



In Their Shoes

In Their Shoes is an interactive resource for projects in nursing homes. It aims to highlight the voice and experience of the employees.

Start at the Start





In Their Shoes



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What is this?

This resource is here to help you and your team work with new projects in the nursing homes of Oslo. The information here is built from observations done with staff members in the homes.

Here, you'll find:



Background provides a bit more information and some general findings.



Project Foundations are the very basic things that must be remembered for any project.



Project Themes are more specific findings from the research as well as directions for new projects.

How to use it

As an interactive PDF you can:

- click through the pages using the sidebar navigation
- bookmark relevant pages
- make comments or notes
- save your annotated version and share with your team

"The people who make decisions about my day are so high up. They don't see what's really happening."

-Nurse





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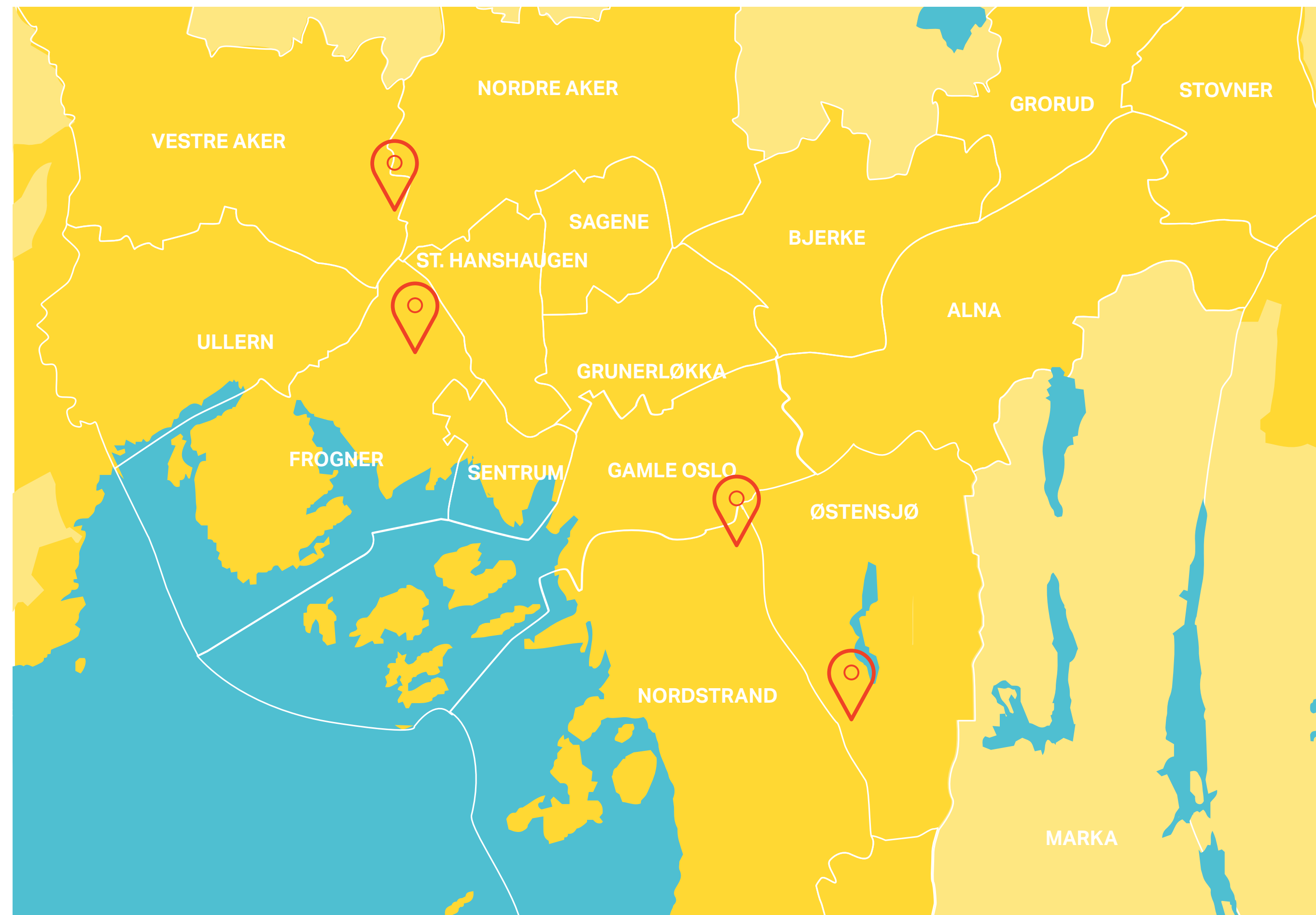
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The information in this resource was collected during observations in four different nursing homes across Oslo. They represent large and small homes, publicly and privately run.



3 NURSES
1 NURSING ASSISTANT



4 DIFFERENT NURSING HOMES



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The Method

As a designer, I frequently use an observational research method, also called shadowing, to understand the area I'm working with. This method allows me to immerse myself in that world.

In order to design for the space, I need to find out how things actually work, to understand the physical, emotional, and mental environments the employees find themselves in every day. The best way to find out is just to go there and see.

Who

In this type of research, we get a lot of information from a few participants, as opposed to a survey, where you have many participants, but not much depth to the questions.

Where

Four homes were available in my time frame to allow shadowing. They were both long and short term houses, all in Oslo kommune.

When

All of these were done during normal working hours. I observed day shifts in October 2015.

What

Observation offers a rich and in depth view of a few people. Experiencing the work first hand gives much more understanding to the nuanced details of their days.

How

I simply followed one employee each day during their shift, from start to finish, taking notes all the time, along with the occasional photo or video.

Why

As a neutral person coming in to simply observe, and not judge, people do not feel like they have to perform. They just act naturally. I explain that I am evaluating the systems, and not the staff's ability to use them.



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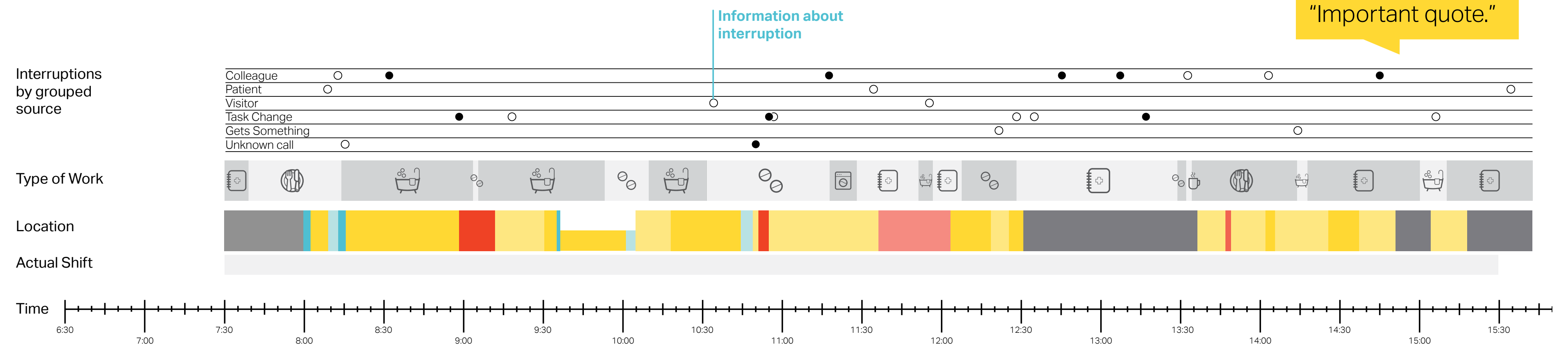
Project Themes

Timelines

Each shift is shown on a time line. These show a lot of information, so I've tried to simplify it as much as possible. These pages show the details of each shift, with the names of who I shadowed removed.

- Staff Work Room
- Resident Room
- Residents' Common Space
- Medicine Room
- Staff Break Space
- Storage Space
- Laundry/Cleaning Room
- admin nursing
- medical nursing
- non-medical care
- preparing food
- break
- cleaning

Example





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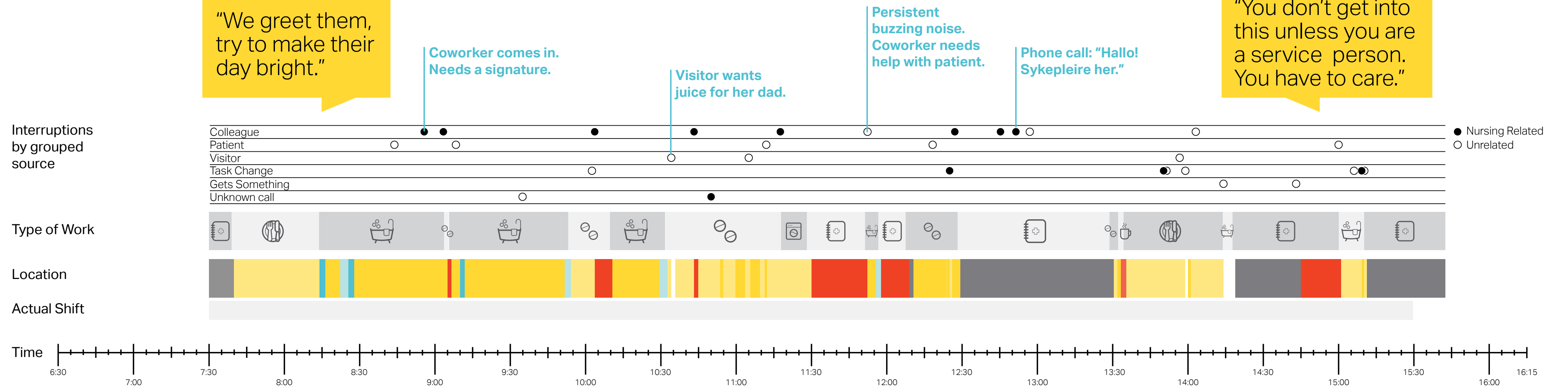


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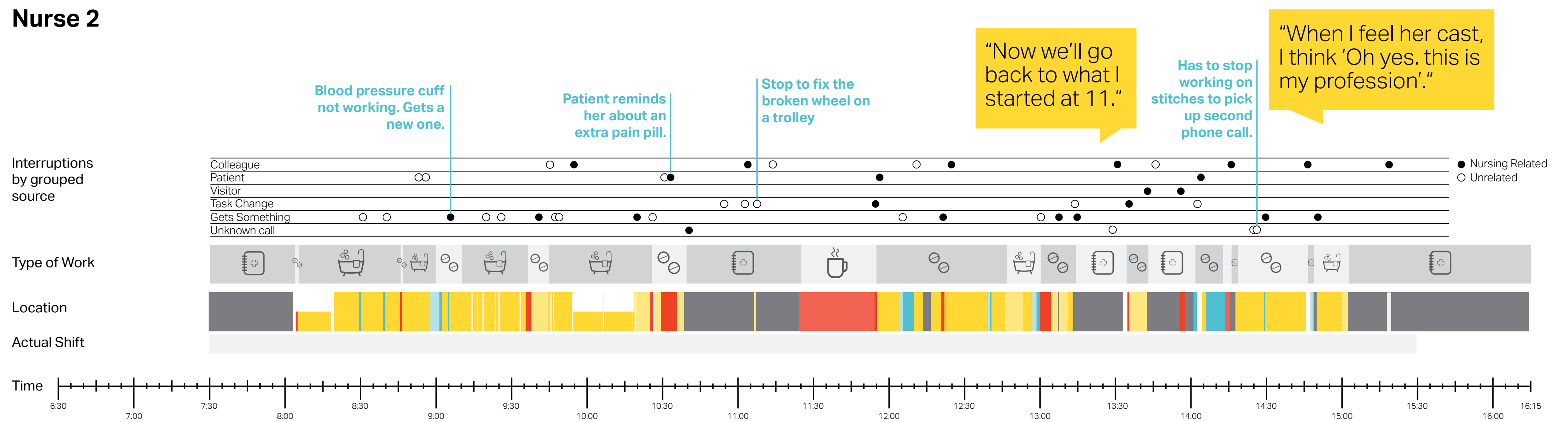


