



*Handbook for*  
**FILIPINO NURSES**  
Immigrating to the United States

**FIRST EDITION**  
*JULY 2021*



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## ACKNOWLEDGMENT

This Handbook for Filipino Nurses Immigrating to the United States is the culmination of years of discussion, sharing stories, trials and tribulations, hard-won accomplishments, and, above all, the desire to impart practical and valuable information to nurses exploring job opportunities in the USA. It was made possible by the unwavering support and encouragement of so many people. We are grateful to all who contributed.

Current PNAA President **Mary Joy Garcia-Dia, DNP, RN, FAAN**, provided the vision for future generations of nurses. Her motivation to get this Handbook done in record time grew out of her dedication to educate and inform Filipino nurses during a time of great demand for well-trained professionals.

**Carmina T. V. Bautista, MSN, NP, FNP-BC, BC-ADM**, compiled valuable resources and references for new nurses as they navigate the unique personal and professional landscape in the US.

**Lolita B. Compas, MA, RN**, past President of PNAA, who has held numerous positions and roles within PNAA, has been the consistent pioneering champion of Filipino nurses' rights.

**Virginia Alinsao, MBA, MS, RN**, current Chair of the Office of International Affairs at PNAA, shared her vast experience in nursing, hospital administration, recruitment, and on-boarding, as well as her understanding of the challenges faced by newly arrived nurses.



**Leticia Hermosa, JD, Ph.D., RN**, past President of PNAA, applied her passion and commitment to ensure we addressed the cultural aspects of new nurses adapting to life in the US. In addition, her legal advice was invaluable.

**Marife Sevilla, BSN, RN**, current Chair of the Human Rights Committee of PNAA, tirelessly reviewed the literature and compiled the numerous case studies referenced in this Handbook.

**Jasper Tolarba, DNP, MSN, M.Ed., RN, CCRN-Alum.**, did the masterful editing work of the Handbook with his clinical and policy expertise to blend our disparate voices.

Labor Attaché **Angela Librado-Trinidad** and her Consular team at the Philippine Overseas Labor Office (POLO) in Washington, DC, provided their unique perspective and advice.

Finally, this Handbook rests on the contributions and work of numerous Task Forces for Ethical Recruitment Practices, The MacArthur Foundation, the Alliance, and CGFNS. **Victoria Navarro, MSN, MAS, RN**, past President of PNAA whose OIA work with the Task Force members, crystallized PNAA's advocacy in aligning policy with the Code on the ethical recruitment of IEN.

Through this Handbook and in all its work, PNAA will continue to protect and safeguard the interests of all Filipino and other IENs as they pursue their professional career and practice in the United States.

***Welcome to our community!***

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## CORE VALUES AND MISSION OF PNAA

***The Philippine Nurses Association of America (PNAA)*** was formed in response to the growing need for concerted effort to address the issues and concerns of Filipino nurses in the USA. It has to advance itself to keep abreast with the dynamic changes in healthcare and society.

The PNAA as an organization must remain connected with the Filipino nurse members and be supportive of their professional values and interest. To be pertinent, it must maintain its advocacy to promote equity and justice for the ethnic minority members and be mindful of issues relating to human rights infringements

*(Windle, Peralta, Diaz-Font and Garcia-Dia, 2019.)*







## WHY THIS HANDBOOK WAS CREATED

With the Philippines as a source country of nurses, PNAA continues to work hard in establishing the ethical recruitment of internationally educated nurses (IENs) as the cycle of nurse shortage is predicted. Nursing migration, also known as nursing mobility, continues to present concerns to the Filipino nurse up to the present times. Often, these nurse migrants are faced with unexpected challenges as they find their way into their new workplace and unfamiliar environment. Issues involving breach of contracts, unfavorable working and living conditions, lack of proper orientation, low wages were some of the problems presented to PNAA through its Human Rights Committee.

This handbook aims to create a quick reference that can provide guidance to Filipino nurses and address their commonly asked questions. This handbook can also be used by internationally educated nurses who are exploring to migrate and work in the United States. PNAA has collected case studies to provide case scenarios experienced by many nurses who arrived in the United States. These experiences can serve as pearls of wisdom for a new nurse that just came to the United States or are still in the process of adapting to the new workplace and the environment.





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## CHAPTER 1

# BACKGROUND ON LABOR AND MIGRATION

Nursing continues to be the fastest-growing occupation in the United States and globally. Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics projects 438,100 nurse-related new jobs will be created by 2026 (Trines, 2018). Post-COVID, the International Council of Nurses projected a shortage of 14 million nurses globally, which could intensify the recruitment of internationally educated nurses from countries like the Philippines and India. The trend in labor migration depends on variables such as the country's economy, immigration policy, aging and population health, and the healthcare industry's supply and demand prospects.

Historically, the labor export of nurses started in the early 1960s as part of the Philippine government's development program in fostering an economic system through remittances from overseas workers. According to Buchan and Catton (2020), the "train for export" model led to the rapid expansion of nursing schools which could have ramifications. It can potentially lower educational standards and may result in unemployment if the local healthcare system is not able to create jobs or improve the poor working conditions (i.e., equitable salary). As a result, Filipino nurses are likely to migrate to countries that can offer better pay and career prospects.



The Philippine Nurses Association of America (PNAA) has been instrumental in raising awareness of unethical practices of recruitment agencies in the United States. Through the years, its engagement with professional organizations, regulatory bodies, and government agencies has shed light upon illegal recruitment practices that disguised human trafficking in contract documents that disrespect nurses' rights for ethical and equitable employment. This handbook is provided as a quick guide to Filipino nurses who intend to migrate to the United States. This handbook is not intended to replace legal advice. It assumes that nurses have consulted or reached out to reputable lawyers who can determine their employment contracts' validity and credibility. PNAA highly recommends reading these articles that can serve as a background on labor migration and the critical role that nurses, and our nursing profession have on global health and healthcare in general:

Buchan, James. (2020). COVID-19 and the international supply of nurses. Report for the International Council of Nurses. [www.icn.ch/system/files/documents/2020-07/COVID19\\_internationalsofsupplyofnurses\\_Report\\_FINAL.pdf](http://www.icn.ch/system/files/documents/2020-07/COVID19_internationalsofsupplyofnurses_Report_FINAL.pdf)

Shaffer FA, Bakhshi MA, Farrell N, Álvarez TD. (2020). The Recruitment Experience of Foreign-Educated Health Professionals to the United States. *American Journal of Nursing*, 120(1):28-38.

Alliance for Ethical International Recruitment Practice. (2015). Health Care Code for Ethical International Recruitment and Employment Practices. <https://www.cgfnalliance.org/about-the-codes/health-professional/>



## CHAPTER 2

### INTRODUCTION: STARTING YOUR JOURNEY

For most nurses, the prospect of working in the US as a nurse is a “dream come true.” However, the initial excitement is followed by anxiety and stress. This significant change in life means leaving the comfort of home, family, friends, and relatives.

Include your immediate family members in your decision to assure them that you are ready to make this life-changing move. Their guidance and support are critical as you start your journey.

The Recruitment Agency, Philippine Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE), Philippine Overseas Employment Administration (POEA), and U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) are some of your guides through the application and immigration process. Keep regular contact with them, and the Agency should update you on your progress. Seek assistance from your Agency with NCLEX application, IELTS, Credential Evaluation Service, and VISA SCREEN. They are knowledgeable about the application process and estimated response time from licensing agencies in the US.

As you prepare for US immigration, continue to work in the hospital to develop and enhance your skills and competencies. If you do not stay current in your skills (not working as a nurse), the sponsoring facility may terminate the contract.



This handbook is the product of those who have made this journey and is spearheaded by the Philippine Nurses Association in America.

## 1. Factors to consider as you start your journey

- What agencies are advertising in the Philippines?
- Find out about the company through google search, family, friends, and those the Agency has deployed.
- Does the agency list the minimum nursing work experience and in what setting? i.e., acute hospital, tertiary, clinic, dialysis, etc.
- Have you passed NCLEX?
- Have you passed NCLEX and meet the work experience requirement? Prepare your portfolio to include a resume, transcript, copy of Philippine RN license, copy of the letter showing you passed NCLEX, certification, commendations, and at least two letters of reference from immediate supervisors? The Agency may require additional documents like a skill checklist. (see sample)
- Agencies may accept candidates without NCLEX but meet the work experience.
- If the Agency is hiring as a “direct-hire,” research the company and learn about the hiring facility.
- Do you have medical issues that can potentially affect your application?



