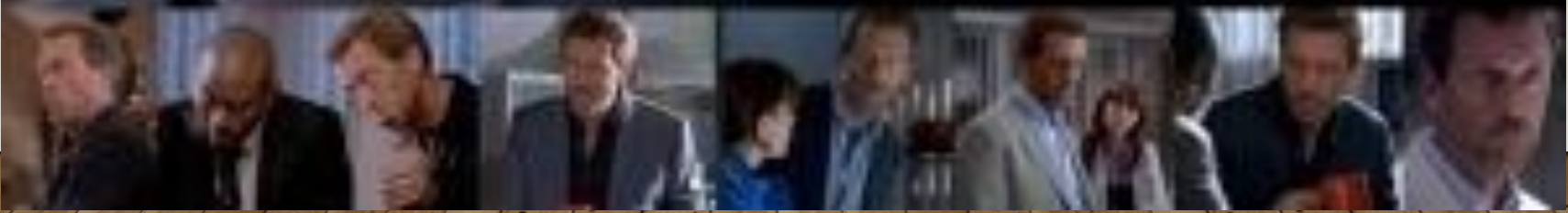
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Only CompuCaddy has the... you need. And only CompuCaddy can help you find out more.

CompuCaddy

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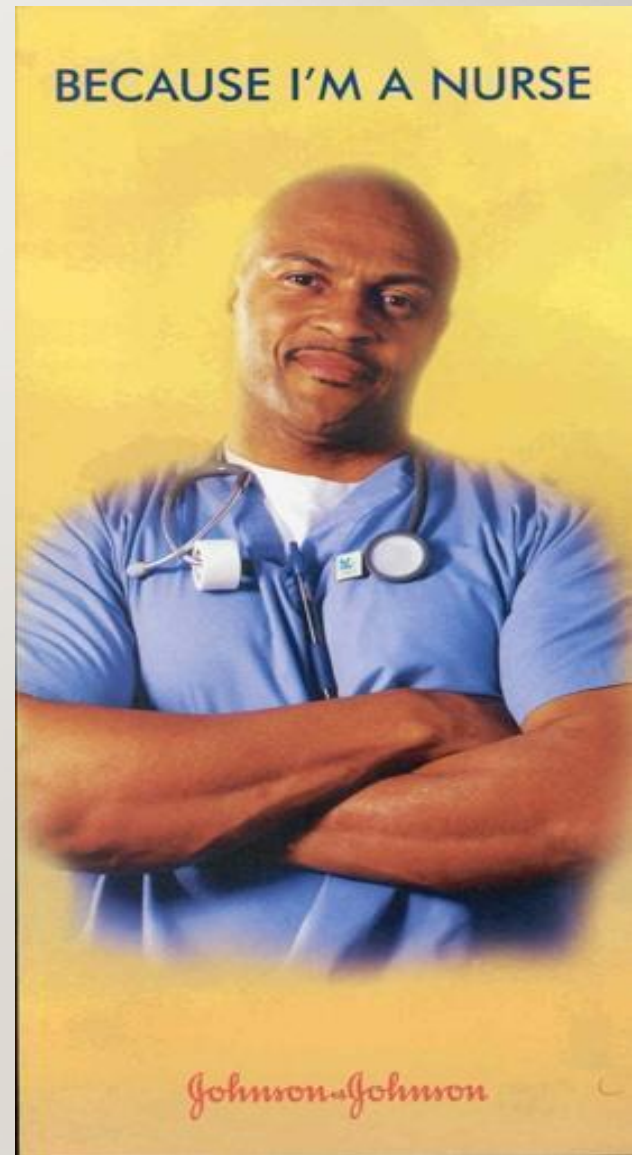


**STEREOTYPE- THE MALE**  
**NURSE AS GAY, EFFEMINATE**  
**OR SEXUALLY PREDATORY**





This makes it very difficult for male nurses to demonstrate the caring, therapeutic interactions that are such an important part of nursing.



In addition,  
there is a  
popular  
stereotype that  
male nurses are  
non-achievers  
for going into  
nursing.