Project Themes

Nurse 1



Nurse 2



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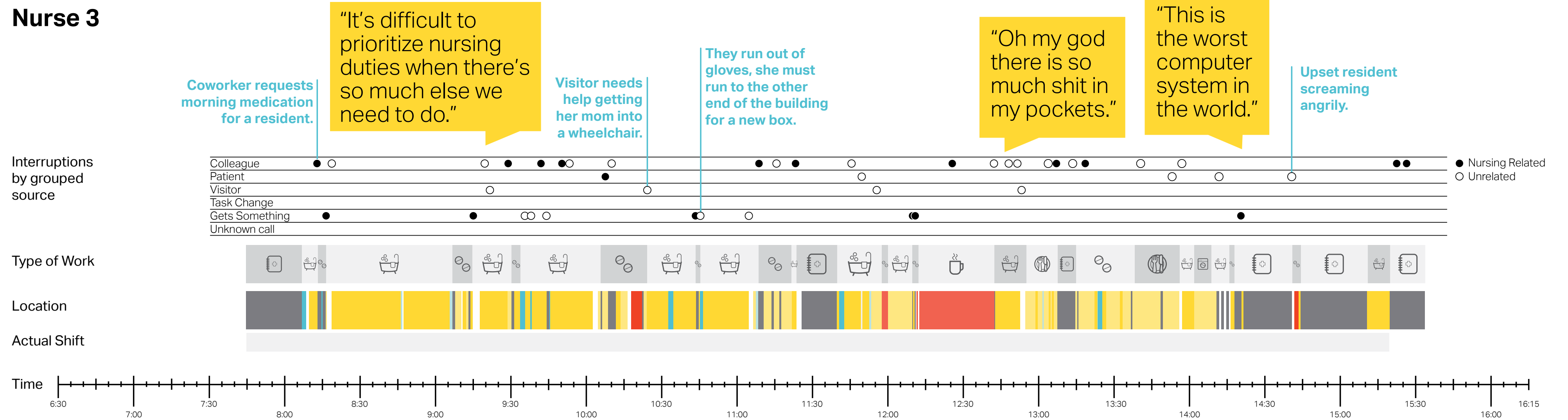
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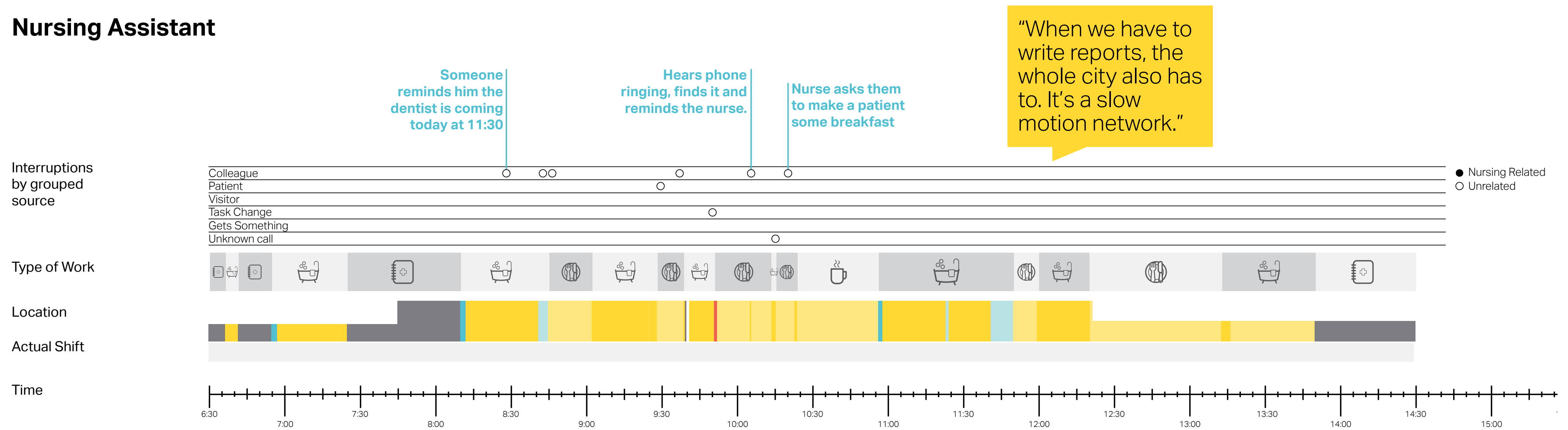
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Nurse 3



Nursing Assistant





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General Findings


By zooming out and looking at all the observations at once, we can see what the staff spends their time doing. But these only go so far. It's important to dig past these "big picture" numbers and dive into the detail.

What kind of work do they do?

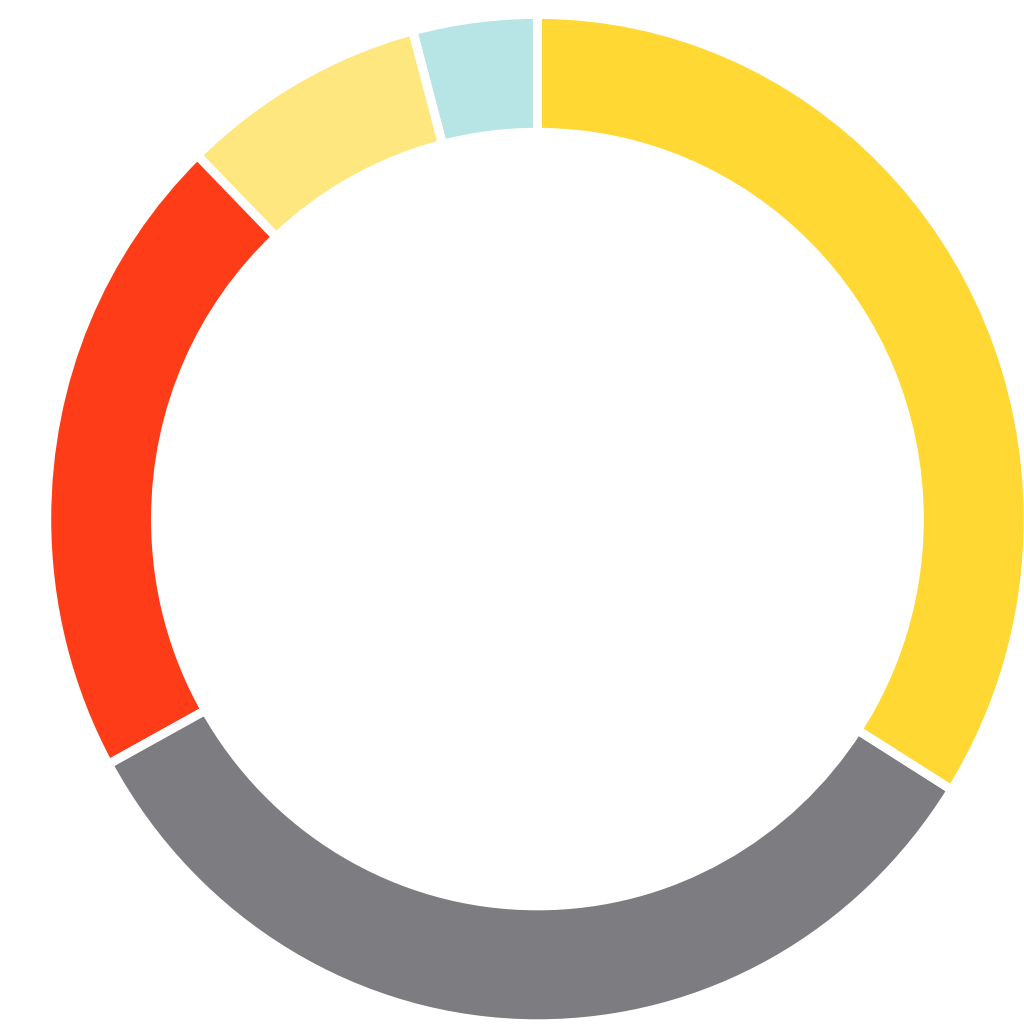
 **34%**
non medical care

 **31%**
nursing administration

 **22%**
medical care

 **9%**
food preparation

 **4%**
on break



Where do they work?