## 2. Preparing for interview

- Be prepared for a zoom or webinar interview.
- Do you have a private and quiet area to do the interview?
- Get a good night's sleep and relax.
- Be prepared to answer behavior-based questions. Give a STAR response:

*S: Situation – Describe the situation or problem*

*T: Task – Describe the task*

*A: Action – Describe the action YOU took*

*R: Results – Explain the results*

- Tell the interviewer a story but be concise.
- Practice interview sessions with an experienced job interviewer
- Prepare your questions for the interviewer. Interviewers will ask you if you have any questions at the end of the interview. This is the time to ask your queries related to clinical or hospital.

## 3. RN license requirements

- Each State in the US has its own Board of Nursing and state-specific requirements for internationally educated nurses. Check each state Board of Nursing website for guidance.





- You may consider applying for NCLEX in a state that is regarded as a “compact state,” meaning your license would be honored in another state without applying for a license by endorsement. There are 33 states participating. You can see the latest list via this website: <https://www.ncsbn.org/compacts.htm>.
- You would not get your “active license” until you show your Social Security (SS) number. You only get your Social Security number and apply for one upon arrival in the USA. You cannot apply for an SS card while out of the country and without your green card. This process can take weeks.

<https://www.ssa.gov/forms/ss-5.pdf>

- You cannot start working as an RN until your RN license is activated. It may take weeks after arrival based on how soon you get your SS card. Some direct-hire international nurses may be allowed to work as support staff until their license is issued. This way, the nurse gains some acculturation to the place plus income to support themselves. However, you will be paid a nursing support salary (much less), not an RN salary.

#### 4. Employment category

- **Recruitment agency as the sponsoring employer - In**



this scenario, the Recruitment Company is the employer. Ascertain at the beginning of the process if the company is a **STAFFING AGENCY**. The Staffing agency will assign you to a facility for a pre-determined time period per Agency and facility arrangement. Then, the Staffing agency issues your paycheck.

- **Direct hire nurses.** The employing facility is the sponsor of the nurse and the employer. You become a regular full-time employee of the hiring facility, and the employer issues your paycheck.

## 5. About STAFFING AGENCY

- A staffing agency has a corporate office in one State. The Agency has contracts in many states, and you would be assigned to an available open position in any state when you arrive in the US.
- A staffing agency cannot guarantee you a specific state because it depends on the Staffing Agency's available facility contracts.
- You should specify your preferred state(s) at the outset.
- Assignment. Inquire if you would be assigned to a specific unit for the duration of the staffing agency contract. If assigned as a "Float" nurse, your unit assignment can change daily.



## 6. Choosing a Recruitment Agency

- Go to the CGFNS Alliance for Ethical International Recruitment Practices website to check certified recruitment firms (<https://www.cgfnsalliance.org/>). These firms adhere to a rigorous process to ensure ethical recruitment practices.
- Check the Philippine Overseas Employment Administration (POEA) website if the local recruitment agency is licensed by POEA.
- Consult with relatives, friends, colleagues, or nursing school classmates who have personal experience with the firm.
- Be cautious of ads in social media postings. Check if ad is associated with an agency and verify POEA license or CGFNS certification.

## 7. VISA requirement

- Registered nurses qualify for a Green card (or EB-3) through employment. You may be eligible for this immigrant visa preference category if you are a skilled worker, professional, or other worker. “Skilled workers” are persons whose jobs require a minimum of 2 years of training or experience, not of a temporary or seasonal nature. The skilled worker must meet the educational, training, or experience requirements of the job opportunity. Relevant



post-secondary education may be considered as training.

- “Professionals” are persons whose job requires at least a U.S. baccalaureate or its international equivalent degree and are a member of the professions. The “other workers” subcategory is for persons performing unskilled labor requiring less than two years of training, education, or experience, not of a temporary or seasonal nature. For more information, please visit the USCIS website at <https://www.uscis.gov/working-in-the-united-states/permanent-workers/employment-based-immigration-third-preference-eb-3>.
- There is also an Employment-Based Immigration: Second Preference EB-2 visa for those with advanced degrees or the H1B visa which is an employment-based, non-immigrant visa for temporary workers.
- There are other requirements to qualify as an RN to apply for a green card, like finding a sponsor or employer.
- The employer sponsors a nurse who meets the qualifications required by employers to meet their needs. This includes:
  - US RN license or CGFNS certificate (can use the CGFNS certificate to make the initial filing, but the nurse must still pass NCLEX)
  - minimum nursing experience
  - English proficiency (verbal and written)
  - Credential review to make sure the academic requirements are met as an internationally educated professional



- Review of resume/Curriculum Vitae
- Authenticated professional references.
- Actual interview
- Other requirements by employer sponsor.

#### **8. Things to ask your recruitment agency**

- What is my visa category? Green card? Work visa?
- What fees would I be responsible for? Request for detailed list in writing.
- Will you include my family in the visa processing?
- Who is responsible for the processing cost of my family members?
- Would the Agency assist in financing family members' visa applications with salary deduction arrangements once I start employment?
- Can my family travel with me once we get the visa?
- What is the housing arrangement?
- How soon would I know where in the USA I would be assigned?

#### **9. Understanding your contract- very important to understand this before signing fully.**

- Do not sign a contract on the spot.
- Review with someone knowledgeable about contracts and ask questions.



- If you do not understand the terms of the contract, ask the employer to explain.
- Contracts should be easily understood.
- Is the contract duration in hours or years? If you work extra hours, would that count towards your contract? (The Code specifies that extra hours do not count toward completion of contract hours.
- What is the length of the contract?
- What happens when I do not complete my contract term? This is called a “breach” of contract. A breach of contract is when one party breaks the terms of the agreement. Make sure you understand the fee associated with not completing your contract, and how that fee might be adjusted if you complete a portion of the contract”.
- Do I have a choice of shift? Do you offer an 8-hour, 10-hour or 12 -hour shift?
- Am I allowed to work overtime? What would be the rate?
- Am I allowed to work extra in another facility?
- What is my starting salary? What is the prevailing wage of the State I get assigned?
- Do I get paid my starting salary on day # one of orientation?
- Do you give credit for my home country or international RN experience in calculating base salary?
- If the State is not known, would I get the prevailing wage for my assigned State if different from the corporate office state rate?



- How long is the probationary period? New employees must successfully meet all requirements to pass probation. Failure to do so may result in extended probation or termination.
- Compare salary and benefits. Remember that a higher salary in one state is due to the higher cost of living.
- Benefits include vacation, sick time, holidays, health insurance coverage, retirement plan, tuition support for advanced education, daycare, etc.
- How long is the orientation period? Is it modified to meet my specific need? What are the implications if I fail orientation?
- Am I allowed to transfer unit? How soon?
- Does my contract include a clause on floating?
- Do I get an assigned preceptor? For how long?
- Do you arrange housing accommodation on arrival?
- Who pays for my initial housing cost? How long?
- If I do not get an assignment due to circumstances beyond the employer's control, does the Agency or employer continue to pay for my housing?

## 10. Consular Interview

- Complete medical examination and clearance
- Agency provides a contract to candidates to present to the US Consular officer.



- Recruitment agent assists the candidate with all required documents and interview at the Consular Office.

## 11. Visa Issuance

- US Consular office will issue and mail visa to the candidate's designated address, including dependents' visa for green card or permanent residency visa.

## 12. Arrangement for departure for the USA

- Tender your resignation from your current job, if applicable.
- Coordinate departure schedule with your Recruiter
- Recruiter will coordinate with US counterpart to prepare for your arrival
- What resources are available to prepare the nurse for the job before onboarding?
- Any online courses that nurses may take?
- Pack your bags.
- Have a party!!







## CHAPTER 3

### ARRIVING IN AMERICA – PRACTICAL STRATEGIES THAT ADDRESS DIFFERENT STAGES OF CULTURAL INTEGRATION

#### STAGE 1: WHAT SHOULD I DO IN MY FIRST THREE MONTHS?

Arriving in America can be a foreign, stressful, and overwhelming experience for you and your family. This is particularly true for nurses who will adjust to the new environment and learn and to ease your transition by offering practical guidelines and resources to follow.

#### CHECKLIST

- A. Did your Agency provide an orientation program on acculturation? Overview of life in America such as geographical location of possible area/s of deployment, climate, clothing, food, prevailing ethnicity, rural vs. urban living, standard of living, presence of Asian/Filipino community, socio-cultural activities.