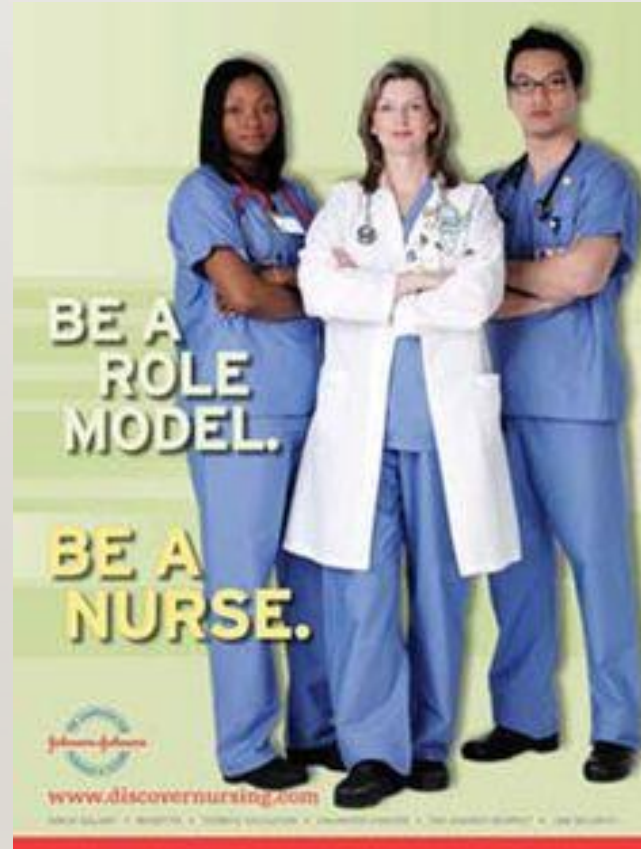


GAYLORD 'GREG' FOCKER RN,  
IN  
*MEET THE PARENTS*



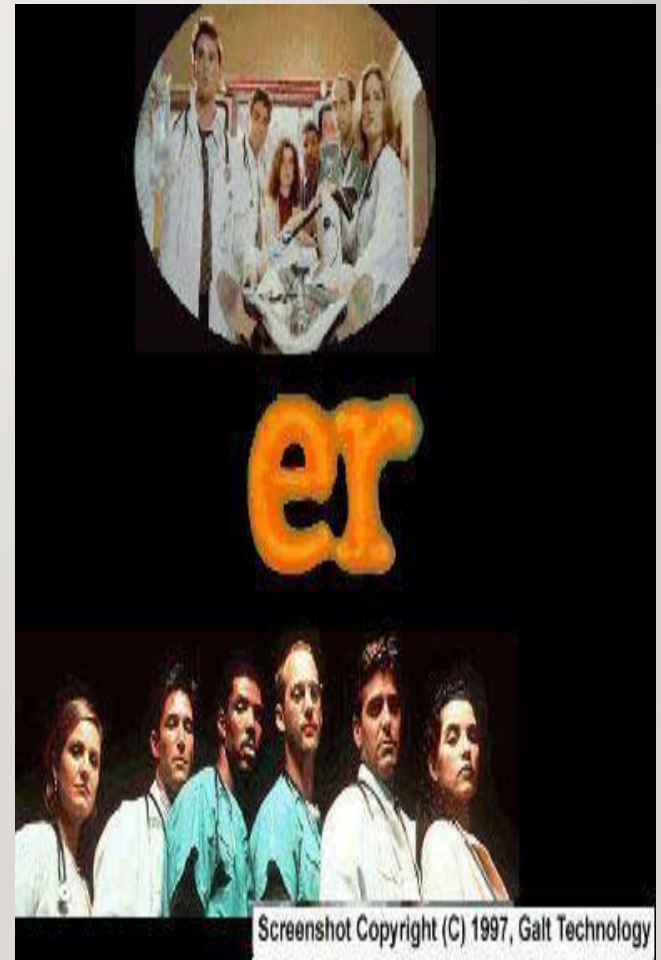


# Who Have Been Our Media Role Models?



# NURSE STEREOTYPES ON TV

Television medical  
dramas currently  
provide the greatest  
number of visual images  
of nurses at work.