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Waking patients: 4-5 times



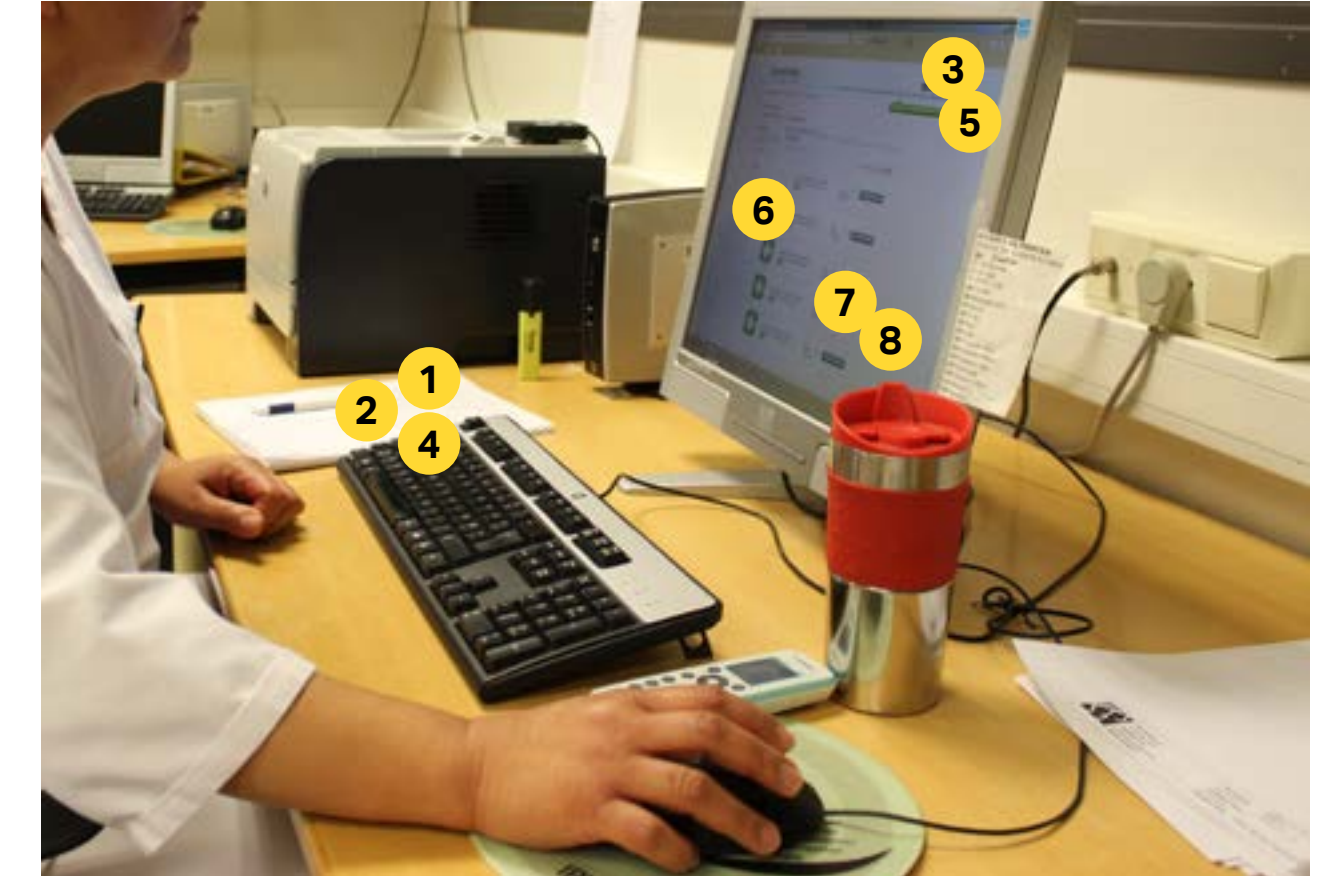
- 1 gets washing things
- 2 turns on the light
- 3 says hello!
- 4 removes clothes and bathes resident
- 5 changes diaper
- 6 dresses them
- 7 brushes teeth
- 8 wheels out to kitchen

Giving medication: 5-10 times



- 1 opens to their page
- 2 gets week's pill box
- 3 empties pills into cup
- 4 verifies pill by pill
- 5 if needed, crushes with jam or mixes into water
- 6 gets water
- 7 tracks down patient
- 8 signs the book

Ordering medication: 69 times



- 1 placeholder pen
- 2 reads name
- 3 types into search
- 4 double checks
- 5 clicks "search" & wait
- 6 scrolls through results
- 7 changes quantity
- 8 clicks order

When Repetition Works

Having a predictable morning routine is good for patients when they wake. Administrative tasks should be as automated as possible. When ordering medication or giving it out, repetition can make sure each pills goes where it needs to.

When It Doesn't Work

If the repetitive task relies on a slow computer system, she spends a lot of her time waiting for the screen to load. If she has to control medication in a busy kitchen area and go find each patient in between, it leaves plenty of opportunity to get interrupted and pulled into other tasks. This work requires intense focus.



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Paper Systems

One of the first things I noticed about the environment is how much paper is displayed everywhere. These vary widely in their use.

■ Rarely

Staff members become desensitized to things that are up for a long time. They are placed there as references, but end up cluttering the space. In every office there are cumbersome binders that are used for reference, but staff admitted they almost never use them.

■ Once per shift

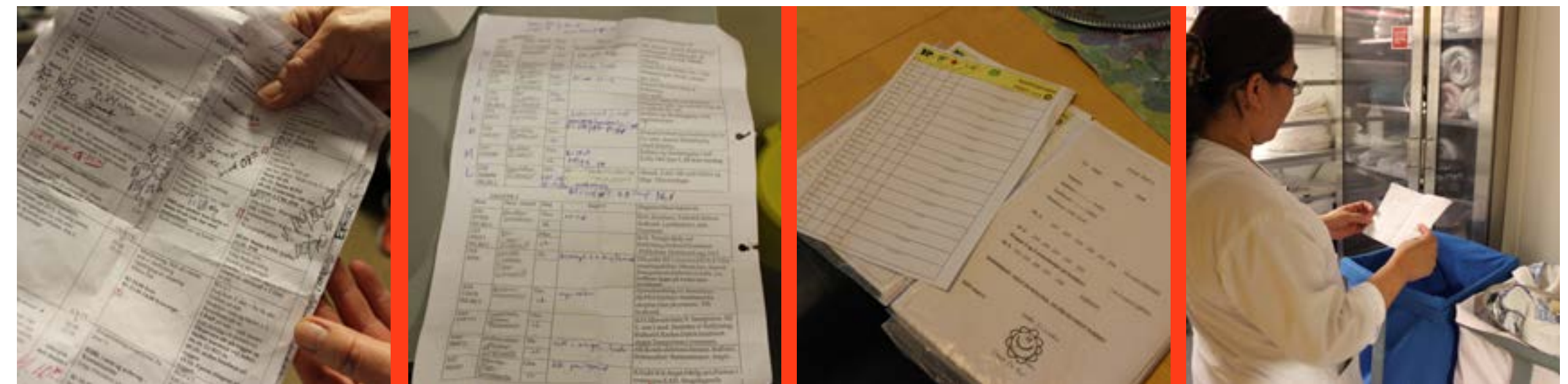
These calendars, or “black books”, are used to note down items that do not happen on a regular basis. The staff reads them at the beginning of the shift and take notes if they are relevant for them. They do not look at them throughout the shift.










■ Constantly throughout shift

One nurse referred to these A4 sheets as “the bible”. They use it to keep track of patient needs, like showers or medical checks. They also note medical information like the patient’s temperature and blood pressure that they copy into the reports at the end of the shift before the sheets are shredded.

■ As needed

Each ward has their own medical cart, which also holds the medicine binder, used by the nurses to check medications and sign off. There are also other books around to note to the janitor or physiotherapist.



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Foundations

Foundations are the most basic, fundamental findings. They are not separate from each other, but work together to form a solid base for every project. They are written here from the viewpoint of a nursing home employee. These are ideas that frequently get forgotten when new changes are being implemented.


Click each to read more.

We did not enter this field because we love writing reports.



Trust our judgment about our own work.


Acknowledge the variety in our world.



Understand that our world is filled with contradictions.



Remember that we only have 60 minutes in each hour.



Remember that we only have 60 minutes in each hour.












We don't enter this field because we love writing reports.

We cherish the human side of care. Many residents rely on staff for social interactions. But, when we are tired or stressed, they feel it too.

It takes one kind of energy to do the laundry, another kind to give a kind smile and have a meaningful conversation. Support changes that preserve our energy for the residents.

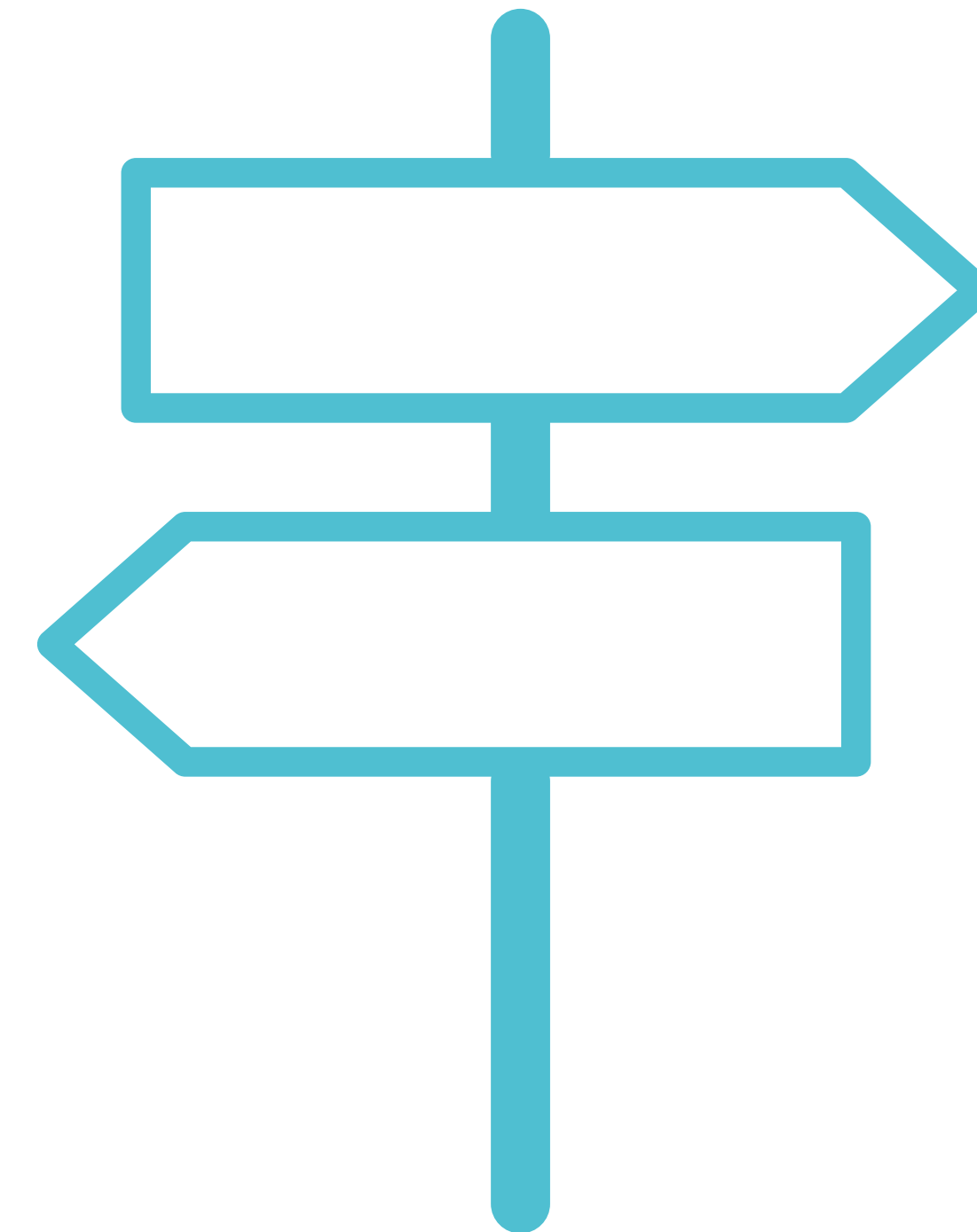











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Understand that our world is filled with contradictions.

This work is an art and a science, clinical and personal, requiring sharp focus and a broad perspective. Our days need to be predictable for the residents, with room for movement and spontaneity.