#### GEOGRAPHICAL LOCATION

Ask your Staffing Agency the possible states of your deployment. As you arrive in the United States, there will be a waiting period prior to your actual work assignment as the Agency will



need to apply for your nursing licenses to 5 different states and your Social Security Card.

It is necessary to know the regions you may be assigned as you need to adapt to the climate changes, the spoken languages, different English accent, prevailing culture, and ethnicity.

As part of your pre departure orientation from the Staffing Agency, ask to show you the map of the United States to familiarize yourself to the different states in the country. ***Please note that the Agency will not be able to tell you where exactly you may be deployed right there and then. Work assignments will happen upon arrival to the United States after your state nursing licenses has been issued and where the Agency has existing contracts with healthcare facilities.***

#### For you to know:

The US basically have 4 seasons namely: Summer, Fall, Winter and Spring.

Winter - late November to February

Spring - March to May

Summer - June to August

Fall – September to November

States located in northern part of the United States will have severe winter season, rainy and cold. Example: Minnesota, No. & So. Dakotas, Michigan, Massachusetts, New York, and other



northern states. Spring and Fall will be cold but Summer will be hot.

Southern States like Texas, Louisiana, Mississippi, Florida, will have milder winter climate, but very hot in summer. People in these states typically speaks with southern accents that maybe hard to understand in the beginning. One need to get used to hearing them and learning their common expressions.

There is Hispanic Latin ethnic group specially in Texas as a border state from Mexico. The influence of this people is evident in many socio-cultural events, food, language, religious practices, etc.

Midland states like Illinois, Ohio, Oklahoma can have severe weather patterns depending on climate changes.

Western States like California, Hawaii, S. Nevada and Arizona enjoy the warm weather throughout the year. Alaska, Idaho, Montana, Utah, Oregon and Washington will have seasons like the northern states.

California and Arizona will have a big Hispanic population like Texas. It is a plus if one knows to speak Spanish as skill to communicate. Please take into consideration their cultural practices, language, livelihood, educational and social backgrounds.

There are several Indian reservations designated by the government. It is important to recognize and respect the American



native's rituals and beliefs.

- Please note that recognizing different climate conditions will give you the preparedness to adapt to your surroundings, execute organized plan regarding work and daily living activities, observance of safety and maintaining one's health.
- United States is a potpourri of people coming from different countries all over the world. As healthcare providers you must be cognizant and respectful of different needs, idiosyncrasies and beliefs that people brought from their homeland as part of their culture that can greatly affect the quality of care afforded to patients.

## CLOTHING

What should you bring? There are many things to consider.

- Possible area of deployment?
- Time of year arriving in the United States.
- What kind of clothing to bring?

Knowing the basic weather patterns can help you plan what to bring.

Whatever concerns you have, it is always best to be prepared. Travel with comfortable shoes, pack clothing just enough for your luggage not to be overweight. Consider the changing season but



most important is to bring warm clothing and jacket/s since Filipinos are prone to getting cold easily no matter what time of year it is. Pack dressy pair of shoes and dress for special occasions.

Bring personal items like personal hygiene care and or medications to start.

Bear in mind that you can always adjust your clothing needs as you go along and earning. This also true for your family members if they are with you.

## FOOD

Big metropolitan areas will have wide selections of food to buy, choice of restaurants and eateries, groceries with cooked food items and various places that serves ethnic food like

Chinese, Filipino, Indian and Mexican food, etc. to satisfy one's craving. One can even buy native ingredients if desiring to cook Filipino food.

Mexican cuisine has a big presence in Southern states and some parts of the Western region like California and Arizona. China towns are also popular in big urban areas. Otherwise, American food like hamburgers is ever present as well as having fast food joints all over.

## URBAN VS RURAL LIVING

Big cities like New York, Chicago, Los Angeles are typical urban living that has dense population. The presence of big businesses



and institutions like hospitals, universities, stores and complex transportation system defines the fast pace of life in the city.

In contrast is the rural way of life where everything is in a smaller scale, lesser population, presence of community hospital, farmlands, personal acquaintances abound, churches and schools in short distances. Some amenities found in the big city may not be available here. Life is defined by its slow pace and simplicity. Some rural counties are found in Texas, Idaho, New Mexico, Colorado, Kentucky and more.

- People working in urban areas earn significantly more than those in rural areas, however, the standard of living in the big city is high therefore everything is costly and expensive to maintain one's lifestyle.

## ETHNICITY

50 million Hispanics live in the United State, and they are all over the country, majority of them are found in Texas and California; Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islanders, Asians tend to favor the warm climates of California, the American Indian lives in Rancherias, Blacks or African American hailing from the South and the predominant White population.

- These are the 6 ethnic groups in the United States.

## STANDARD OF LIVING

It is the material well-being of the average person in each population. It is closely related to quality of life with factors such as economic and political stability, religious freedom, environmen-



tal quality, climate and safety. (Investopedia.com) This varies considerably with socio-economic status. The United States has one of the widest rich-poor gaps of any high-income nation. (Wikipedia.org)

This is evident by the presence of many underserved communities with impoverished population causing health disparity, prevalence of health co-morbidities such as diabetes, cardiovascular diseases, hypertension and obesity, poor nutrition. Infant mortality ranks highest among the native American Indian population.

## PRESENCE OF ASIAN/FILIPINO COMMUNITY AND CULTURAL ACTIVITIES

The Philippine Embassy and consular offices will have a wide array of resources about Filipino communities/ organizations and calendar of social events. The Philippine Overseas Labor Office (POLO) under the Philippine Embassy in Washington D.C has a new program that conducts a Post Arrival Assessment for all newly arrived Filipino workers in the US. It is very useful as it gives you wealth of information on various services you can avail. Networking with Filipino nurses and workers in your workplace can be a vital source of information.

## B. LANGUAGE AND COMPUTER SKILLS

1. Language is a significant obstacle to overcome at work and daily living as you must communicate and be understood. It is imperative to widen vocabulary, improve



English pronunciation, diction/accents, understanding of slang and common English expressions. Watching English television, reading books and journals, and engaging in English conversation will help you practice these communication skills. Check the local library nearby for free English lessons.

2. Computer knowledge and applications are essential to understand the applied use of Electronic Medical Records.

Communicate to your Agency the need to teach US based computer systems and forms of telecommunications. Request Agency to give practice exercises on hospital-based computer system designed to simulate clinical performance to gain confidence and proficiency. *See Case Study*

*Nurse A arrived in March 2017 and was given a mandatory orientation for 2 weeks by the Agency while waiting for her nursing license/s. She started working on June 27. She was given 2 days of clinical orientation and about 4 hours of hands-on training on Meditech software for clinical documentation. She was barely 6 weeks to her assignment when the hospital terminated her assignment due to poor performance on the use of Meditech software based on her evaluation. This case was referred to POLO for assistance dealing with the Staffing Agency and accumulated financial obligations.*





### C. CLINICAL ORIENTATION

1. What is the required clinical orientation before departure? How long is the orientation?
2. Did you have certification classes on ACLS, BLS, and PALS? Did you have to pay upfront,
3. Were you required to take other classes like EKG and cardiac unit training? Did you have to pay?

### D. UNDERSTANDING YOUR CONTRACT.

1. Was there a clear identification of financial responsibilities between the nurse and the recruiter?
2. Were you clarified by your Agency as to the nature of your employment, i.e., direct hire or staffing as in **Contract nurse**? Are you aware of the difference between **Travel nurse** and **Contract nurse**? *See Case Study*

*Nurse J was recruited by a Staffing Agency from the Philippines. Upon arrival in the US, he was assigned to work as a Contract nurse in a hospital. He worked with Travel nurses who were paid more than he did. He started to complain to the Agency that he should be paid the same wage as the Travel nurses. He breached his contract and paid the Agency the amount. He demanded to settle his case. He did not understand the difference between a **Contract nurse** vs a **Travel nurse**.*

- A **Contract nurse** is one recruited by the Recruitment Staffing Agency and signed a contract with the Agency for so many hours or years. The salary is based on the prevailing wage of the state where the Contract nurse works.



The Agency as the employer pay for the nurse' salary and all other benefits included in the contract as well as giving you the temporary work assignments where the Agency has contracts to different hospitals or healthcare facilities in different states. You are bound to the length of service stipulated in the contract, i.e., 3yrs or so many hours.