# CAROL HATHAWAY, CHARGE NURSE ER

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# ABBY LOCKHART, RN, MD

## ER



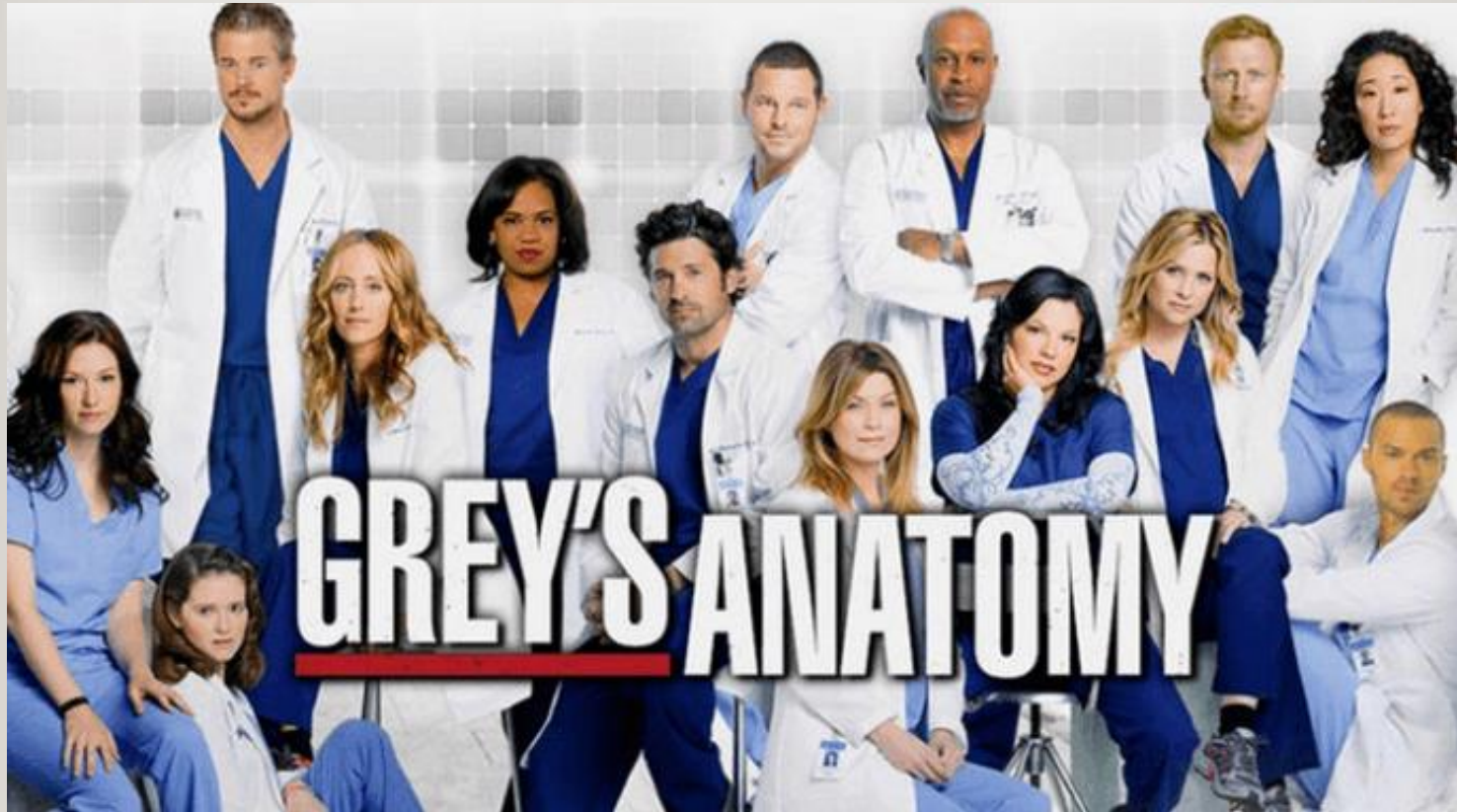
# SAMANTHA TAGGART, STAFF NURSE

ER

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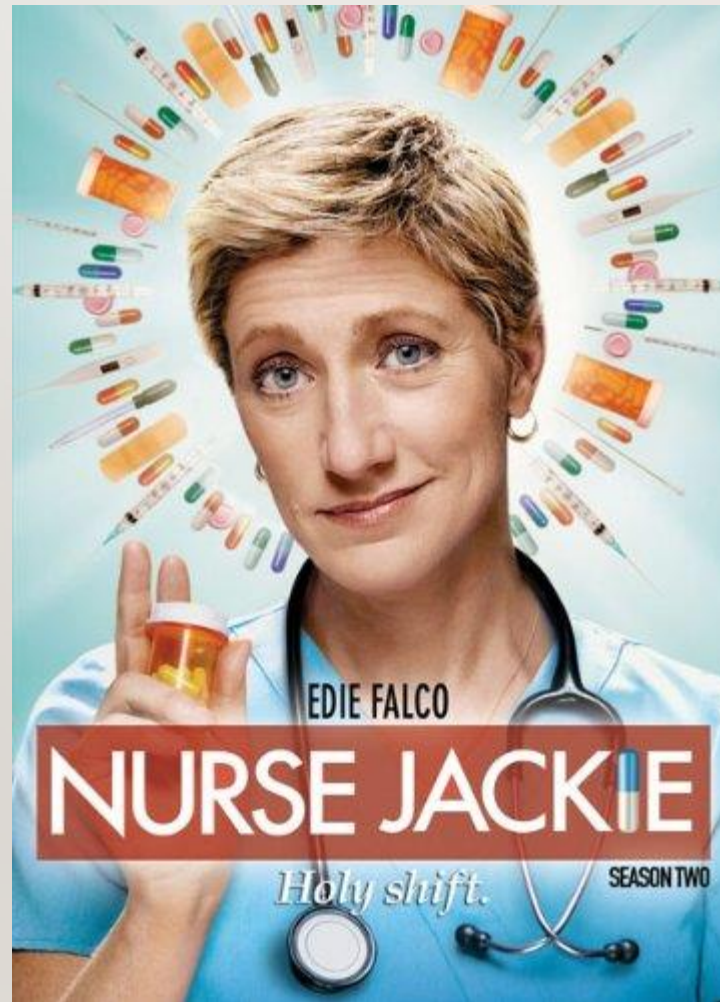


# GREY'S ANATOMY





# “NURSE JACKIE”





Out of excuses. Out of tricks. Out of control.



High & Mighty

Emmy® Winner Edie Falco

# NURSE JACKIE

SEASON PREMIERE  
MARCH 28

MONDAYS 10PM/9C

Followed by UNITED STATES OF AMERICA™

SHOWTIME  
BRACE YOURSELF

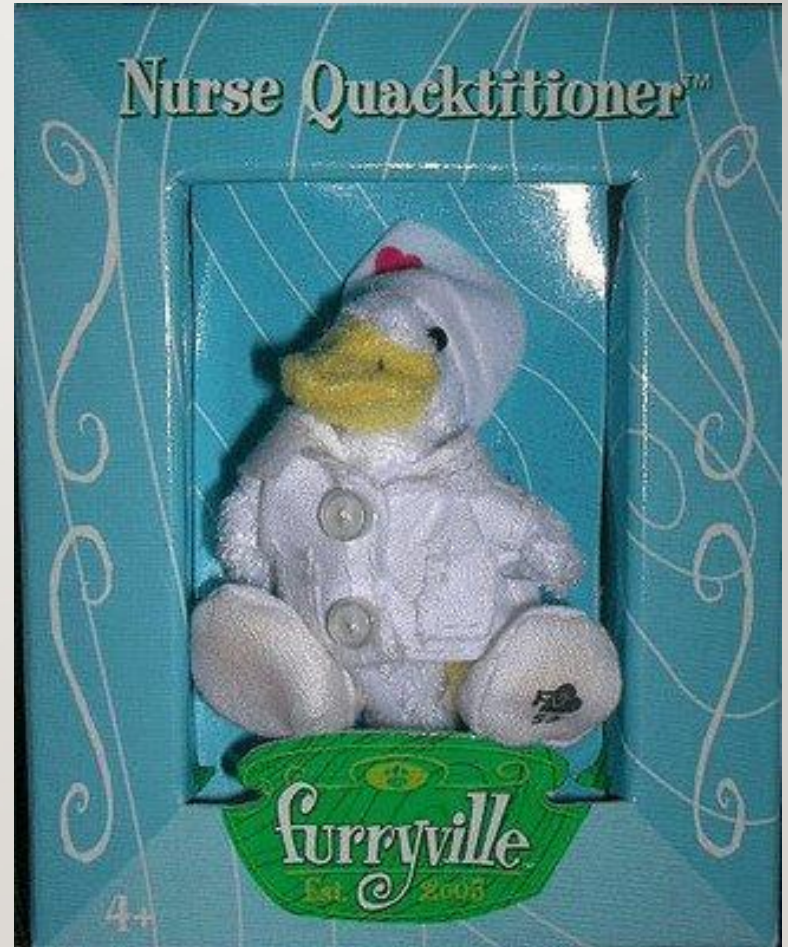


September 7, 2004

The popular television quiz show  
"Jeopardy!" implied that Nurse  
Practitioners treat only "minor  
ailments."



Mattel ruffled nurse's feathers by producing a tiny fluffy duck called the Nurse Quacktitioner.



The “Quack Nurse”







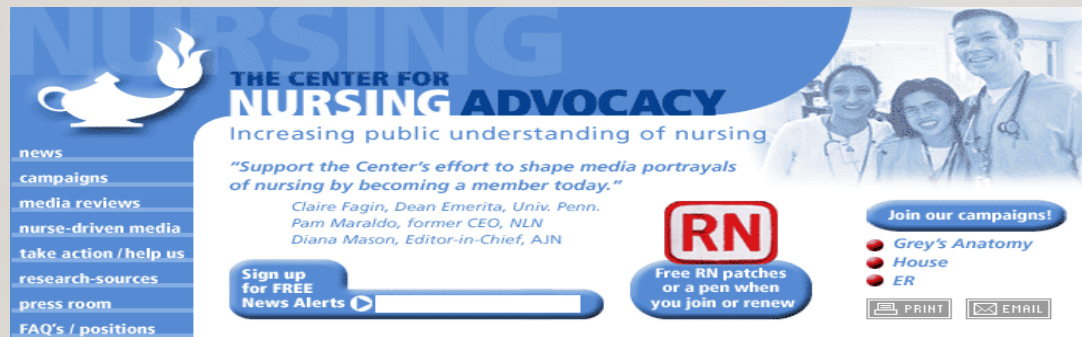
# RESPONDING TO INACCURATE OR NEGATIVE IMAGES IN THE MEDIA.....



Most nurses are upset about their depiction in contemporary media but our efforts to respond and change the situation have been fragmented to date.



A more unified voice became possible with the creation of *The Center for Nursing Advocacy* in 2001 and ....  
*The Truth About Nursing* in 2009.



