

MORE MALE NURSES NOW THAN EVER, BUT STEREOTYPES PERSIST

Why just a nurse? Are you in the right place? Male nurses defy existing gender stereotypes as the nursing field expands with more male nurses now than ever before.

With 12% of nurses being male, there are more male nurses than ever, according to [Southern New Hampshire University](#).

However, many still question the idea of a male nurse.

[According to the Accredited Schools Online Organization](#), “Throughout the 20th century and into the 21st century, stereotypes and stigmas have followed men who chose to enter nursing as a professional career.”

Men in nursing school also face these stereotypes.

“I walked into my first day of [nursing] advising class, and the teacher asked me if I was at the right place. And once I sat down, I realized I was the only guy in the class,” Trevor Melito, a freshman nursing major at Southeastern Louisiana University, said.

One stereotype is that being a doctor is a man’s job and nursing is a woman’s job.

Jacob Hickson, a medical intensive care unit nurse at Georgetown Hospital in Washington, D.C. who will be a nurse practitioner in July, shares questions patients ask him: Why not go to med school? Why do you feel like you want to be just a nurse?

“And ‘Just a nurse’ was always a phrase that bothered me because nursing, to me, is so important and necessary,” Hickson said.

Hickson said, “When it comes to patients themselves, they always will assume that the male entering the room is a physician.”

Blake Kennedy, a registered nurse who works in Jackson, Mississippi in interventional radiology, shares similar experiences.

“I never really hear them ask the females ‘well are you going back to school to be a doctor?’, but almost everyone asks me, ‘oh, so are you going back to be a doctor?’,” Kennedy said.

Another common stereotype is that women make better nurses because they are naturally nurturing.

However, Hickson and Kennedy explain that the quality of care is not dependent on gender.

“I don’t think it is a gender issue at all in terms of the proper level of care given,” Hickson said.

Hickson said, “I work with amazing female nurses who I would let take care of me or my family any day, but I also work with amazing male nurses who provide just the same level of care.”

Blake Kennedy agrees with Hickson.

“It’s such an individualistic thing,” Kennedy said.

“I know some guys that are some of the best nurses. They’ll go above and beyond for patients with whatever the request is, and it’s the same as for females,” Kennedy said.

Melito has similar viewpoints from watching his dad, a dialysis nurse.

“I’ve seen him in the workplace, and I’ve seen him be nurturing. And I admire that, and I would like to be like that,” Melito said.

Melito said, “It’s not a quote-on-quote ‘masculine’ job. Even though I believe it is. Of course, I believe it is. I believe it’s one of the more masculine jobs.”