- A **Travel nurse** is a US based nurse who travel to different facilities and states for work to fill a temporary work position in hospitals or healthcare facilities. *They must have a home base.* They are under a staffing agency and their compensations will be based on what the Agency offer.
3. Is your contract stated in *years* or *service hours*? Did your Agency make an apparent effort to explain about overtime hours worked counted or not counted towards completion of your contract?
  4. Will you be allowed to work in another facility on your days off to earn extra income? **See Case Study**

*Nurse D was working a 12 hrs. shift 3 days per week in a hospital as contracted by the Staffing Agency. Nurse D decided to take advantage of the many days off by working in another hospital to augment his income. He was sued by the Staffing Agency for Breach of contract on the ground that he was solely contracted to work for the specified hospital where he was given assignment. Nurse D reached out to PNAA Human Rights. The case was referred to the PNAA Legal Adviser who successfully mitigated the case. Nurse D paid the Staffing Agency a minimal amount to end his contract.*



5. Are you aware of the following terminologies and their significance, i.e.? Breach of contract, Buy out, Non-compete clause?
  - A non-compete clause is a contract between an employee and employer. It prohibits the employee from engaging or starting a similar profession in competition with the previous employer.

*See Case Study*

*Nurse M was working in a hospital who sustained a back injury while at work. She cannot perform bedside work but able to do office work. The hospital did not offer any available office position to Nurse M. She decided to apply for a case management work in another facility but unbeknownst to her that there was a non-compete clause signed in her hospital contract. She can only work in another facility 50 miles away from her previous hospital. She sought a legal counsel to help her with her disability payment and resolution to her non-compete situation.*

6. Employment delays can happen as much as weeks or months due to many reasons like waiting for your license/s, social security card, or facility availability. Per Health Care Code, you must be paid in accordance with your contract even if there is delay in assignment. Check your contract to include such provision like housing, how much and nature of pay – is it wage or stipend?



Remember to keep a copy/original of the contract with all signatures and all immigration-related paper works and documentation, i.e., passport, visa, license/s, certifications, social security card, health insurance card, etc.,

- Collective Bargaining Representation in the Hospital

1. Direct Hire for full time employment – some states and hospitals will have a union representing nurses in collective bargaining. Discussion of such will be a part of orientation.

The Health Care Code for Ethical International Recruitment and Employment states the nurse's right to participate in professional organizations and unions.

2. For staffing agency – collective bargaining is not available to contract nurses due to the temporary nature of assignment to different states and facilities where the staffing agency has a contract.

- Hospital Employment Policy – Human resources

Human Resource department in the hospital is responsible for employee recruitment, hiring, training, and administering employee benefits. It provides labor law compliance, safety and health, labor relations and performance issues. (www.investopedia)

- The Staffing Agency is the employer of Contract nurse who provides salary, health insurance for you and family members, sick leave, vacation time, etc.



- Contract nurse should review signed contract from Staffing agency for details of employment in relation to the hospital Human Resource department policies and procedures.
- Hospital Orientation, DEI (diversity, equity and inclusion) and abbreviated orientation on Joint Commission/Regulatory requirements

The goal of nursing orientation is to ensure that orientees receive consistent information regarding policies and procedures, regulatory compliances, standards and documentations to support practice and familiarize with the vision, mission, values, goals and organizational structure. ([www.health.ucdavis.edu](http://www.health.ucdavis.edu))

- Direct hire nurses for full time employment to a facility will have extended comprehensive plan of orientation that can last up to 3months. This includes in -depth hospital wide plan, clinical orientation and human resource functions.
- Travel nurses from Staffing agencies will have limited days of orientation with very high expectations to deliver the care and fulfill the staffing needs as soon as possible focusing on assigned clinical area, work schedule, shift assignment, standards of care and documentations.
- The Staffing Agency offers classes on Regulatory compliances, OSHA, Joint commission, Infection Control, Continuing education for nursing license renewals and certifications. These are very important classes to participate.



- The Staffing Agency and Travel nurses/Contract nurses must engage in open discussion on diversity, inclusion and equity in healthcare workforce.
- The presence of different ethnicities in the workforce can help address and understand the various needs of patients from diverse patient population.
- It can help new migrant nurses identify biases, racism and feelings of discrimination that can significantly affect their delivery of care.
- Encourage nurses to ask and verbalize feelings of uncertainty, fear or frustrations.
- Encourage Staffing Agency to teach new nurses strategic ways to be included and appreciated as new members of nursing staff in the unit.

You have the responsibility to alert the Agency if additional clinical training is needed and disclose any factor which could impede your ability to fulfill your contractual obligation or professional commitments. Your main goal is to achieve a mutually agreed resolution between you and the Agency, thus avoiding disagreements.

### ***See Case Studies***

*Nurse M was seven months pregnant when she arrived in the States. She declined her immediate work assignment for fear of imminent delivery. After a full-term delivery, she asked the Agency for another 3mos maternity leave that was granted. She then moved to another state, where the Agency found her*



*a 6mos assignment. Unfortunately, the commute to work took 3hrs each way. It was too far that she cannot spend much time to take care of her children. She asked for a nearby assignment from her Agency but was ignored. The Journey Guide from the Agency was rude and condescending. She finished her 6mos contract and told the Journey Guide her intention to leave if the Agency cannot find work nearby. The Agency did not find her work and did not pay her for the last 36 hours work, thus she decided to quit the Agency.*

*The Agency filed a lawsuit for breach of contract against the nurse in Florida. The nurse reached out to PNAA Human Rights Committee. Her case was referred to Mr. Saul de Vries of POLO who intervened in her behalf. She was paid for the 36 hours owed to her. The case against the nurse was declared a mistrial by the judge as both parties were absent during the trial in Florida.*

*Nurse S and her 4yr old daughter arrived in the US employed by a Staffing Agency. She started her three months assignment as a relief nurse to someone who was on maternity leave. Unexpectedly, post-delivery, the nurse came back too soon that Nurse S did not finish her term. The Agency found new assignments for her working afternoon and evening shifts. Due to childcare, she was unable to work on her assignments. She eventually breached her contract. Follow-up on her case is still in progress as of this writing.*



## STAGE II: SOCIAL AND COMMUNITY ENVIRONMENT

The first three months should give you a clearer perspective on how to navigate the new environment. It will provide you with an idea of using public transportation and finding out many community resources available in the neighborhood addressing your basic needs and social engagement.

### HOUSING:

Upon arrival, housing is commonly provided by the Agency for the first month while processing your license/s and applying for a Social Security card. You are given a certain amount as allowance by the Agency to pay for the apartment and personal needs. There are situations where there is a delay in obtaining license/s, Social Security card, and work assignment. For the Staffing Agency, due to the nature of multi-state assignments, they will be applying for five licenses at a time. It would be best if you clarified from your Agency in writing the provision to be financially supported should there be any delay due to any of the above reasons. There are known cases of delays that took up to 3 months. Seek the advice of your Agency when looking for a place to rent and know the rental process, i.e., location, rental application, credit history, deposit, lease agreement, renter insurance, utility expenses. Factors to consider are safe location, transportation accessibility, proximity to work, and affordability. Consideration should also be made in terms of locations of schools, churches, grocery stores, banks, and postal services.





## TRANSPORTATION:

Public transportation is the commonly used means of affordable transportation and offers a flexible schedule. There are city and inter-city buses, trains, subway, streetcars, and privately paid services like taxi, Uber, and Lyft. For the first few days, your “Journey guide” will show you the schedule and places to catch the bus, subway stations, streetcar stations, and the system to use for Uber, Lyft, and taxi. The Agency, at times, will offer a car loan to help you buy a car. The loan will be payable as a monthly salary deduction.

## DRIVER’S LICENSE

Your Agency will help you apply to DMV to secure your driver’s license in the state where you live. Information and process on obtaining a driver’s license are available from your state’s Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV). Even if you do not plan to drive, it is still a good idea to get a driver’s license or a non-driver identification card from your state’s DMV because these are commonly used forms of identification throughout the United States.

## BANKING:

Open a bank account as soon as you arrived in the United States. Ensure that the bank you chose is insured by FDIC (Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation), as shown at the bank’s front entrance. This will ensure that if the bank closes, the Federal government will reimburse your deposited funds.



For practicality, choose a bank with branches close to where you live or work. To open a bank account, you will need a form of identification such as your passport and or alien registration card. You will need to make a minimum deposit to open your accounts.