**NURSING**

**THE CENTER FOR NURSING ADVOCACY**  
Increasing public understanding of nursing

news  
campaigns  
media reviews  
nurse-driven media  
take action / help us  
research-sources  
press room  
FAQ's / positions

*"Support the Center's effort to shape media portrayals of nursing by becoming a member today."*

Claire Fagin, Dean Emerita, Univ. Penn.  
Pam Maraldo, former CEO, NLN  
Diana Mason, Editor-in-Chief, AJN

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Free RN patches or a pen when you join or renew

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- House
- ER

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Changing how the world thinks about nursing

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campaigns  
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**SAVING LIVES**  
WHY THE MEDIA'S PORTRAYAL OF NURSES PUTS US ALL AT RISK

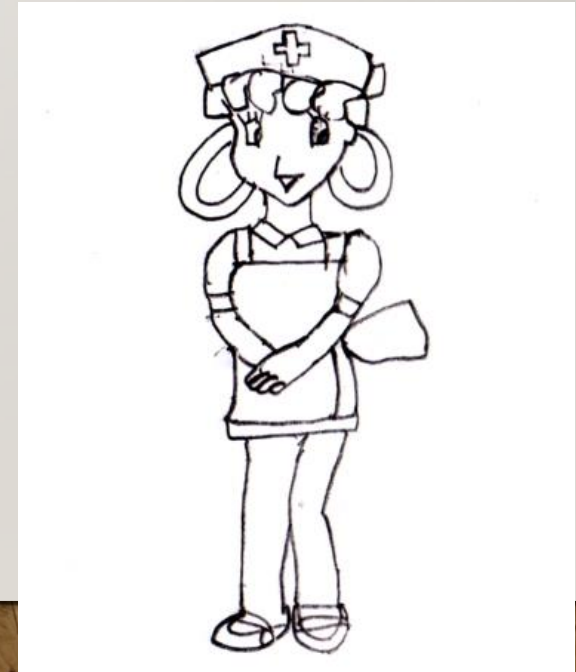
SANDY SUMMERS, RN, MSN, MPH AND HARRY JACOBS SUMMERS



Research is increasingly concluding that not only are inaccurate and negative stereotypes of nurses well ingrained, they are instilled early in life.



Indeed, stereotyping about career opportunities begins at a very early age.



# THE CHALLENGE OF CHANGING INGRAINED STEREOTYPES



Carol's failed 2nd  
grade class experiment

Source- Huston, C. (n.d.) Nursing  
stereotypes ingrained by second grade.)



Fist a nurse having surgery on  
a real important disease

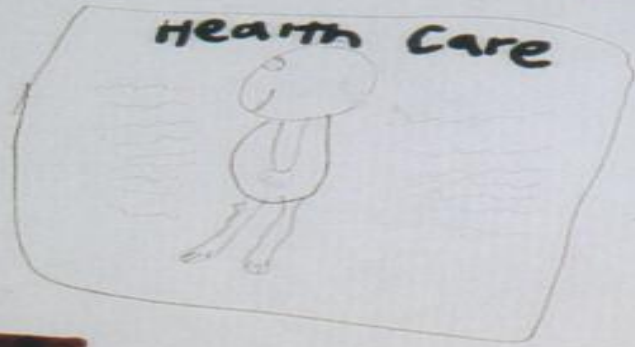
Jennifer



Rushing into the hospital.



The nurse is making the bed.





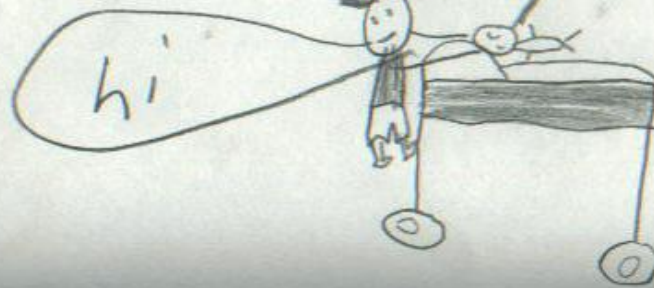
Beckie

Baby's Girl Boy Girl



oh grat I'm  
The Only Boy  
and in  
middle  
of it

Door



I like that  
bac krub





The Nurse Jany  
is helping The  
Kid and is in a  
Rush!







The babies are taking  
care of.

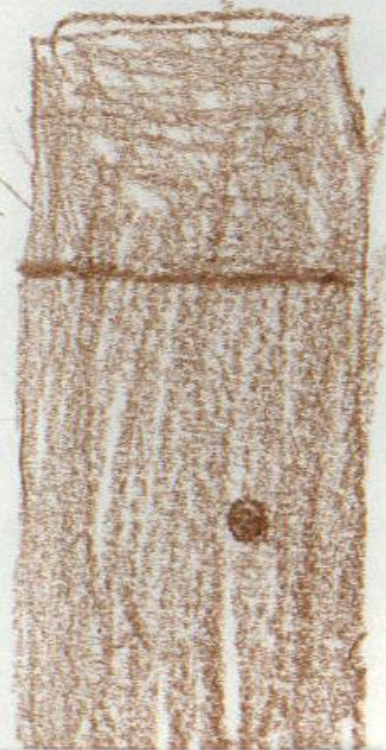
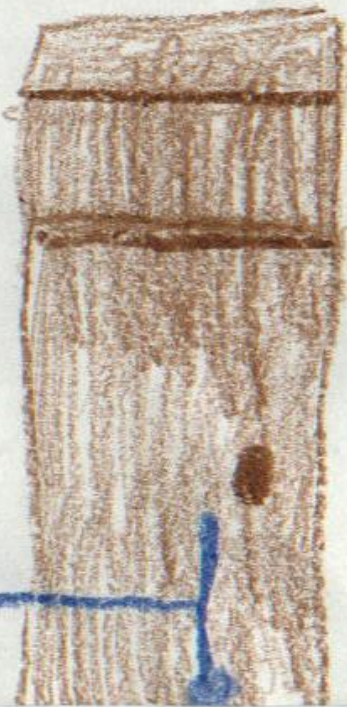


