WHAT NEXT?

To Gavin, Clemency and Toby who went away and played
somewhere else, my love and thanks.

WHAT NEXT?

Post-basic Opportunities for Nurses

Jill Baker

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MACMILLAN
EDUCATION

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First published 1988

Published by
MACMILLAN EDUCATION LTD
Houndmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire RG21 2XS
and London
Companies and representatives
throughout the world

Typesetting by Footnote Graphics,
Warminster, Wilts.

British Library Cataloguing in Publication Data
Baker, Jill

What next? : post-basic opportunities for
nurses.

1. Great Britain. Medicine. Nursing—
Career guides

I. Title

610.73'023'41

ISBN 978-0-333-44784-0

ISBN 978-1-349-09728-9 (eBook)

DOI 10.1007/978-1-349-09728-9

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Apologia and Acknowledgements

Throughout this book I have referred to nurses as 'she'. This is simply to avoid the use of 'he and she', 'his and her' and similar expressions, and it is in no way intended to insult the many caring men in the profession. I hope that they will forgive me.

I gratefully acknowledge Mary Waltham for her unfailing encouragement, and Pat Stillwell and Kathy Smithers for their practical help without which this book would have never been written.

Abbreviations Used in the Text

AIDS	Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome
BA	Bachelor of Arts
BN	Bachelor of Nursing
BSc	Bachelor of Science
CPN	Community Psychiatric Nurse
CSE	Certificate of Secondary Education
DENCert	District Enrolled Nurse Certificate
DHSS	Department of Health and Social Security
DLC	Distance Learning Centre
DNCert	District Nursing Certificate
EN	Enrolled Nurse
ENB	English National Board for Nursing, Midwifery and Health Visiting
GCE	General Certificate of Education
GCSE	General Certificate of Secondary Education
GP	General Practitioner
MA	Master of Arts
MPhil	Master of Philosophy
MSc	Master of Science
NHS	National Health Service
OHNC	Occupational Health Nursing Certificate
OND	Ophthalmic Nursing Diploma
PCAS	Polytechnic Central Admissions System
PhD	Doctor of Philosophy
RCN	Royal College of Nursing
RGN	Registered General Nurse
RHV	Registered Health Visitor
RM	Registered Midwife
RMN	Registered Mental Nurse
RNMH	Registered Nurse for the Mentally Handicapped
RNT	Registered Nurse Tutor
UCCA	Universities' Central Council on Admissions
UKCC	United Kingdom Central Council for Nursing, Midwifery and Health Visiting

Foreword

In an age where there is an ever-increasing demand for efficient, effective use of resources and public accountability, the need for nurses to plan their career development has never been more urgent. Gone are the days when a basic training sufficed to see the kindly carer through the rest of his or her working life. There is an explosion of new information which is growing all the time, and in order to be able to offer patients the service which they deserve, nurses have to be aware of new developments and continue to learn throughout their professional careers. This is no more than one would expect of any person working in a service-related discipline, but especially important when the 'product' of the service is another human being who has a right to know that the care that is offered is based on sound, up-to-date understanding.

Partly because of the diversity of choices which are open to nurses once they have undertaken their basic preparation, it is not always easy to know which options are available, or the implications of choosing a particular career path. A text such as this, which collates information about these choices, can be a valuable resource when important decisions are made about where to go next. Not only is information provided about formal access to courses, but also something about the work itself and the implications of moving into a particular sphere of nursing.

While information has been collected here about the more formal aspects of career development, it is worth remembering that learning is not confined to the addition of formal qualifications to one's repertoire. One of the important characteristics of all professional people is that they have a curiosity about their work and continue to question and, at times, challenge current practice through self-directed enquiry. Such a characteristic does not have to be confined within the boundaries of a formal course but is an activity which should invade practice at all times.

A combination of both formal and informal enquiry is widely

supported at both national and local levels as evidenced by the recent DHSS video *A Way of Thinking* and its accompanying text. It is recognised that the decisions which nurses have to make about their future careers are not easy, but a wise choice can lead to a rewarding future.

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