### CHECKING AND SAVING ACCOUNT

Open both a checking and saving account at your selected bank. A savings account is for saving money for emergencies and significant expenses. The general advice is to keep an equivalent to 3 months' salary in your savings account for unexpected costs.

Use your checking account to pay your bills or get cash from the bank. Opening a checking account, the bank will order you a booklet of checks printed with your name (and husband for a joint account) with your address. Avoid expensive overdraft bank charges by ensuring that you have enough money in your checking account before writing a check.

### ATM

The most convenient way to deposit or withdraw cash from your account is through your bank's automated teller machines (ATM). Apply for an ATM card at your selected bank. You can also apply for a debit card that you can use as an ATM card and make purchases. A four-digit personal identification number (PIN) will be necessary to activate your card. ***Be aware that using your ATM card other than your bank will incur charges.*** ATMs are available at your bank and branches in several locations.



## DIRECT DEPOSIT

To avoid going to the bank to deposit your paycheck, you may authorize your employer to do a transaction called direct deposit with your bank. Your salary will automatically be deposited electronically to your bank account. *You can designate a portion to go to your saving and checking account.*

## ONLINE BANKING

Monthly statements of bank accounts will be sent to you via mail or online. Transactions include deposits made and checks you wrote in the previous month. Bank Statements also include withdrawals, earned interest, and any fees or penalties. Inquire at your bank how to get started with online banking and its uses as in purchases, paying bills, and transfer or remit money abroad. You may also inquire about using Venmo, Zelle, and other electronic forms of payments.

## REMITTANCE

Major cities will have remittances to send money to the Philippines like LBC, Western Union, PNB, Banco de Oro. Rural areas will have limited access to remittances. However, your bank can transfer money to known banks in the Philippines like Banco de Oro, PNB with charges.

## CREDIT CARDS

It is convenient to use a credit card to pay for goods and services when you may not have cash with you or do not have sufficient



funds in your checking account. ***However, it is also an easy way to acquire significant debt.*** Make sure that you understand the terms and interest rate of your credit card. Failure to pay your bill entirely at the end of a billing cycle will result in interest charges on the amount you owe. They may also increase your interest rate and assess finance charges for late payment.

## CREDIT HISTORY

You may incur a higher interest rate on your credit card or apply for a loan if you do not have a credit history in the United States. One way to prove your creditworthiness is to provide a copy of your job offer letter/contract with salary information and the length of the agreement. ***It is essential to have a good credit rating by paying your bills on time and keeping balances low. Avoid applying for too many loans or credit cards.*** A good credit rating will make it easier to get a lower credit card interest rate and obtain a loan with a favorable interest rate to buy a car or home.

## CREDIT CARD SECURITY

Carry your credit card in a safe place to avoid misplacing or having it stolen. Keep a copy of your credit card and company contact information. It is vital to keep the information in case of credit card loss. Reporting the loss immediately will avoid any fraudulent charges that may occur against you.



## SAFETY:

Being in a new place and different culture can foster a sense of helplessness and vulnerability. Unfortunately, immigrants can be an easy target to dishonest individuals and are less likely to report a crime committed against them.

## LAW ENFORCEMENT AGENCY

Law enforcement agencies in the United States exist to protect all members of the community from harm. There are certain things that one should know when they encounter a Police Officer.

- Be polite and cooperative.
- If stopped while driving, immediately pull your vehicle to the side of the road and stop.
- When the officer approaches you, do not make sudden movements.
- Do not reach for your ID until the officer instructs you to do so.
- Do not get out of the car unless the officer instructs you to do so.
- Please keep your hands where the officer can see them, and do not attempt to reach into your pocket or other areas of the car.
- You can ask the officer to show you his/her ID and badge.
- ***Never attempt to bribe a police officer, as this is a crime in the United States.***



## EMERGENCY SYSTEM

**The emergency number is 911.** You can call this number from any landline or mobile telephone.

Only call 911 for life-threatening emergencies or medical emergencies, report a fire, or report a crime in progress or suspicious activities such as screams or call for help. All 911 calls are recorded, and operators are trained to handle emergencies.

When you call 911, you must stay calm and be prepared to describe the emergency. Do not hang up until you have answered all questions posed by the operator. Remember your location (your home address or present location).

Become acquainted with the police department near you. Always keep the telephone numbers of your local emergency service providers visible and accessible in your home. This includes the Police department, fire and emergency rescue department, poison control center, mental health emergency helpline, and local animal control office.

## ACCESS TO GROCERY STORES AND POSTAL SERVICE:

Grocery stores or supermarket primarily sells food products which may be fresh or packaged. Smaller type stores that sell groceries are called convenience stores. Produce stores mainly sell fruits and vegetables. Some supermarkets are open for 24hrs.



## POSTAL SERVICE

The United States Postal Service (USPS) is an independent branch of the federal government responsible for providing Postal Service in the United States. The USPS handles the mailing of letters and packages, sorting and delivering mail, and selling postal products like stamps, mailing supplies, and commemoratives. Other services provided are money orders and passports renewals.

## SOCIAL SERVICES:

Social services are a range of public services provided by the government, private profit, and non-profit organizations.

Social services have a statutory obligation to safeguard and promote the welfare of vulnerable children and adults. They can provide a wide range of services to children and their parents, usually within the home environment and coordinated by a social worker.

- Working with and enabling people to achieve the best possible levels of personal and social well-being
- Working to achieve social justice through social development and social change.

Log into: [www.hhs.gov](http://www.hhs.gov) for a complete list of services ranging from child-care and education, parental support, programs for seniors, programs for persons with disabilities, homelessness,



adult education, training, and many other services. The public library offers a wide variety of information regarding the many social services afforded to the community.

### COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT, COMMUNITY ORGANIZATIONS, AND RELIGIOUS ORGANIZATIONS

Getting involved in your community may be hard at first but making an effort to know your neighbor will help you feel connected. Simple gestures such as introducing yourself and greeting your neighbors whenever you see them are a good start. Visit your city or town hall in your community to inquire about community organizations and recreational activities that you and your family can join or volunteer for projects that benefit your community.

You should also visit your home country's consulate or embassy. For places that do not have a consular office, inquire about the telephone number of the closest consular office near you. This office can provide information about various hometown associations and volunteer projects. Informal immigrant organizations, known as Hometown Associations (HTA), also can play a critical role in immigrant integration into the community. HTAs offer support services such as language classes, daycare, and resources to other community services. Other ways to get involved in your community are through your place of worship, the schools your children attend, or through your work.





## PUBLIC LIBRARIES

The public library is open to everyone and provides mostly free and valuable resources and library staff that can help you. It is a great place to review materials and literature about events happening in your community. There are many opportunities for community involvement. You can do your part and feel connected to the community by participating in local, state, and national projects and initiatives.

## SCHOOL SYSTEM

The school system is divided into elementary school and secondary school. Children usually start kindergarten or first grade (at age 5 or 6) and complete school after 12th grade (at age 17 or 18). The school year runs from early September until May or June (9 months.)

The school publishes vacation dates in advance. A school day in elementary and high school run typically from 8 am-3 pm with an hour lunch. Extra-curricular activities and sports are scheduled after school hours.

Evidence of immunizations, including exact dates, is required when applying to school. These include DTP, MMR. TB screening might be necessary. Inform the school if your child had TB vaccination already.



## CHILD-CARE

It can be a challenge for working parent/s to find a child-care. Best resources will be to ask friends or relatives, co-workers, or even the hospital at times will have information about licensed child-care agencies available in the community.

## ADULT EDUCATION

Adult education is a public education program for all adults. Adult schools offer free to low-cost classes for adults 18 and older. Students can earn a high school diploma, high school equivalency certificate, learn about jobs, learn to speak English, and become US citizens. There are online courses to take or going to publicly funded schools offering day and evening classes. A list of nearby schools can be found in libraries or online.

## JOB OPPORTUNITIES

Sources are networking, job referrals, career website, job fairs, and advertisements.