# “A NURSE GO TO THE HOSPITAL”

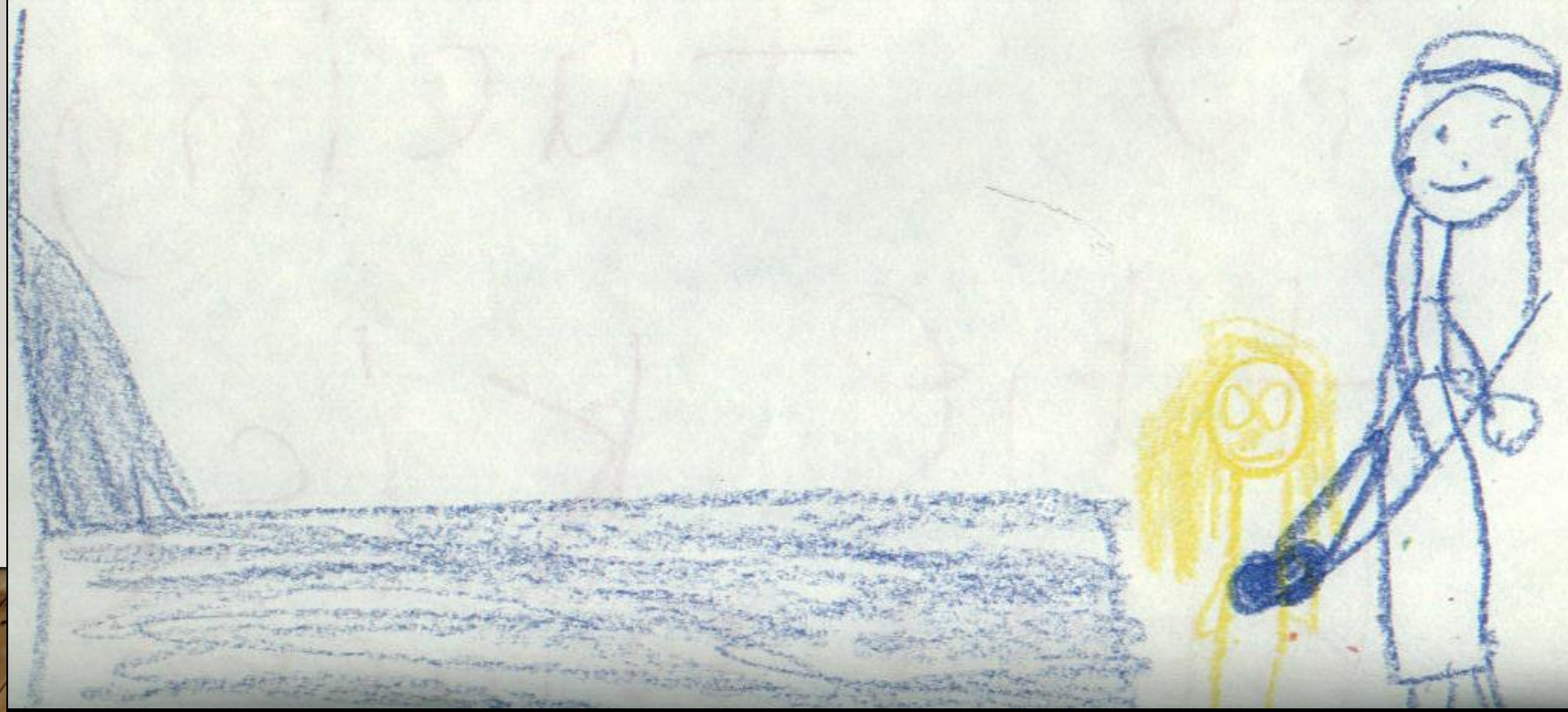
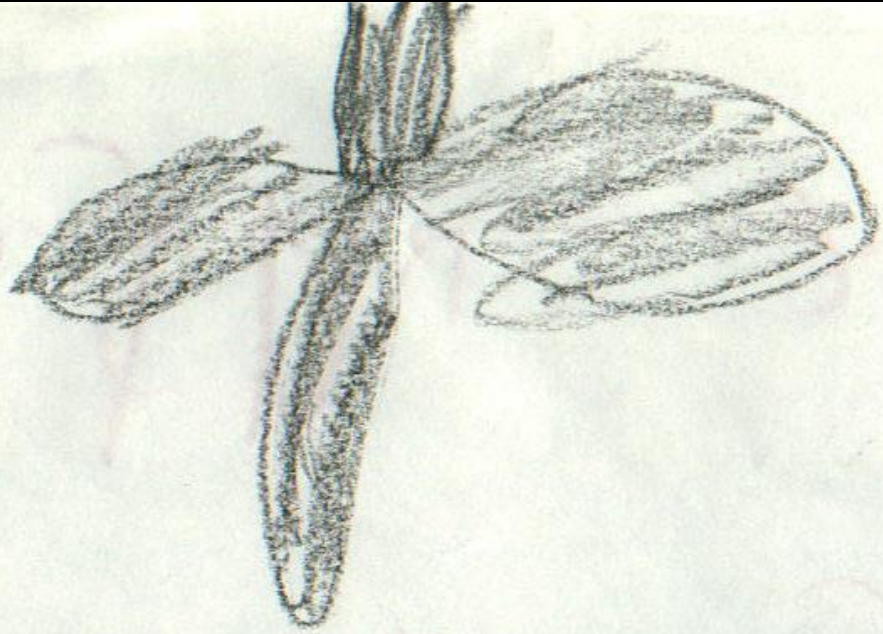