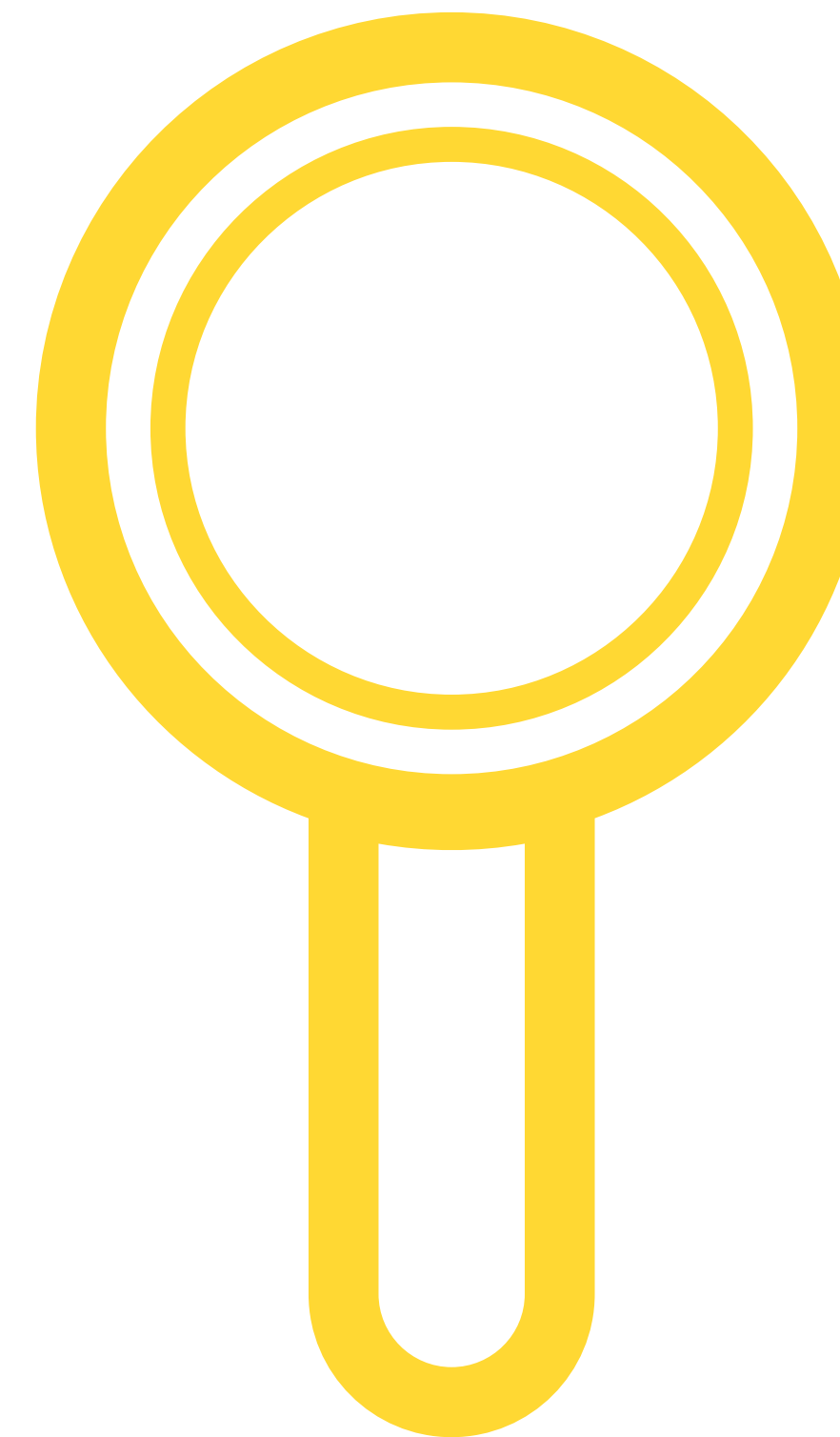
Give us a world that can handle the unpredictability without falling apart, or causing more stress.



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Trust our judgment about our own work.

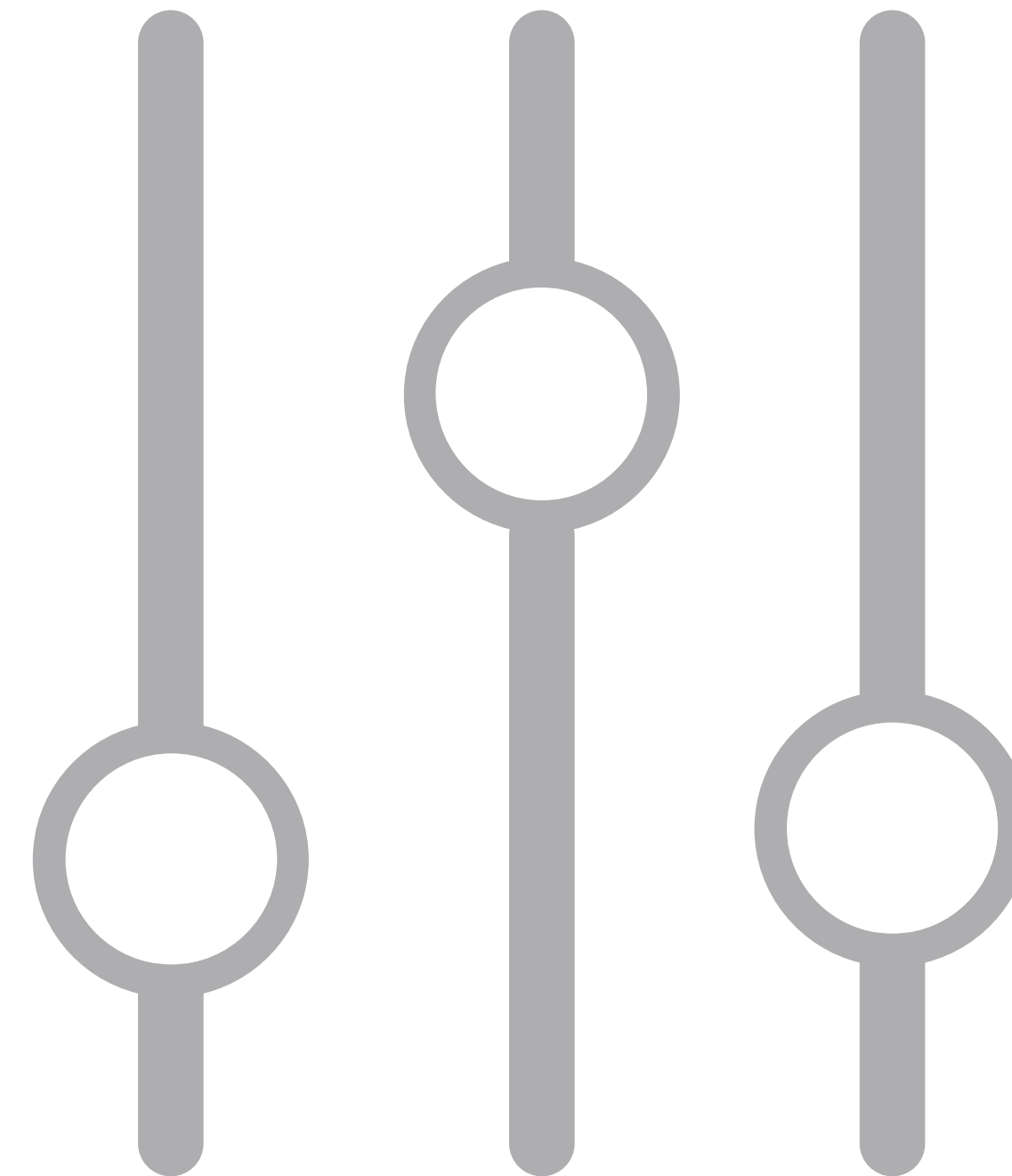
If you trust us to care for your family members, please trust us when you ask about our work. You will get a much more accurate answer if you ask the people doing the work. If you have a question about nurses, ask the nurses. If you want to know about administration, ask them. We're here, and happy to share.



Acknowledge the variety in our world.

There is a difference between nurses and nursing assistants, and between the night shift and the day. Our residents have a diverse range of abilities and diagnoses.

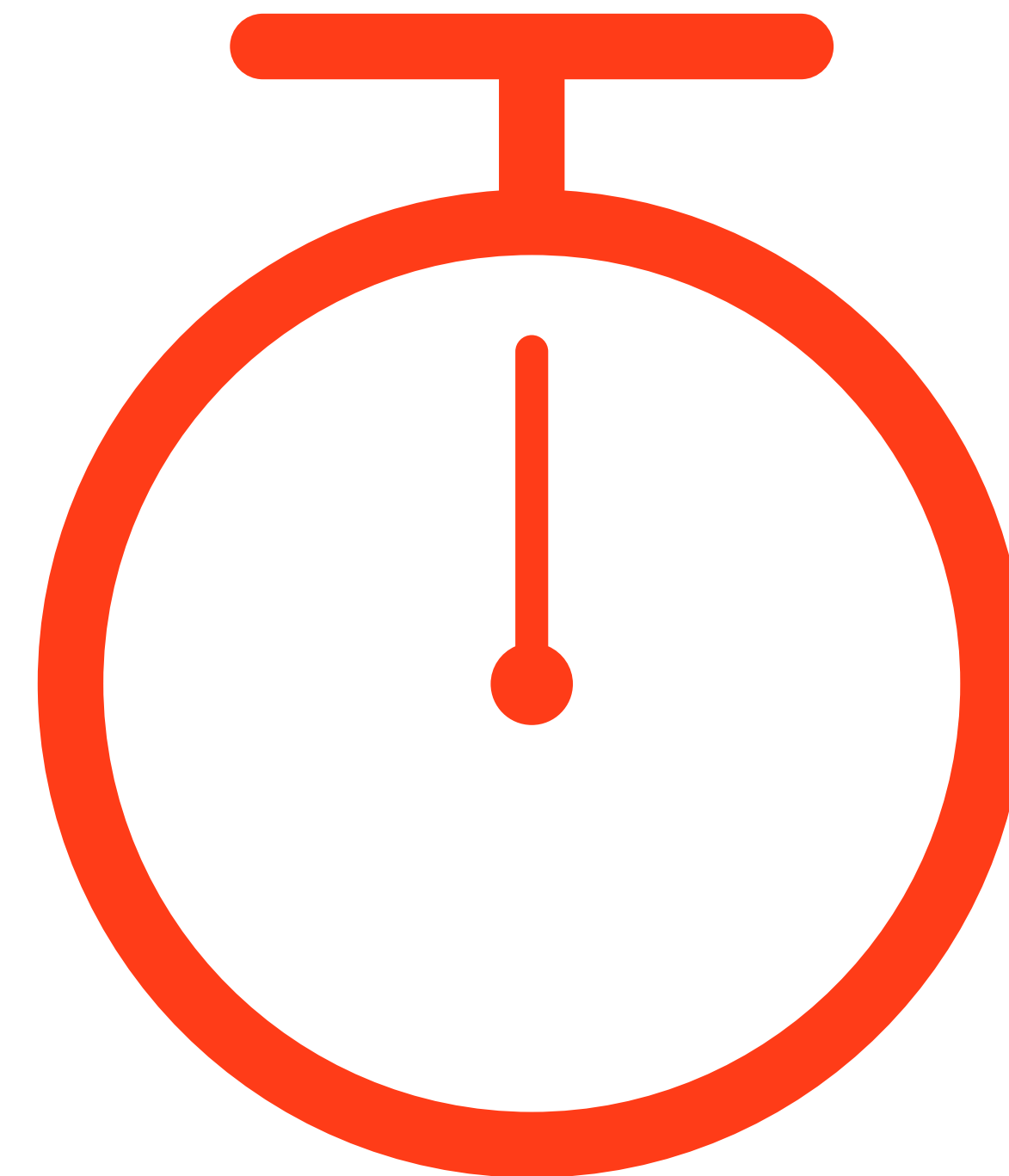
Build a system that plays to the strengths of these differences. Treating everything and everyone as the same can end up with some being stressed and others not living up their potential.