## STAGE III: THE WORKPLACE ENVIRONMENT

### A. CLINICAL ORIENTATION: ( BLINDON,S.L 2009 JOURNAL FOR NURSES STAFF DEVELOPMENT)

- Review knowledge of Nursing Process
- Assessment and documentation – assessment skills
- Infection control practices - standard precautions



- Medication Administration - role and experience
- Pain management -role in pain management
- Laboratory Values -critical value reporting
- Chronic disease management – adult and geriatric care
- Surgery and procedures – consents, pre and post op procedures
- Postmortem care – care and responsibilities
- Multidisciplinary team roles – roles of NP, PA, MD, RN,
- English as second language – assess for understanding, difficulties to communicate
- Communication style – verbal, non-verbal
- Assertive communication – ask questions, eye contact
- Critical thinking – unit specific case-based scenario

## B. General Considerations

1. Staffing assignment must be based on clinical experience.
2. Well-defined work schedule, shift assignment, overtime hours.
3. Knowledge of Electronic Medical Record and computer system specific to assigned facility.
4. Reinforce English proficiency, pronunciation, accents, slang, common English expressions.
5. Enhance communication skills: understanding Drs. Order, written and verbal, use of telephone, paging system, beepers, intercoms.



6. Get to know your unit staffing, patient load, cases, special procedures done, etc.
7. Know your unit emergency protocols, i.e., emergency cart and equipment.

C. Standardized Agency orientation to include the following:

The orientation on the following subjects are conducted upon arrival to the US.

- Infection control
- ACLS, BLS, PALS
- Joint Commission and Regulatory compliances, OSHA, HIPAA
- Continuing Education for license renewal
- Financial – wage, taxation, deductions



## CHAPTER 4

# PROFESSIONAL DEGREES, SPECIALTY CERTIFICATIONS, AND CONTINUING EDUCATION

In the United States, there are three pathways to becoming a nurse: a bachelor's degree in nursing, an associate's degree, or a diploma from an approved nursing program. In most cases, Filipino nurses immigrating to the United States are comparable to a domestically educated baccalaureate degree in nursing. This is due to the Philippine educational system offering nursing program only at a bachelor's degree level (BSN). A registered nurse with BSN as the professional degree entry-to-practice earns a relatively higher salary than an associate degree or diploma holder. Therefore, it is essential that when you find a US employer and sign your employment contract, you want to make sure that your salary reflects your BSN degree. It is okay to ask your recruiter or hospital employer if your BSN education is factored into your salary rate.

For those nurses who are immigrating to the US who have obtained graduate degrees in addition to their BSN degrees (e.g., Master's degree, Ph.D., etc.), it is also to their advantage. An employer in the US may or may not automatically recognize these additional credentials. If you have not done so yet, it is recommended that you have your graduate degrees be evaluated for US



comparability using an accredited credentialing agency. Some of these credentials evaluation agencies are listed below:

- CGFNS International, Inc. – CES Academic Report
- Educational Credential Evaluators, Inc.
- International Consultants of Delaware (ICD) – Course-by-Course Evaluation
- International Education Research Foundation, Inc.
- Josef Silny and Associates, Inc.
- World Education Services (WES) – Degree Equivalency

There are other credentials evaluation agencies that are also members of the National Association of Credential Evaluation Services (NACES), which can be found in their website link: <https://www.naces.org/members>. You have to ask your employer if they have a preference on which credentials evaluation agency they would like you to use. Your evaluation report will be sent directly to your employer. Depending on the outcome of the evaluation, your graduate degree could also impact your salary positively. It could also open opportunities for future promotion or other roles within the organization that require advanced degrees. The good news is that most graduate degrees in the Philippines (e.g., MSN, MA, Ph.D., etc.) are often considered equivalent to a US graduate degree. This is because the Philippine curriculum, textbook, and mode of instruction are often tailored after the US curriculum.

One of the other things you will notice as a new nurse in the US is the high emphasis put by employers on obtaining certification in



specialty areas. For instance, nurses working in Medical-Surgical floors are encouraged to obtain MSNBC's Certified Medical-Surgical Registered Nursing (CMSRN®) or ANCC's Medical-Surgical Nursing Board Certification (MEDSURG-BC™) after meeting the eligibility requirements and passing the competency-based examination. After successfully obtaining the certification, the nurse may use these credentials post-nominal (e.g., Jose Ramos, CMSRN; Maria Ramos, RN-BC). Typically, it requires at least two years of professional nursing experience in the US or outside the US to become eligible for the certification. Each certifying body has its own eligibility criteria, so it is recommended that you visit their website directly. Below are some of the common nursing certification organizations and direct link to their sites:

- American Association of Critical Care Nurses - <https://www.aacn.org/certification/get-certified>
- American Nurses Credentialing Center - <https://www.nursingworld.org/our-certifications/>
- Certification Board for Diabetes Care and Education - <https://www.cbdce.org/eligibility>
- CCI's Certified Perioperative Nurse - <https://www.cc-institute.org/cnor/learn/>
- Medical-Surgical Nursing Certification Board - <https://www.msncb.org/medical-surgical>
- Oncology Nursing Certification - <https://www.oncc.org/certifications/oncology-certified-nurse-ocn>
- Pediatric Nursing Certification Board - <https://www.pncb.org/certified-pediatric-nurse>



Aside from those listed above, many other types of specialty nursing certifications are available, depending on your interest and qualifications. You can download an extensive list using this link: <https://nursinglicensemap.com/resources/specialty-nursing-certification-approved-programs/>

Finally, it is not uncommon that your employer, a state board of nursing, certification agency, or other authorized body would ask for Continuing Education (CE) hours or Continuing Professional Development (CPD) hours. Although these terms are often used interchangeably, it simply means taking a range of approved learning activities relevant to your current or future nursing practice (e.g., Child-Abuse Recognition and Reporting, Impairment in the Workplace, etc.). This educational activity could be in the form of a seminar, webinar, a module, completing an online self-paced learning activity, etc. These activities should reflect how many CE or CPD hours are awarded. Then, you will submit to the requesting agency your CE/CPD certificates for purposes that it serves, such as obtaining your nursing license, renewal of specialty certification, etc. Some of these CE/CPD have fees, while others are offered free of charge.





## CHAPTER 5

# THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK: ACCULTURATION, INTEGRATION, AND ADAPTATION

### DEFINITION

The classical definition of acculturation is “a phenomenon which results when groups of individuals having different cultures come into continuous first-hand contact with subsequent changes in the original culture patterns of either or both groups. Adaptation refers to the relatively stable changes that take place in an individual or group in response to environmental demands.” (*Berry, 1997*)

### ACCULTURATION STRATEGIES

Cultural groups and their members, in both the dominant (the receiving culture) and non-dominant situations (incoming culture), must deal with the issue of how to acculturate. Strategies with respect to two major issues are usually worked out by groups and individuals in their daily encounters with each other. These issues are: **cultural maintenance** (to what extent are cultural identity and characteristics considered to be important, and their maintenance strived for); and **contact and participation** (to what extent should they become involved in other cultural groups or remain primarily among themselves). When these two underlying issues are considered simultaneously, a conceptual framework is generated, suggesting four acculturation strategies. These



strategies carry different names, depending on which group (the dominant or non-dominant) is considered. From the perspective of non-dominant groups, when individuals do not wish to maintain their cultural identity and seek daily interaction with other cultures, the **Assimilation** strategy is defined.

In contrast, when individuals place a value on holding on to their original culture, and at the same time, wish to avoid interaction with others, then the **Separation** alternative is defined. When there is an interest in both maintaining one's original culture while in daily interactions with other groups, **Integration** is the option; here, there is some degree of cultural integrity maintained, while at the same time seeking to participate as an integral part of the larger social network. Finally, when there is a slight possibility or interest in cultural maintenance (often for reasons of enforced cultural loss) and little interest in relations with others (often for reasons of exclusion or discrimination), **Marginalization** is defined. Acculturation strategies have been shown to have substantial relationships with positive adaptation: integration is usually the most successful, marginalization is the least, and assimilation and separation strategies are intermediate. The integration strategy incorporates many of the other protective factors: a willingness for mutual accommodation (i.e., the presence of mutual positive attitudes and absence of prejudice and discrimination); involvement in two cultural communities (i.e., having two social support systems); and being flexible in personality". (Berry, 1997)



## SOCIAL INTEGRATION

Social integration is the process during which newcomers or minorities are incorporated into the social structure of the host society. Social integration, together with economic integration and identity integration, are three main dimensions of newcomers' experiences in the society that is receiving them. A greater extent of social integration contributes to a closer social distance between groups and more consistent values and practices. Bringing together various ethnic groups irrespective of language, caste, creed, etc., without losing one's identity. It gives access to all areas of community life and eliminates segregation. (*Wikipedia, n.d.*)

The underlying theory of social integration is “collective consciousness,” according to Emile Durheim, a French sociologist, considered one of the founders of sociology. People's norms, beliefs, and values make up a collective consciousness or a shared way of understanding and behaving in the world. The collective consciousness binds individuals together and creates social integration. (*Durheim and Social Integration LibreText, 2020*)

## CULTURAL INTEGRATION

Cultural integration is a form of cultural exchange in which one group assumes the beliefs, practices, and rituals of another group without sacrificing the characteristics of its own culture. Cultural integration is a healthy intermingling of the beliefs and traditions of two unique cultures.