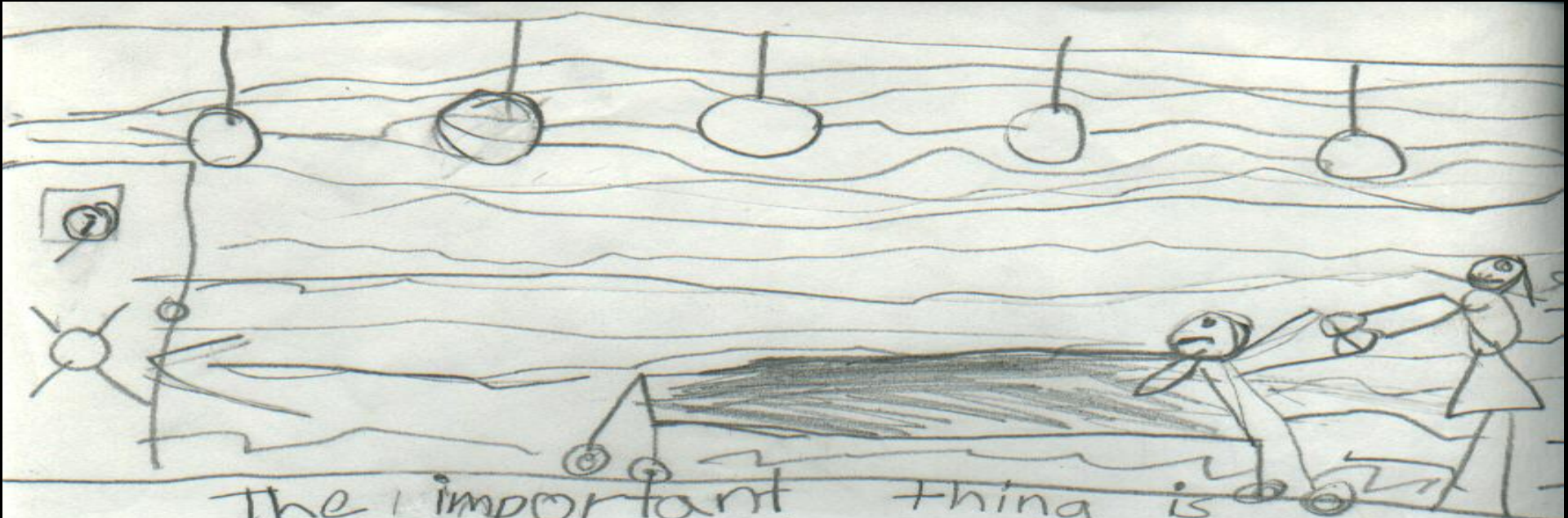
is taking  
Cotton to  
that room









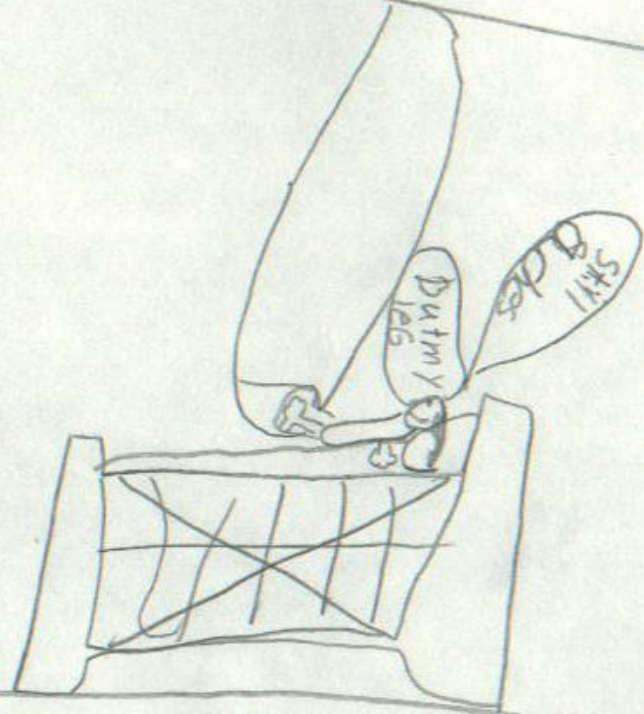


The important thing is  
when they take the people  
to the operating room.

YOU'RE the  
best  
nurse I ever  
had



That is the  
best medicine  
I ever had.

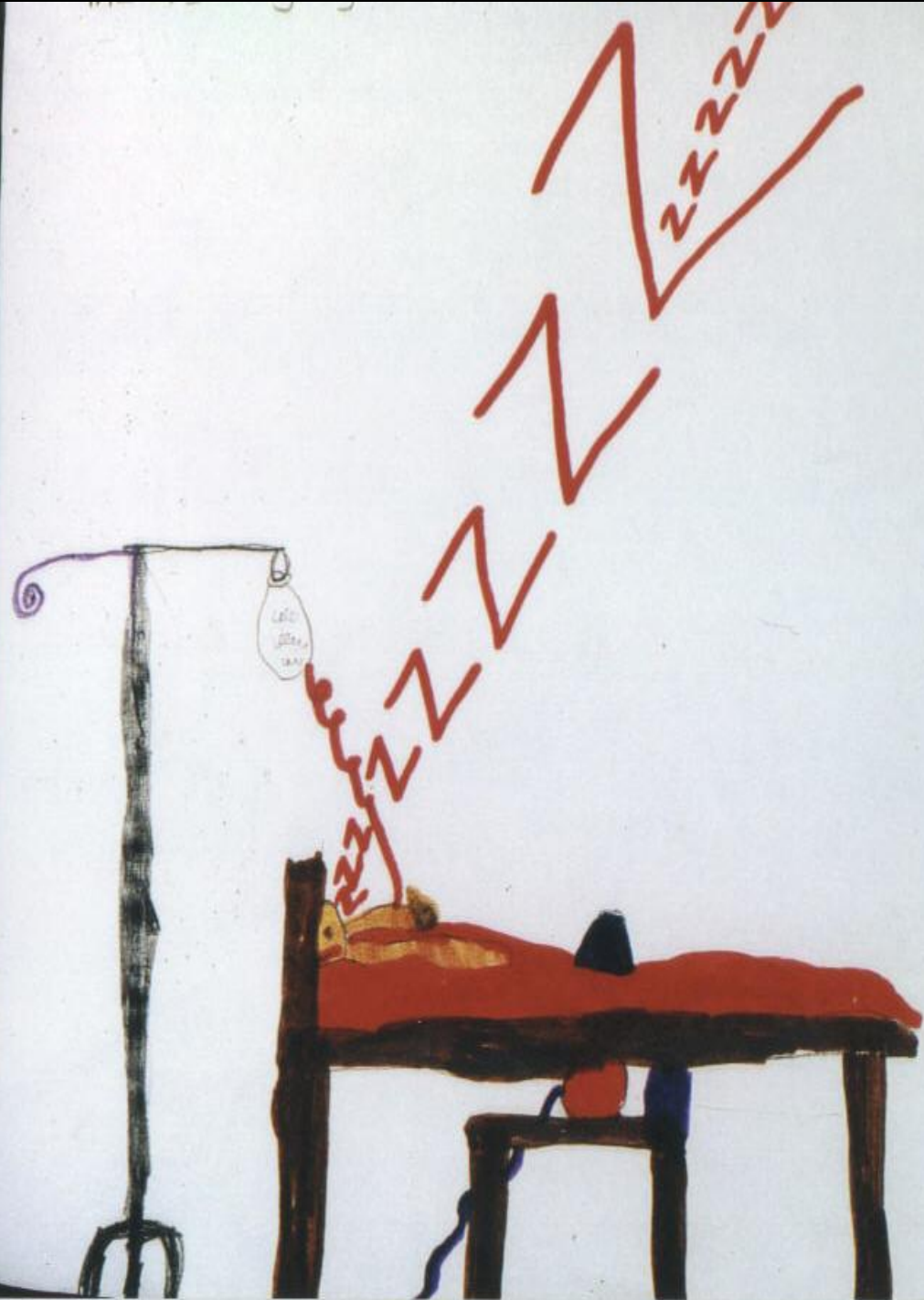




# “A NURSE SHOWING A LADY HOW TO TAKE CARE OF A BABY”







# WHAT DID I LEARN?





The domination and pervasiveness of nursing stereotypes is due, at least in part, to what has been called “nursing’s invisibility as a profession.”



