

Tips for Writing a Personal Statement

Expression

1. Write in the active voice.
2. Be yourself – do not use words or styles you wouldn't normally use.
3. Use a consistent theme. Do not convey too many contrasting ideas.

Organization

1. Follow directions regarding length. If no limit is given, aim for 2 -3 pages double-spaced.
2. Do not start your essay with biographical information like “I was born in” or “I have a degree in”.
3. Begin with an attention-grabbing lead – an anecdote, quote, question, vivid description of a scene, etc.
4. Create clear transitions between paragraphs, connecting ideas between each.
5. End your essay with a conclusion that refers to the introduction, relates to your theme, or summarizes your main points.

Excerpts from Personal Statement

My awakening to the wonder of human cultural diversity began with my entry into Army Basic Training. Living in an open barracks for three months with women from every corner of the United States opened my eyes and mind to the amazing variety of cultural groups just within our own country. Since then, I have lived, worked, and traveled in Europe, Africa, and the Middle East. I gained invaluable cross-cultural experience as a member of a multi-national task force, which provided Emergency Medical Service in Kuwait during Operation Desert Storm. In addition to these experiences, my Army training has enabled me to develop strong skills in leadership, teambuilding, and organization. These are all qualities that will help me to be successful in my chosen field of Community Health Nursing.

[In this paragraph, she summarizes her turning points, skills, and attributes. She also connects her past and present.]

I have chosen the focus area of cross-cultural nursing because I know that making health programs culturally accessible is as important as making them geographically and financially accessible. This has been clearly demonstrated to me at the Washington Poison Center where we provide telephone information services to the entire state of Washington. Poison Center services are underutilized by non-English speaking population groups and those with English as a second language. This is due in part to a lack of awareness of or understanding of the services provided by the Poison Center. Cross-cultural health education is the key to informing these populations of the benefits of using Poison Center services.

[In the second paragraph, she discusses why she is applying for this program and talks about some related experiences.]

As a cross-cultural nursing consultant I will work with multidisciplinary teams planning and implementing community health programs for underserved populations. I will bring to these teams the unique nursing perspective and an expertise in the effects of culture on health-seeking behaviors. Washington State has a rapidly growing Hispanic population with a large subculture of migrant farm workers. I intend to spend some time in rural eastern Washington working with Public Health officials and community leaders to increase the focus on primary prevention for this population group. I am also interested in working with Hispanic populations in other locations. With these plans in mind, I am currently studying Spanish. In addition, I plan to teach cross-cultural nursing subjects in the academic setting and in other venues such as hospital inservice training.

[She connects her future goals to the program and area. She also describes why she is a unique candidate.]