In situations where individuals voluntarily relocate to a society that is not their own, cultural integration is necessary for survival. Individuals who integrate are welcomed as they are by their new community while still embracing the new culture in which they find themselves. Without it, individuals are unlikely to develop healthy relationships and become functioning members of their new communities. (*Reference.com-World View, Updated 2020*)

## STAGES OF CULTURAL ADAPTATION

Adjusting to a new culture and environment is a normal process and can generate a wide variety of reactions and feelings. Some stages in the adjustment process have been identified and are described below. Even though the adjustment process is described as a number of successive stages, not all people go through each stage and not necessarily in the order mentioned. The stages, when experienced, can last different lengths of time for other people, and sometimes people cycle through these stages more than once. (*University of Illinois Counseling Center, Retrieved 2021*)

## STAGES OF CULTURAL ADAPTATION

### *The Honeymoon Stage*

This is usually the first stage experienced after arrival to a new culture. At this stage, everything seems exciting and new. The focus is on the sense of success in being in a new culture, curiosity, and interest in the novelty of the new surroundings; and an appreciation and anticipation of the opportunities to be found



in the new culture. Most people feel energetic and enthusiastic during this stage.

### *The Culture Shock Stage*

In this stage, the primary focus is on the differences between one's home culture and the new culture and the conflicts that arise due to these differences, including:

- having to use a foreign language
- not being sure how to interact with people in authority
- not having a clear idea of how to make friends with people from different cultures
- not being understood when you express yourself in your usual way
- finding that food and eating customs are different
- finding significant differences in the educational system
- finding that some people in the new culture are impatient when you don't understand things right away
- finding that some people are prejudiced against others from different cultures

The conflicts may be with other people or internal – in terms of one's values, habits and preferences when contrasted with the norms and expectations of those from the new culture. Feelings that accompany the culture shock stage may include: confusion, anxiety, homesickness, anger, feeling overwhelmed, feeling lonely, feeling less competent, feeling fearful of the unknown and un



familiar, feeling unsure about whether to stay in the USA or go back to one's country of origin.

### *The Recovery Stage*

After spending some time in the new culture, people begin to resolve some of the conflicts they may have experienced and start to regain a sense of appreciation that they might have experienced in the first stage. They have learned more about the new culture and can better understand external and internal resources that help manage demands and conflicts that might arise. Feelings typical of this stage are a mixture of the first two stages.

### *The Adaptation Stage*

This stage consists of people developing a realistic understanding of the similarities and differences between their home cultures and the new culture to have clearer ideas about what they like and dislike in each. Many people move in the direction of becoming “bicultural,” i.e., being able to value and appreciate the aspects of both cultures that they wish to retain or include in their lives. This stage may be characterized by a sense of confidence, maturity, flexibility, and tolerance.

### *Reverse Culture Shock*

This is an often-unexpected part of the cultural adaptation process. Based on the above stages, people eventually become relatively comfortable with the new culture. They can learn and



incorporate new attitudes and behavior to function better in the new culture. However, when this person returns to their home culture (especially if they have not been back for a while), they may sometimes find that the changes in themselves as well as in the home culture, while they were away, may create the need for an entirely new adjustment process. This can be incredibly confusing if the person is expecting to fit in effortlessly into their home culture. Neither the person nor members of the home culture are sensitive to the possibility of reverse culture shock.

Tips for Successful Cultural Adaptation (*University of Illinois Counseling Center, Retrieved 2021*)

- Learning about and becoming familiar with the US culture and understanding the social customs here can help with smoother interactions with peers and teachers. This can be immensely helpful in the adaptation process.
- Spend time listening and talking to colleagues and other people from the US
- Watch TV and read newspapers to obtain information about the local and national US culture.
- Check with others if you are unsure about appropriate behavior, language use, etc.
- Find someone you feel comfortable with who can help you understand the US culture better (e.g., a friend who is further along in the adaptation process).



- Emotional Support
- Sometimes the lack of familiar support systems – family and friends – can result in feelings of stress and loneliness that can make the entire adaptation process feel burdensome. It is, therefore, a good idea to:
  - Find people with whom you can share your feelings and experiences
  - Develop a support network of people who understand your experiences
  - Stay in contact with friends and family back home
  - Balance work and recreation in your everyday life
  - Seek professional support if needed – especially since the familiar support systems from home may not be available here.

## THE NEED FOR WORKFORCE INTEGRATION OF IMMIGRANT NURSES

Variations in nursing practice and communication difficulties pose a challenge for the successful integration into the workforce of immigrant nurses. Evidence for this is found in cultural clashes, interpersonal conflicts, communication problems, prejudiced attitudes, and discrimination towards immigrant nurses.

Studies have shown the relationships between social structures (policies, rules, and resources) and nurses' actions that either enabled or inhibited workforce integration in hospital settings. In-





adequate social structures can become structural constraints on their adaptation to professional nursing practice and integration into the workforce in a host country. Learning from each other in multicultural teams and positive intergroup interaction in promoting intercultural understanding are enablers contributing to immigrant nurses' adaptation and workforce integration. (Xiao, 2014)



## APPENDIX A

### AVAILABLE RESOURCES

**CGFNS Alliance.** Health Care Code for Ethical International Recruitment and Employment Practices. The Alliance provides a list of Certified Ethical Recruiters (CERs) as a resource for employers and internationally educated health professionals looking to work with reputable recruitment organizations. CERs have established that they comply with the standards outlined in the Code, have agreed to be monitored by the Alliance, and decided to participate in mediation and remediation processes as necessary. Retrieved February 1, 2021, <https://www.cgfnsalliance.org/about-the-codes/health-professional/>

**CGFNS International, Inc. (formerly Commission on Graduate of Foreign Nursing School).** An immigration-neutral non-profit organization that helps internationally educated healthcare professionals live and work in their country of choice by assessing and validating their academic and professional credentials. <https://www.cgfns.org/about/>

**NCSBN: National Council of State Boards of Nursing.** *About Nursing Licensure.* <https://www.ncsbn.org/licensure.htm>

**NCSBN: National Council of State Boards of Nursing.** *What You Need to Know About Nursing Licensures and the Boards of Nursing.* Retrieved January 22, 2021. [https://www.ncsbn.org/Nursing\\_Licensure.pdf](https://www.ncsbn.org/Nursing_Licensure.pdf)

**NCSBN: National Council of State Boards of Nursing.** *State and Territorial Boards of Nursing: What Every Nurse Needs to Know.* Retrieved January 22, 2021. [https://www.ncsbn.org/What\\_Every\\_Nurse\\_Needs\\_to\\_Know.pdf](https://www.ncsbn.org/What_Every_Nurse_Needs_to_Know.pdf)

**Philippine Consulate Finder.** Ten Philippine missions throughout the US offer consular services. Each mission covers a specific geographic region. To find out which mission can assist you, what the hours of operation are, and how to reach it, please use our interactive **Consulate Finder.** <http://www.philippinessanfrancisco.org/philippines-dc/consulate-finder-dc>



**Philippine Nurses Association of America (PNA).** The Philippine Nurses Association of America, Inc. (PNA) is a 501c(6) non-profit professional nursing organization representing 55 chapters with over 5,000 ++ members. PNA's mission is to uphold and foster the positive image and welfare of Filipino-American nurses, promote professional excellence, and contribute to significant outcomes to healthcare and society through education, research, and clinical practice. <https://www.mypnaa.org/>

**Social Security Administration (2021).** *Frequently asked questions about social security.* Retrieved January 21, 2021. <https://faq.ssa.gov/en-US/>

**The Official Website of Philippine Embassy in Washington DC, USA. Philippine Overseas Labor Office - Overseas Workers Welfare Administration (POLO-OWWA)** – monitors US labor policies as they affect trade with the Philippines, labor relations between the two countries, and the employment of Philippine nationals in the US; promotes the employment of Philippine nationals in targeted sectors of the US labor market through briefings and presentations to employers; coordinates with the consular section in extending assistance to Filipinos overseas workers in the United States and other countries under the jurisdiction of the Embassy such as the Caribbean countries; promotes the welfare and interest of more than 40,000 overseas workers in the US through counseling, mediation of labor cases. Retrieved February 5, 2021. Retrieved February 1, 2021. [www.washingtonpe.dfa.gov.ph](http://www.washingtonpe.dfa.gov.ph)