# Woodhull Study Results (1997)



# Journalists' Experiences with Using Nurses as Sources in Health News Stories (2018)

**Source:** Mason, D.J., Glickstein, B., & Westphaln, K. (2018, October). Journalists' experiences with using nurses as sources in health news stories. *The American Journal of Nursing*, [118 \(10\), 42-50](#).

So what are the consequences of inaccurate or negative images of nursing? Do they matter?



One significant consequence of the public not understanding either the scope of practice or the skill level required to be a nurse is that it may limit the profession's ability to recruit the best and brightest students.





Another consequence of inaccurate nursing stereotypes is that they may threaten the collective identity and self esteem of all nurses.



# LEADERSHIP STRATEGIES TO ADDRESS THE PROBLEM

The nursing profession needs to take a more proactive stance to counter the exploitation of nursing and the negative stereotypes that permeate the media.



Each of us can serve as a leader. And one leader creates another and another, ad infinitum, just as one candle's flame light another and another, until the once-impenetrable darkness has turned to brilliant light.

We need to raise the educational entry level in nursing.





# Entry Level Degrees for the Health Professions

<b>Health Profession</b>	<b>Entry Level Degree</b>
Medicine	Doctorate
Pharmacy	Doctorate
Social work	Master's
Speech pathology	Master's
Physical therapy	Master's transitioning to Doctorate
Occupational therapy	Master's
Nursing	Associate

# MORE NURSES MUST HOLD POSITIONS OF INFLUENCE.

---



# Office of the National Nurse

The effort toward an equal partnership with the Surgeon General on Capitol Hill.





Many nurses serve in Congress and  
the state legislatures.  
Could you be next?



Another important leadership strategy needed to change nursing's image is to change the image of nursing in the mind of the image-makers.



Interacting with the media is not intuitive for most nurses. Formal training is needed.





# CONSIDER

Nurses are experts in healthcare. Our invisibility in the media is likely a result of nurses lacking the basic skills and self confidence to get involved, not that the media doesn't want to talk to nurses.



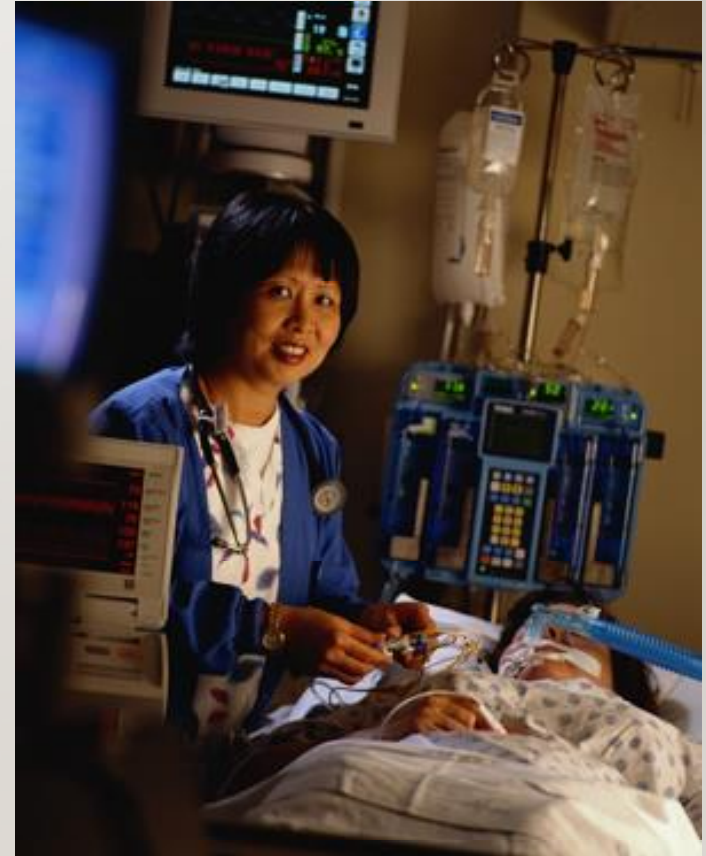


# Media Coverage





Another strategy needed to improve the image of nursing is to assure that use of the term ‘nurse’ is limited to licensed nurses.



The 1990s saw a blurring of titles, roles, and responsibilities between registered nurses, licensed vocational nurses and unlicensed support staff.



Registered nurses often contribute to the confusion in how they introduce themselves to patients.





# Jacobs-Summers and Jacobs-Summers (2011) encourage “nursing out loud.”

**Source:** Jacobs-Summers, H., & Jacobs-Summers, S. (2011). *The image of nursing: It's in your hands.* <http://www.nursingtimes.net/nursing-practice/clinicalspecialisms/educators/the-image-of-nursing-its-in-yourhands/5024815.article>



The media often uses the term nurse for all aides, volunteers, and medical assistants.....

If they wear white, they must be a nurse.



Another leadership strategy for improving the image of nursing is to change how nurses themselves talk about nursing to others.





We must do a better job of supporting our nurse leaders.





Remember that  
every nurse  
controls  
the image of  
nursing.

Identifying a shared and accurate image of nursing is difficult given the diversity of roles nurses assume today as well as the lack of a common mode of dress.





Indeed, nurses began shedding their white uniforms in the 1960s as part of the anti-conformist movement and the identity of the RN became blurred.



Patients complain the nurse is unrecognizable or worse yet, assume that everyone wearing a uniform is a nurse. There is no clear image of nursing that encompasses our diversity.