Remember that we only have 60 minutes in each hour.

Each time you add a new requirement or responsibility, consider what will be left behind or forgotten in its place. Our shifts do not get longer when you add more things for us to do. So we must prioritize.

Any change you make will either take more time from the staff, or give it back.





In Their Shoes



Background



Project Foundations



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Organizational



Cultural



Technological

Organizational

"It's difficult to prioritize nursing duties when there is so much else we need to do."



These projects make sure everyone has the resources they need to get their work done.

Cultural

"You don't get into this work unless you are a service person. You have to care."



These projects will focus on creating a rich community within the homes.

Technological

"When we have to write reports, the whole city also has to. It's a slow motion network."



These projects focus on the systems that the staff uses on a day to day basis.

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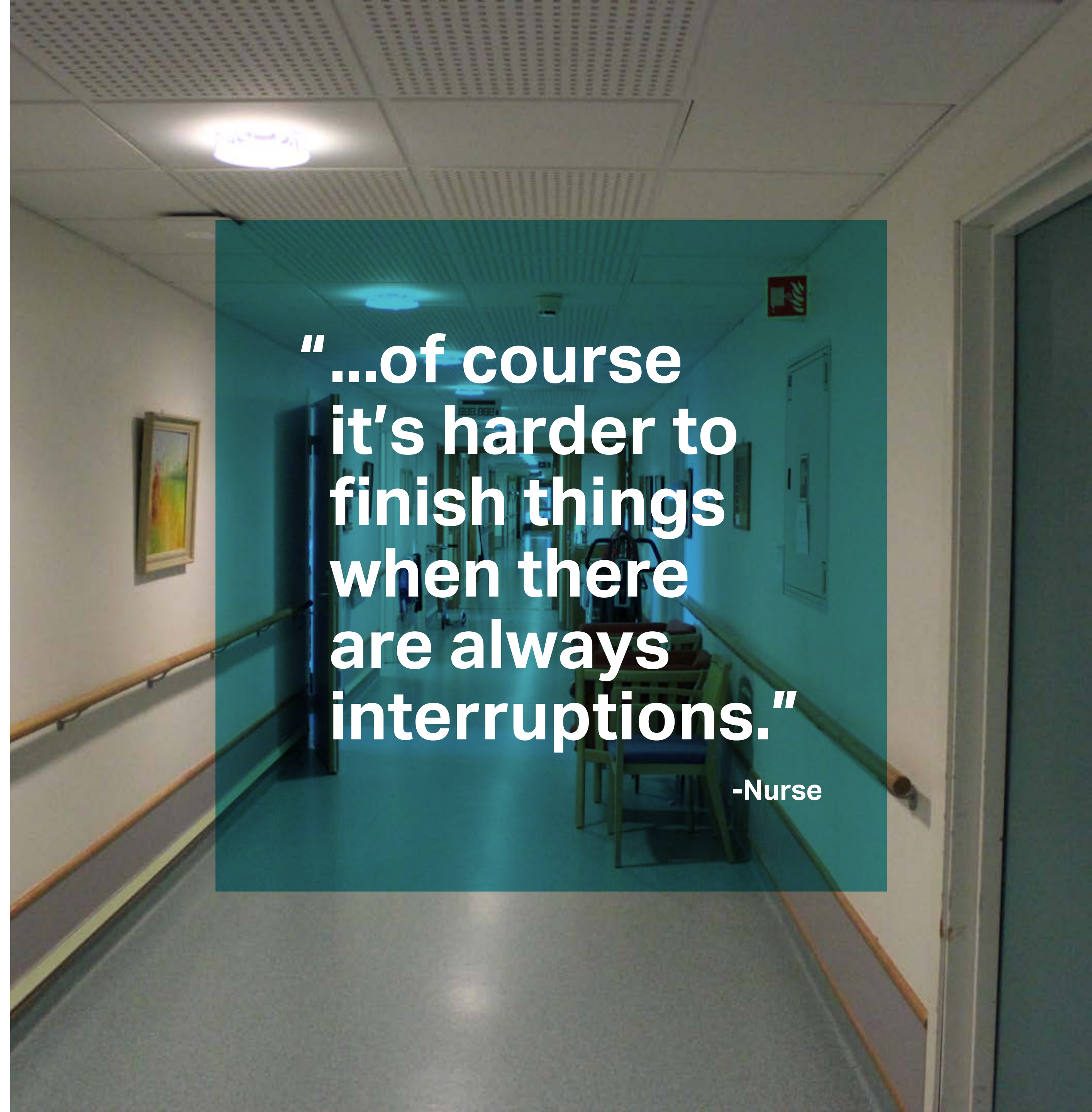
Technological

Relevant Findings

If you want to work on a project that changes organizational systems, there are some important things to know. It's just as important to note when it is calm as when it's busy. The work could be more evenly divided to alleviate the stressful times.

**"...of course
it's harder to
finish things
when there
are always
interruptions."**

-Nurse





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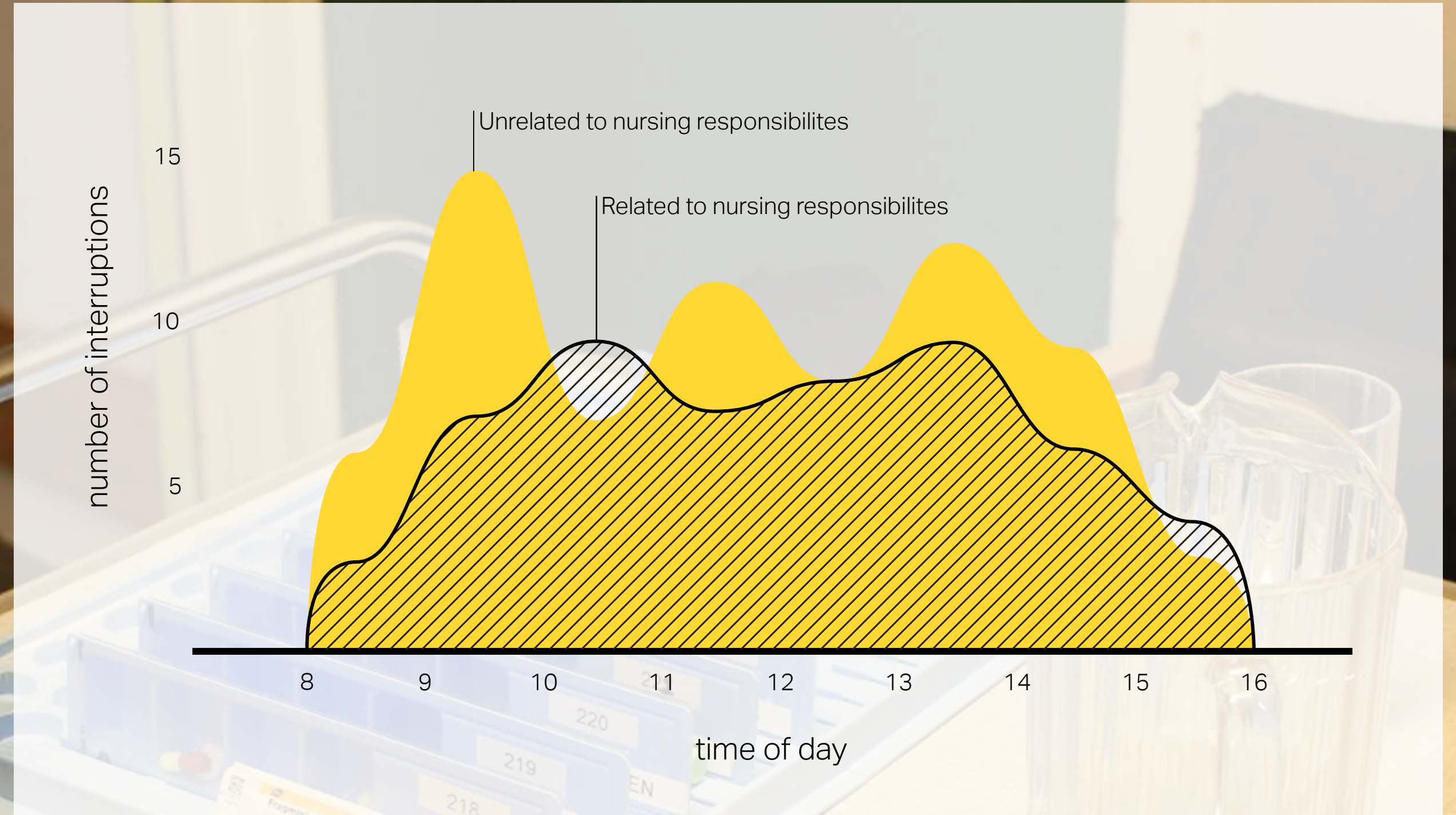
- Organizational Relevant Findings**
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Cultural

Technological

Nursing related requests

Nursing related requests like medication or administrative tasks pick up and drop off at the start and end of the day. This suggests that nursing responsibilities are fairly regular. The unpredictability comes from all the other interruptions. These come seemingly at random.