**The Philippine Consulate (2021).** Mission: The Philippine Consulate provides assistance to distressed Filipinos, economic diplomacy, issuance of passports and visas, civil registration, notarial and other legal services, and the promotion of Philippine culture. Retrieved January 21, 2021. <https://www.philippine-consulatela.org/about-the-consulate/other-philippine-consulates>

**US Citizenship and Immigration Services (2021).** *Working in the United States.* Provides a summary of employment-based nonimmigrant and immigrant visa classifications and other categories of aliens eligible for employment authorization. Retrieved January 31, 2021, from <https://www.uscis.gov/working-in-the-united-states>

**US Citizenship and Immigration Services (2021).** A US government website provides all information related to citizenship, green cards, working in the US, and related tools and resources. <https://www.uscis.gov/>



**US Department of Labor (2021).** *How Do I File for Unemployment Insurance?* Retrieved January 21, 2021. <https://www.dol.gov/general/topic/unemployment-insurance>

## COMMUNITY ORGANIZATIONS

- Church groups - In every State, City, and town, you can google any Church denomination, location, and local groups.
- Filipino-American Organizations - In every State, City, and Town where anyone is living and or employed, you can google any Filipino Organization and various associations specific to Alumni / Schools/Universities, Provincial affiliations. Examples:

### **Coalition of Filipino American Organizations** <https://www.cofao.org>

COFAO is a federation of community organizations whose members are comprised of individuals and families of Filipino American ancestry. COFAO's mission is to promote the value of the cultural heritage and inspire the spirit of unity among Filipino-Americans in the Pacific Northwest.

### **FAHSI - Filipino American Human Services, Inc.** [www.fahsi.org](http://www.fahsi.org)

The Filipino American Human Services, Inc. is a duly recognized and authorized IRC Section 501(c)(3) community-based, non-profit organization established in 1993 to help meet the human services needs of the Filipino American community of New York.

### **FALA New York – Filipino American Lawyers Association of New York** [www.falanewyork.org](http://www.falanewyork.org)

FALA New York – Filipino American Lawyers Association of New York.



**Filipino American Association of Central New Jersey, Inc.**  
***<https://faacnj.weebly.com>***

Filipino American Association in Central New Jersey. PFPP is one of the charity organizations that FAACNJ strongly supports. We are sharing this video so that our many loyal members and supporters see the good that can come about with just a single donation done collectively in a span of time.

**Filipino American Association of Pittsburgh, Inc.**  
***[thefaap.org](http://thefaap.org)***

The Filipino-American Association of Pittsburgh. The association started out as an informal social group in 1957. Formally organized in 1964 as the SPNP, it later became the Filipino American Association of Pittsburgh, Inc. (FAAP) in 2000 when it was incorporated as a non-profit organization. It has been granted public charity status and classified as tax-exempt under Section 501 (c) (3) of the Internal Revenue Code.

**National Alliance for Filipino Concerns**  
***<https://www.nafconusa.org/>***

NAFCON is a national alliance of Filipino organizations, institutions, and individuals that responds to the concerns of Filipinos in the US and in the Philippines by creating an action-oriented platform that brings people together through culture & heritage, education, health & wellness, and advocacy.

**National Federation of Filipino American Associations (NaFFAA)**  
***<https://naffaa.org/>***

Since 1997, the National Federation of Filipino American Associations (NaFFAA) promotes the welfare and well-being of the four million Filipinos and Filipino Americans throughout the United States. As a non-partisan and non-profit organization, NaFFAA is the largest national affiliation of Filipino American institutions, umbrella organizations, and individuals.



**NFALA – National Filipino American Lawyers Association**  
***<https://nfala.com/>***

FALA was started in 2012 when several Filipino American attorneys met in Washington, D.C., at the annual convention of the National Asian Pacific American Bar Association (NAPABA). At that meeting, the group committed to the creation of an all-inclusive attorney organization whose mission was to unite the Filipino American community, help its members succeed in the legal profession and their various industries, and advocate for Filipino American interests. This endeavor was initially called “Project Momentum” and later re-named the National Filipino American Lawyers Association.



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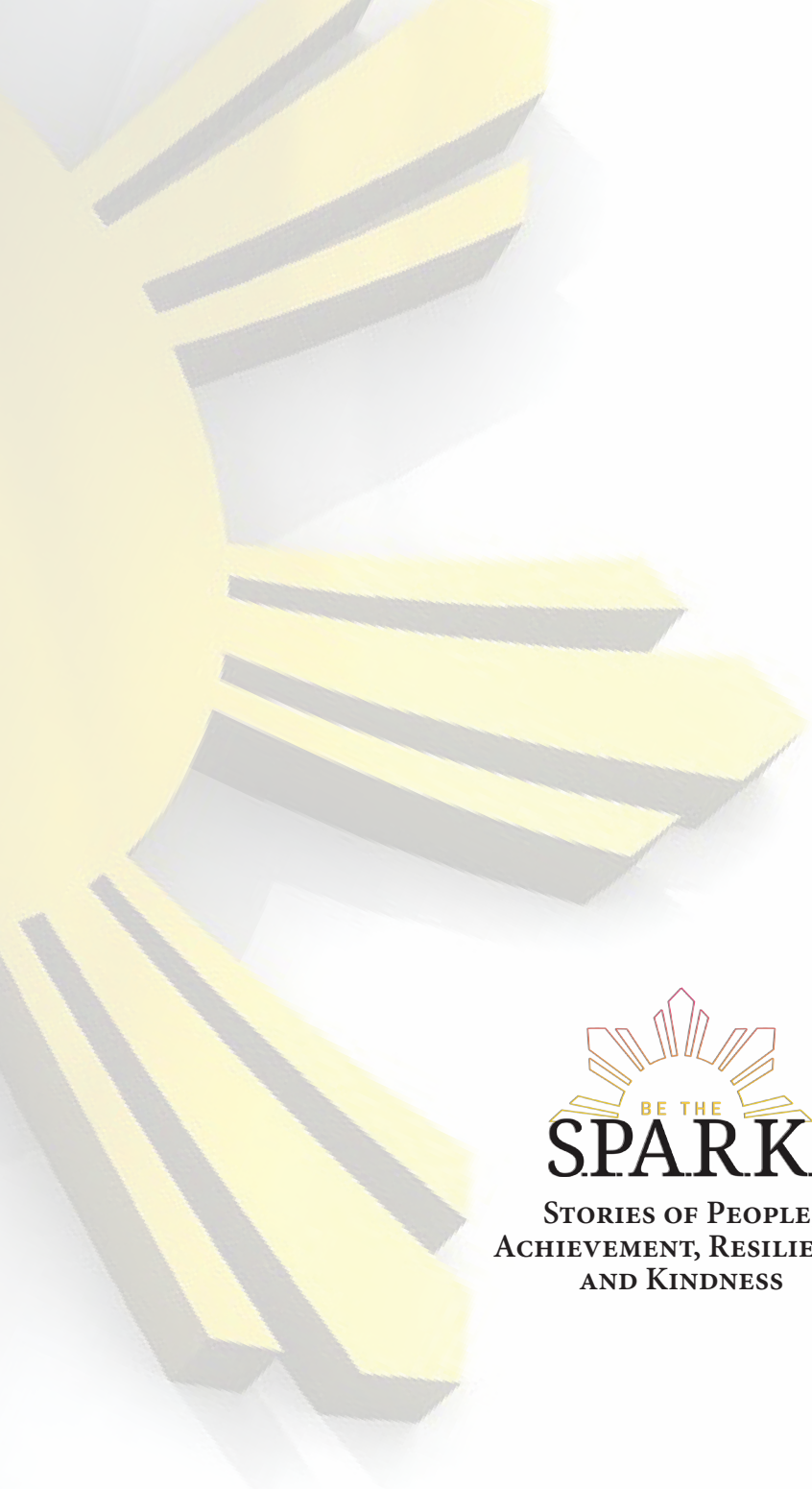


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**STORIES OF PEOPLE,  
ACHIEVEMENT, RESILIENCE  
AND KINDNESS**