# Marvel Heroes Scrubs

# Betty Goes Biking Scrubs





Still others, including myself, would argue that nurses should better define themselves to the public in terms of what they do, not how they dress.



# SO, WHERE TO FROM HERE?

Hopefully, toward a shared goal of improving nursing's public image.

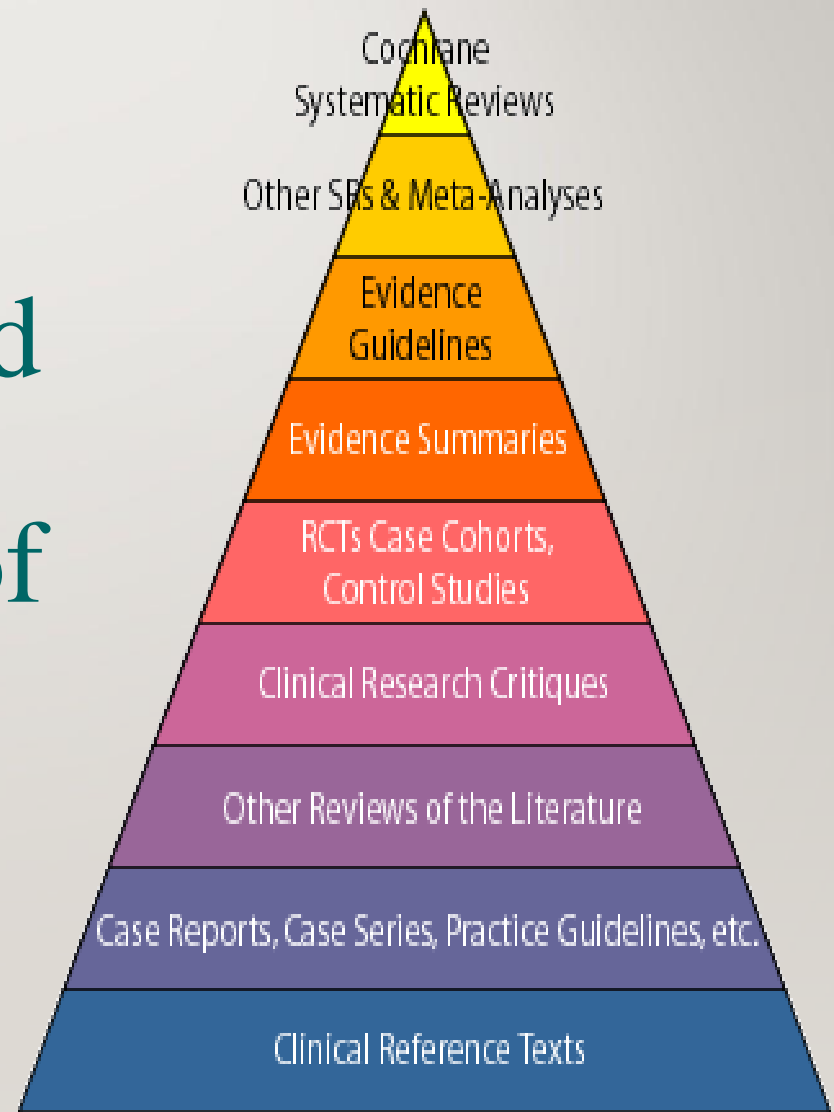


Nurses should not stay in jobs that make them unhappy. There are too many other jobs out there.





Nurses need to emphasize that our perspective is unique, and we need to underscore the depth and breadth of the scientific perspective that underlies our practice.



Patients get better because of nurses, not in spite of nurses....

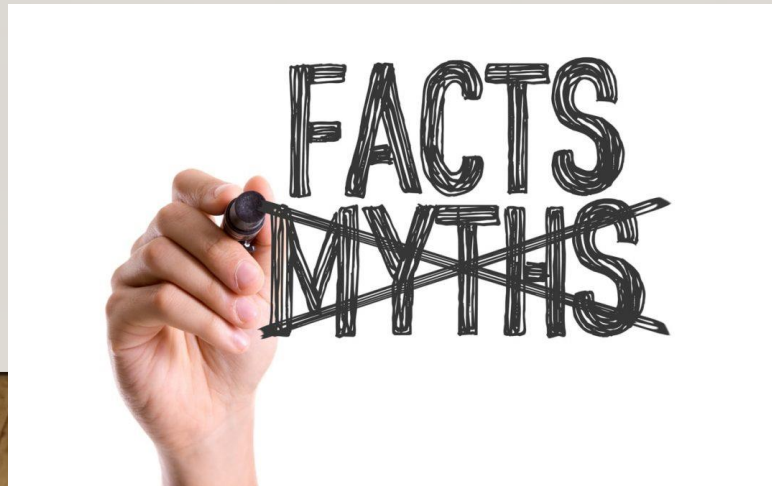


Negative stereotyping damages our ability to develop therapeutic relationships with our clients.





From a sociological perspective,  
conflicting stereotypes of nursing  
have not been helpful and a  
disconnect between reality and public  
image continues.



Nurses must decide what they want their desired collective image to be and then do whatever is necessary to present that image to the public.



# ACCEPT THE CHALLENGE!





“Florence Nightingale was not a fading Victorian violet who avoided a fight. Rather, she was a disrupter, a change agent, a nurse who used her mind and heart to initiate change in the interest of the health and wellbeing of those she felt called to serve” (Carlson, 2017, para 16).

**NURSES TODAY MUST VIEW THE CALL TO CHANGE THEIR PUBLIC IMAGE IN THE SAME MANNER.**

**Source:** Carlson, K. (2017, June 7). *Nurses as disrupters and agents of change*. Retrieved June 5, 2018, from <https://www.ausmed.com/articles/nurses-as-disrupters-agents-of-change>



In Feb. 2018, The Duchess of Cambridge joined nurses and other health leaders across the world in launching a 3-year **Nursing Now** global campaign aimed at raising the profile and status of nursing.



**Source:** Nursing now campaign launches. (2018, January). *Reflections on Nursing Leadership*, 44(1), 1–3.

BE PROUD OF YOUR  
PROFESSION AND WHO YOU  
ARE AS A HEALTHCARE  
PROFESSIONAL.





And work together to create a public image of nursing we are all proud of!



The responsibility for changing nursing's image lies squarely on the shoulders of those who claim nursing as their profession.





THANKS  
FOR  
LISTENING  
AND FOR  
SHARING!



# QUESTIONS? DISCUSSION