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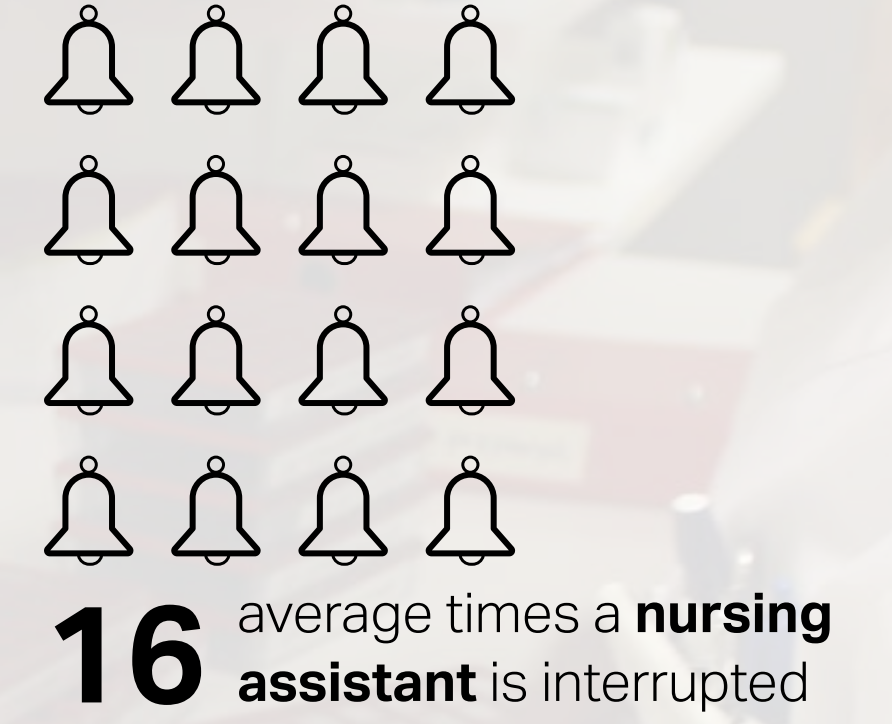
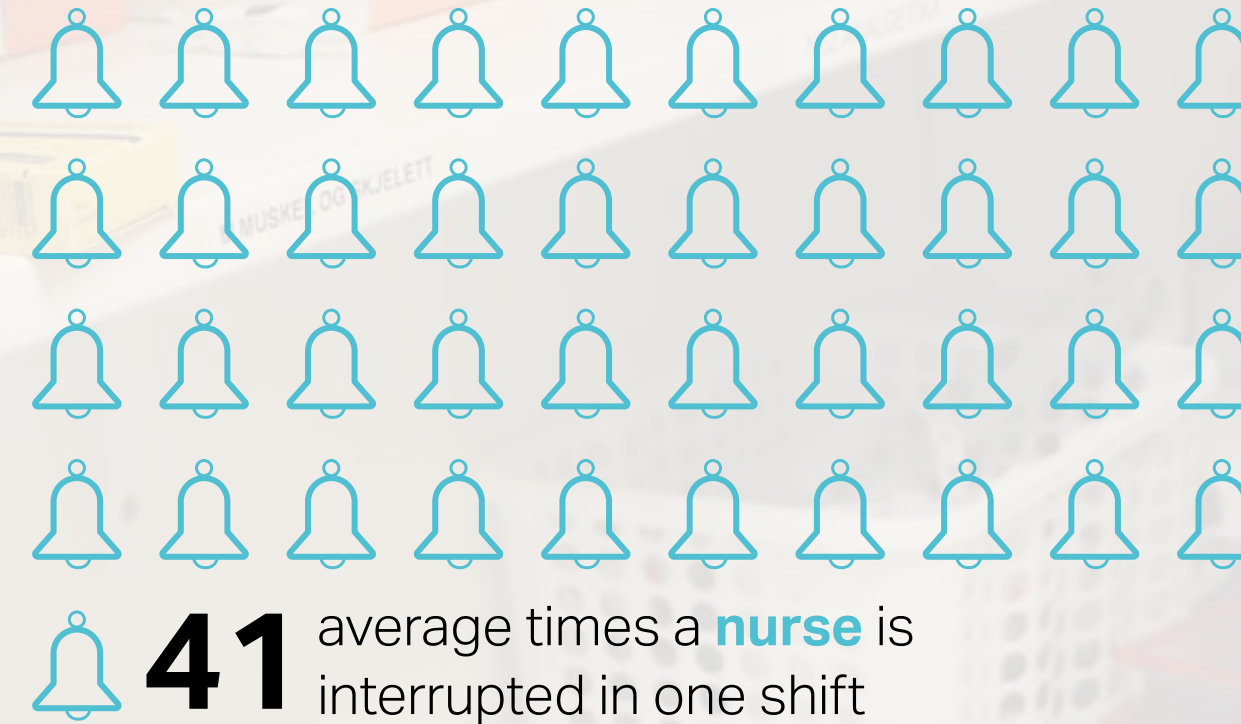
Cultural



Technological

Unequal Days

Nurses and nursing assistants divide the patients equally, but this doesn't account for all the additional responsibilities that nurses have. They wash and dress the same number of patients as the nursing assistants, but also have to prepare medication as well. They are also interrupted much more. Some of the reason nurses are interrupted more is because there are things that only they can do.



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Quiet Before the Storm

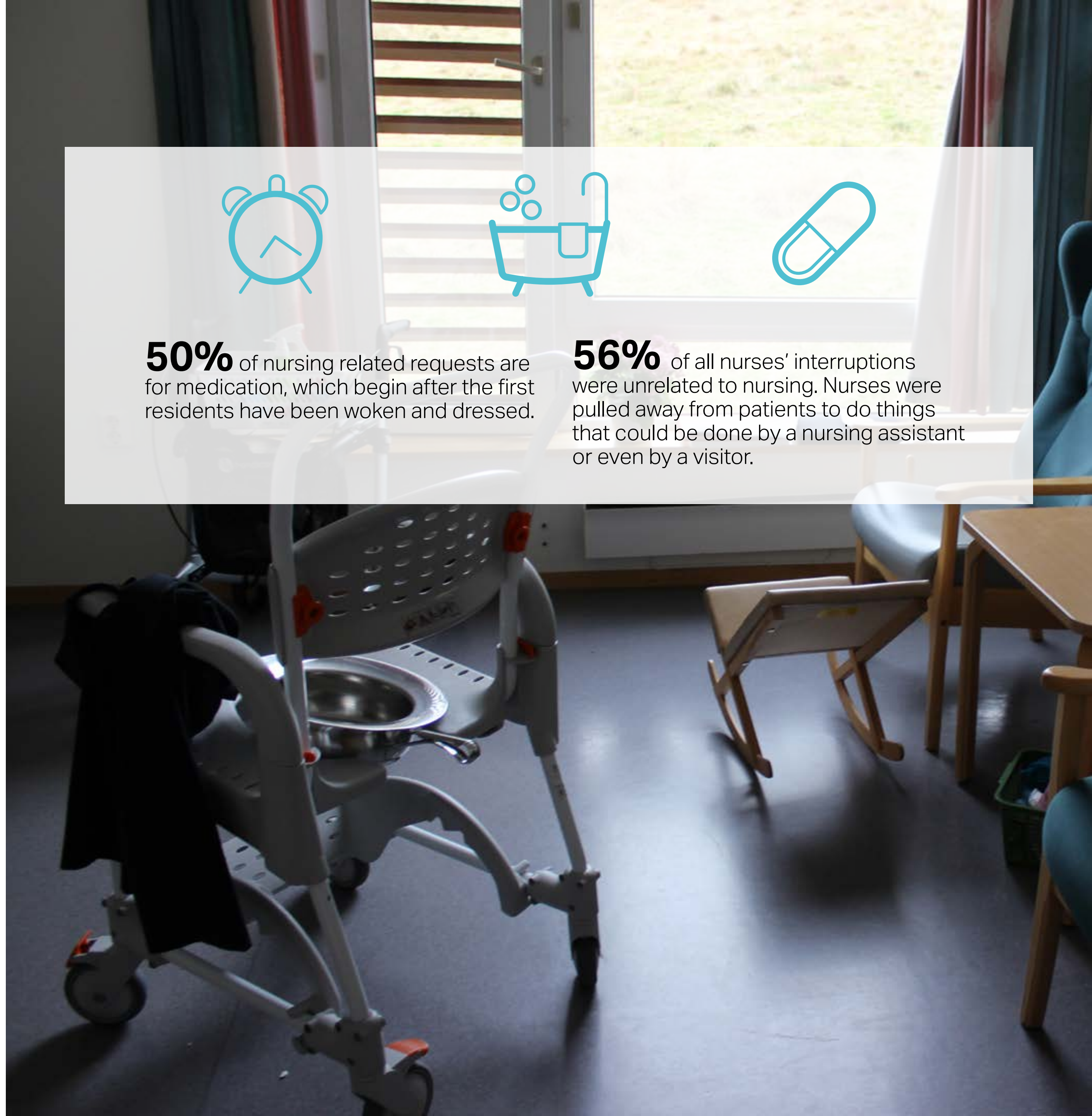
The quietest part of a nurse's day is while waking the first resident. Everyone else is also with a resident. But when he or she is finished, so are the others, and this is when all the interruptions start.



50% of nursing related requests are for medication, which begin after the first residents have been woken and dressed.



56% of all nurses' interruptions were unrelated to nursing. Nurses were pulled away from patients to do things that could be done by a nursing assistant or even by a visitor.



Potential Projects

These are a few initial ideas for changes that can be made in the homes. They try to allow each staff member to have the time, space, and energy to do everything that they are required to.

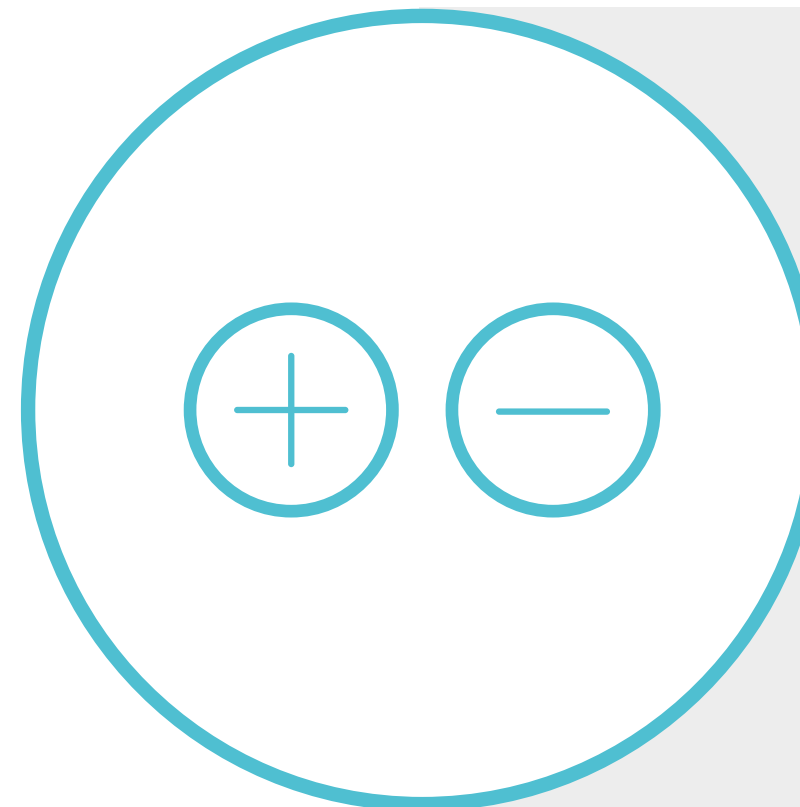


Protected Time

A few short, protected times in the day set aside to control medicine, or other nursing duties is better than constantly stopping work to do them. Protected time means that other staff members cannot interrupt them unless it is an emergency. If it's first thing in the morning, during the quietest time, all the medication will be ready to go, before the requests from other staff members even start.

Potential Benefits

- allows for better concentration on important tasks
- fewer interruptions means that the work can be done quicker, and the staff can get back to their residents



Equal Labor

Staff currently members wake, wash, and dress the same number of patients each. The nurses however, also need to prepare medication, do inventories, and control narcotics on top of that. Equal work is not about the same number, it's about the same amount of work. There should also be equal division between shifts. Take advantage of the quiet times at night to take care of things like ordering supplies or prepping a meal.

Potential Benefits

- balances the work across the whole home, not just on one shift
- lets the nurses focus on nursing skills










Better Meetings

The first shift meeting should acknowledge the regular tasks for the day like supplies that need to be ordered, or inventories that need to be checked. When everyone is aware of what needs to be done, they can all work towards it together. There could also be a second check-in meeting for a few minutes in the middle of the shift. This lets everyone get back on the same page. They can restructure tasks if someone needs help.

