

# LEGAL BASICS FOR NURSES

## How Do I Select an Attorney?

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**T**he selection of an attorney is generally made as the result of an immediate and pressing legal emergency. This may be a stressful situation as you must trust an extremely important aspect of your professional or personal life to a new acquaintance — your attorney. Here are some tips to keep in mind when selecting an attorney.

### **Will you be comfortable working with this attorney?**

It is important that you retain an attorney you trust and who makes you feel comfortable. Keep interviewing lawyers until you find the right one for your case.

### **Can the attorney provide you with real-world legal advice as well as legal analysis?**

You are a nurse and you want any attorney you hire to provide you with practical advice and counsel especially if the legal matter involves your nursing career, license, and employability.

### **What will be the cost of legal representation?**

Attorney fees and costs vary. You will need to determine how you will be billed for services and what the payment expectations are. These points should be clarified in initial conversations with your attorney.

### **Are you hiring the right-size law firm or attorney for your matter?**

Attorneys vary not only in areas of specialization but also in the types and sizes of clients with which they work best. Larger and medium sized law firms may prefer to work with corporations and organizations while small law firms and solo practitioners may work better with individ-

ual clients like nurses. Be sure to find out how the law firm will staff your case. Will you work with one or more attorneys, paralegals, and other support staff? Remember, your case is important to you and you want your case to be important to the attorney and law firm you retain.

### **How is communication handled by the attorney?**

Communication between you and your attorney is very important. Your attorney should be easily accessible and approachable. You'll want to know how to contact your attorney (phone, fax, email, text, instant message, and/or mail) and when you can typically expect a response from the attorney. If you want every piece of paper and document from your case, let your attorney know this. If you do not want your attorney to call you at work or at home and only via cell phone, this should be communicated.

### **What is the reputation of the attorney and the law firm?**

You can research an attorney online. You can enter the name of the attorney and/or law firm into a search engine and review the hits. Such research can help you determine whether your attorney has a reputation for being knowledgeable, effective, compassionate, and understanding or if your attorney has a reputation for being difficult to work with.

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