

PATIENT-CENTERED CARE

Addiction Treatment Nurses Form a Healing Alliance with Patients



Hazelden Betty Ford
Foundation

Healing that Starts with Respect

Q & A with Jill Seward, Chief Nursing Officer

Q. What's unique about the role nurses play in the addiction treatment setting?

A. The nurse-patient therapeutic alliance is so important and vastly different from most other health care settings, other than perhaps long-term care. Nurses at the Hazelden Betty Ford Foundation are most often the first clinical caregivers as a patient admits to residential treatment. Our compassionate approach creates a space for healing and the hope to begin, and we have the opportunity to care for and support patients throughout their journey with us. Nurses provide care to ensure patient safety, medical stabilization and symptom management during detox, and then continue to care for patients as they begin the healing process in recovery.

Q. So, addiction treatment nurses have the opportunity to foster a therapeutic relationship with patients?

A. Absolutely. As the first clinicians patients encounter when admitted to residential addiction treatment, nurses are uniquely positioned to ensure patients feel welcome, safe and accepted. This capacity to meet patients where they are at upon admission and provide care with the utmost respect and compassion sets the groundwork for the patient-nurse healing alliance. Entering addiction treatment is a very vulnerable place for people to be—emotionally and medically. As addiction treatment nurses, our approach to care is rooted in dignity and respect because that's where healing begins.

Q. You use words like "dignity" and "respect" and "compassion" to describe addiction treatment nursing. Why is this nonjudgmental approach so important?



JILL SEWARD, MSN, RN

As chief nursing officer at the Hazelden Betty Ford Foundation, Jill Seward leads evidence-based nursing practices across the nonprofit treatment provider's national system of care. She is passionate about ensuring the highest quality patient-centered care. Through her collaborative leadership style and patient focus, Seward has elevated the role of nursing in the delivery of care across the Hazelden Betty Ford Foundation—to help more people and to save more lives.

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A. The social stigma and shame associated with substance use disorders too often prevent people from accessing care and engaging in addiction treatment. Addiction to alcohol or other drugs is a primary, chronic and potentially fatal disease that strikes nearly one in 10 Americans over the age of 12. Like other chronic diseases such as diabetes or hypertension that involve cycles of relapse and remission, addiction can be treated and managed successfully. Nurses who work in addiction treatment play a pivotal role in opening the way to healing by providing compassionate, nonjudgmental patient-centered care. We call that “meeting patients where they are.”

Q. You're known for saying that nursing requires a brave heart. What do you mean by that?

A. I didn't come up with the saying, but I love it. Having a brave heart means acting with resolve in care for each patient, no matter the situation or circumstance. Nurses see things we never expect to encounter in our lifetimes—terrifying medical emergencies, tragic family losses. All throughout, our focus remains steadily on what needs to be done for the patient in that moment.

A brave heart is also a vulnerable heart. Some of the most profound experiences of my lifetime have been in conversation with patients. The willingness to be vulnerable and to really connect with people takes a certain brand of courage that nurses understand deeply.



TOGETHER Our Mission Is Your Opportunity

Nurses who work in addiction treatment transform the lives of their patients. Be a part of our lifesaving mission.

BRING YOUR COMMITMENT, COURAGE AND EXPERTISE

We are looking for nurses who want to practice in an innovative, interdisciplinary clinical setting with colleagues who share your commitment to high-quality patient care.

WHAT WE'RE OFFERING

- Purposeful and inspiring work
- Competitive pay
- Competitive benefits
- Paid time off
- Growth and training opportunities
- Retirement plan with employer match
- Tuition reimbursement
- Well-being benefit

OUR REACH

- Nation's largest nonprofit addiction treatment provider
- 17 locations in nine states
- 1,600 employees
- 20,000+ patients served annually
- Children's and family programs, alumni and recovery support, publishing house, graduate school, research center, advocacy institute

How to learn more

Visit [HazeldenBettyFord.org/Nurses](https://www.hazeldenbettyford.org/Nurses) for current openings and employment information, or call **651-213-4806**.