Potential Benefits

- builds a more communicative team
- offers help to those who may not otherwise ask for it

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Before You Begin

These projects are centered around the way the wards are organized. These interventions can make a huge impact for little investment of precious resources.

Project Theme Goal:

Build a predictable structure that still has room for spontaneity.

Project Factors:



Low Cost

This involves existing capital. It may involve paying for extra time for the team to plan.



Short time frame

This approach can tell you new things right away. Testing out small ideas can start today.



Low Risk

By keeping the changes small, the risk is minimized. If it doesn't work, just adjust again and see what else can be done.



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Team:

It's important to have people that are working in the wards on the project team. They know about the details of the daily routines in ways that administrators won't.

Because these changes affect more than just one person, it's best to have one or two posts that can act as pilots. They could ever be in the same home. Each post could make the same change and see how it affects them, or compare different ideas.

Key Questions:

1. Are there slower times in the routines that could be better used?
2. Is the team open to making small changes and testing new routines?
3. Are we letting the strengths of each employee shine?
4. How will we measure the differences that result from any changes we propose?

Activities/phases:



Come Together

Gather your team. Getting the right people together is crucial to affecting real change.



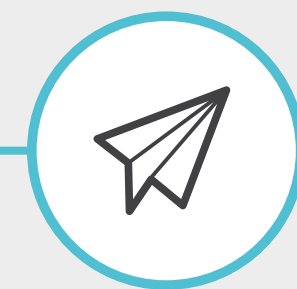
Start Small

Start with small changes, to find their impact. If at first it doesn't work, ask why, make adjustments before giving up.



Measure Up

Document your changes and compare with before to see their effects.



Spread Out

Share your results! If you are benefiting, other homes can too.



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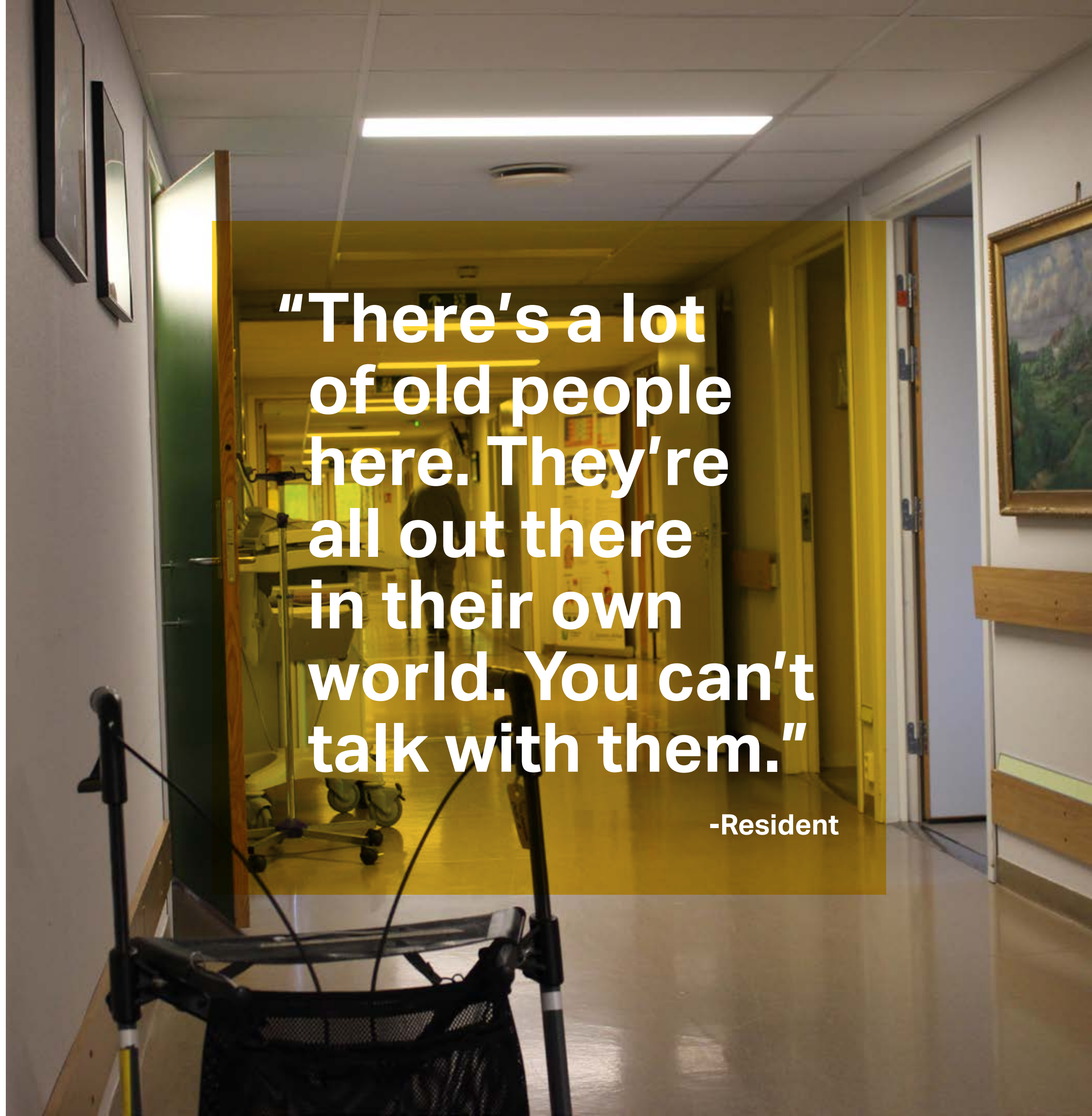
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Relevant Findings

The culture in a nursing home is both clinical and comforting. The staff move very quickly, always doing more than one thing at a time. They get the required work finished while also trying to be social and friendly with the residents.

"There's a lot of old people here. They're all out there in their own world. You can't talk with them."

-Resident





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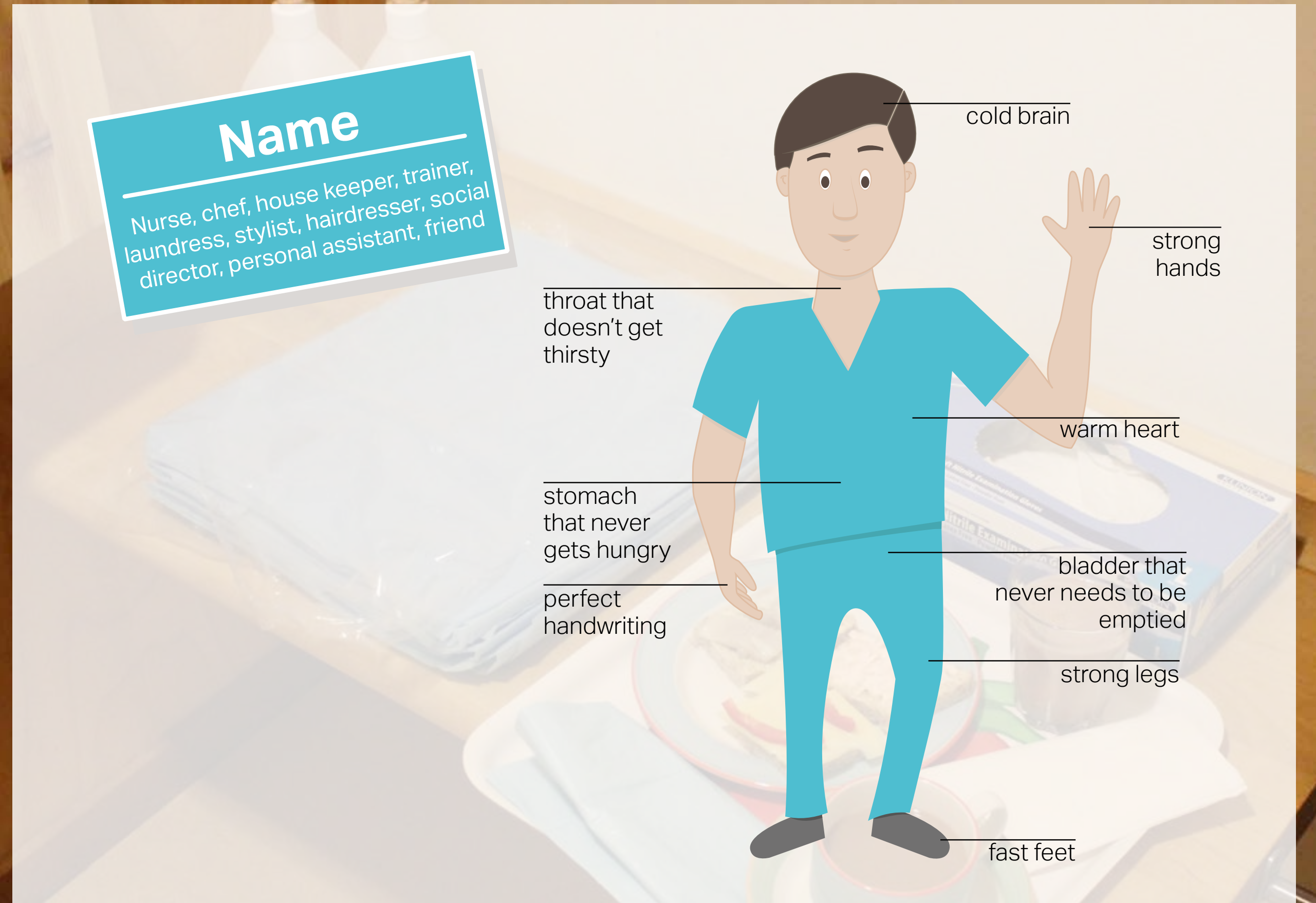
Before You Begin



Technological

They Have Many Requirements

Each employee only wears one job title on their name tag. But really, they do so much more. During an interview I did, one employee said, "to work here, you need a cold brain, strong hands, warm heart, and strong legs." But after my observations, I found that there were a few more things that might be useful.



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Visitors and Social Needs

Residents who are capable of communicating rely on the staff for social interactions. Some residents prefer eating in their rooms because they cannot communicate with or relate to the other residents.








Visitors often ask for very simple things, like juice, and do not know how to use the lifts.



57%

visitor requests that could be avoided with better information



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Nike Should Sponsor Them

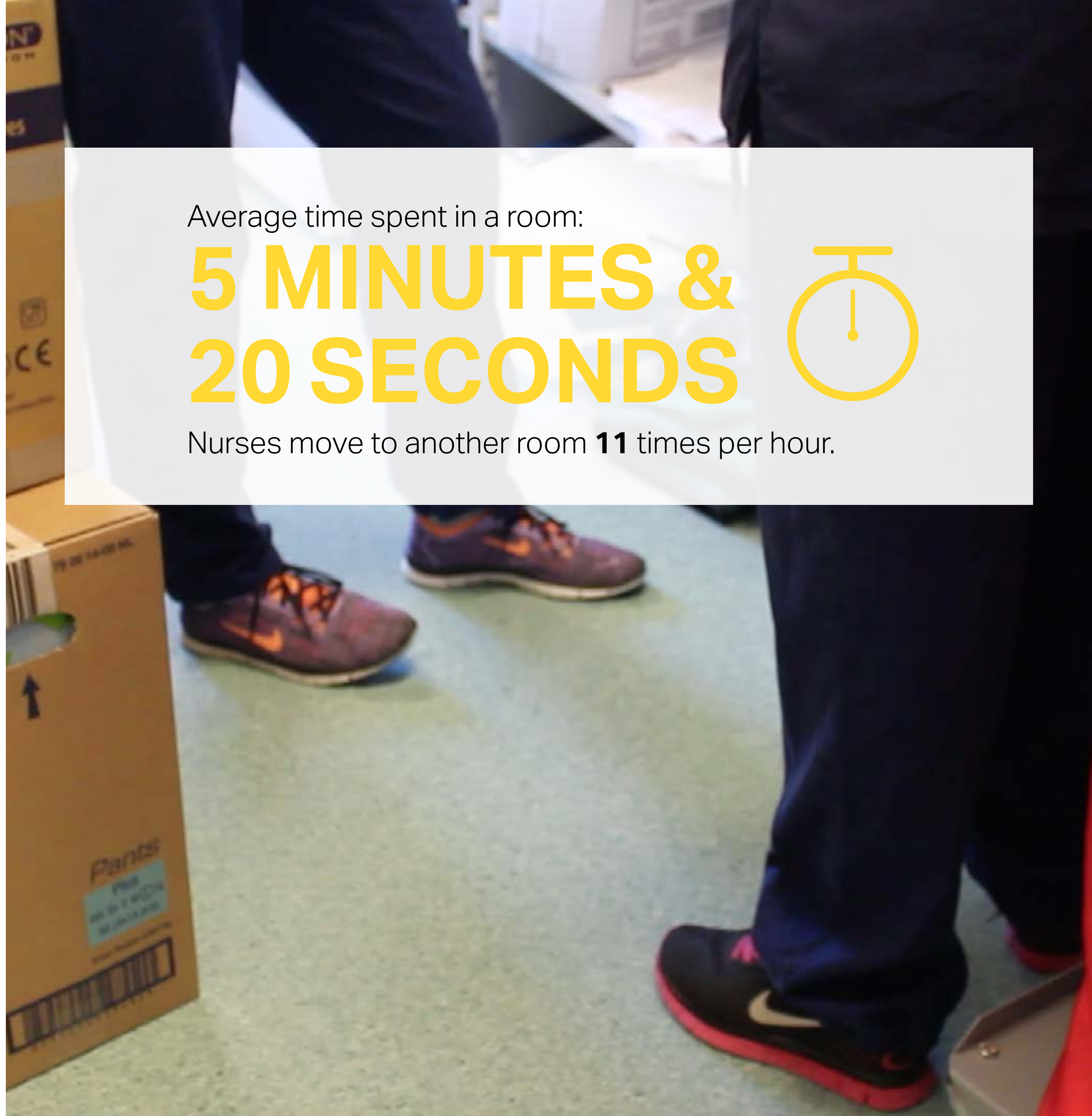
The work in nursing homes is very physical. Not only are you required to lift residents and heavy equipment, you also have to run down the halls whenever something or someone needs urgent attention.

Average time spent in a room:

**5 MINUTES &
20 SECONDS**



Nurses move to another room **11** times per hour.



Potential Projects

These projects are trying to find new ways to engage the community around the residents. This increased capacity from can take unnecessary weight from the staff's shoulders.

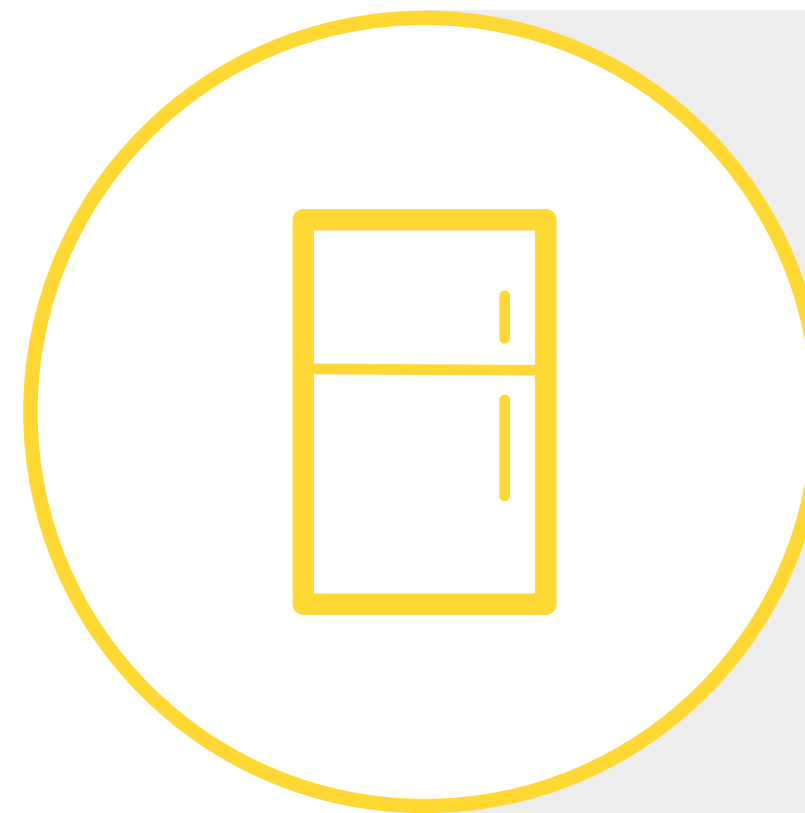


Give Them Training

Bringing the family members into the care can help build a stronger community. If the resident requires a lift to get them in and out of bed, or a wheelchair, the family can also be trained how to use these. Staff members often have to leave one resident behind to help another.

Potential Benefits

- family get a better sense of involvement and responsibility
- they are more included in the care and gain a better appreciation for the work
- one staff member is freed up to do other things



Give Them Access

The residents are supposed to feel like this is their home. Family visitors should then also feel like they are in someone's home. They shouldn't have to stop an employee to get their parents some juice. Granting them some autonomy can lessen the workload.

Potential Benefits

- creates a homier and more welcoming environment
- puts the visitors at ease
- lets the staff focus on more critical needs of the residents










Ask for More

Some nursing homes outside Norway require that family members volunteer in the homes a few hours each week. This builds a wider community, as they get to know other residents besides their own family. A small way to start this could be by requiring they come and help prepare one or two meals each month, either the regular meal, or something special from home.

Potential Benefits

- fosters a sense of responsibility
- allows sharing of traditions and appreciation for the residents' backgrounds
- lightens the loads on the weekends, when there are fewer staff members at the homes

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Before You Begin

Keep this work focused on creating a community around the residents. Building a stronger relationship between the staff, the residents, and the visitors will help everyone. When other people can pitch in on the small stuff, it frees time for the staff to focus on the bigger tasks.

Project Theme Goal:

A strong culture will give more energy than it takes.

Project Factors:



Medium Cost

It may take some additional funding for training or extra days, but nothing overwhelming.



Medium time frame

It will take some time for family and friends to get used to new policies. In time, changes for the best will feel natural.



Medium Risk

There is a risk of alienating some of the quieter family members, but building a stronger community is beneficial for everyone.



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Team:

A team for projects like these should be as diverse as possible. You should include staff members that work in the wards as well as administrators. It's also essential to have the voices of the visitors represented.

You could start by talking with some of the visitors that are there more frequently. They will be more willing to start something new and take on a larger role in the home. They have the opportunity to set an example for others.

Key Questions:

1. Are we encouraging residents' families and friends to take initiative in the home?
2. Are we letting the voice of the visitors be heard? Do they feel at home here as well?
3. What are ways we can involve the residents' friends and families in planning new changes?
4. How can we strengthen the role of visitors to really make the residents feel like they are at home?

Activities/phases:



Plan It Out

What new programs do you want to try? Gather your team together and get dates set well ahead of time.



Recruitment

Find any family members who are keen to participate. Include them in the process. They might have some ideas of their own!



Testing

Get the reactions from family and residents too. What worked? What didn't? How can we build on it?



Spread Out

Share your results! If you are benefiting, other homes will too. They can tweak and adjust to suit their community.



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Sometimes technology speeds up the work, other times, it slows down the staff and keeps them out of reach of the residents. In your tech project, make sure it does not create more distance between the staff and the residents

"Sometimes, I think tech security is a higher priority than patient care."

-Employee





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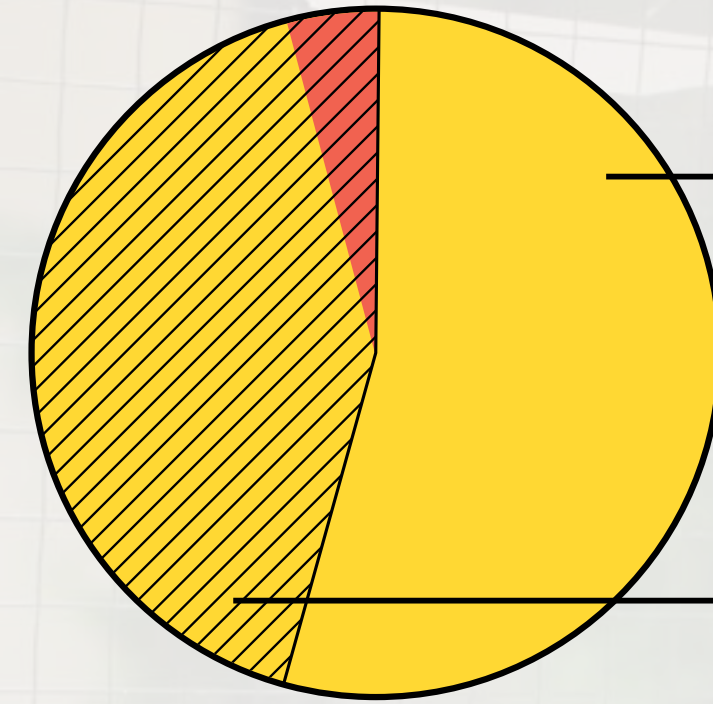
Potential Projects

Before You Begin

Accessible Staff

The computers are located in staff work rooms. This means that when the staff is using a computer, they are not accessible for the residents. It's as if they have disappeared. It's the same for the nurses in the medicine room while they do inventory or control medications.

Slow systems and interruptions keep them hidden from the residents longer. Nearly half of their day is spent away from the residents.



54%

time they are in places accessible to a resident, like in their bedrooms or common kitchen area

46%

time spent in staff only areas doing administrative work, or 4% on break



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Before You Begin

Technology In the Way

When staff are kept from the residents because of technology, it's no longer serving it's purpose. The intention with technology should be to make the work quicker and more efficient, to get the staff back to the residents.



Due to security concerns, staff can't check email and write reports on the patient journals using the same computer. But most staff rooms only have one computer.



When ordering medication, most of the time is spent waiting for the search results to load on the old browser.



Most nursing homes operate on the same schedule, which means the system for writing reports is used by the whole city at the same time. This makes the network slower and more difficult to use.



In Their Shoes



Background



Project Foundations



Project Themes

Organizational

Cultural

Technological

Relevant Findings

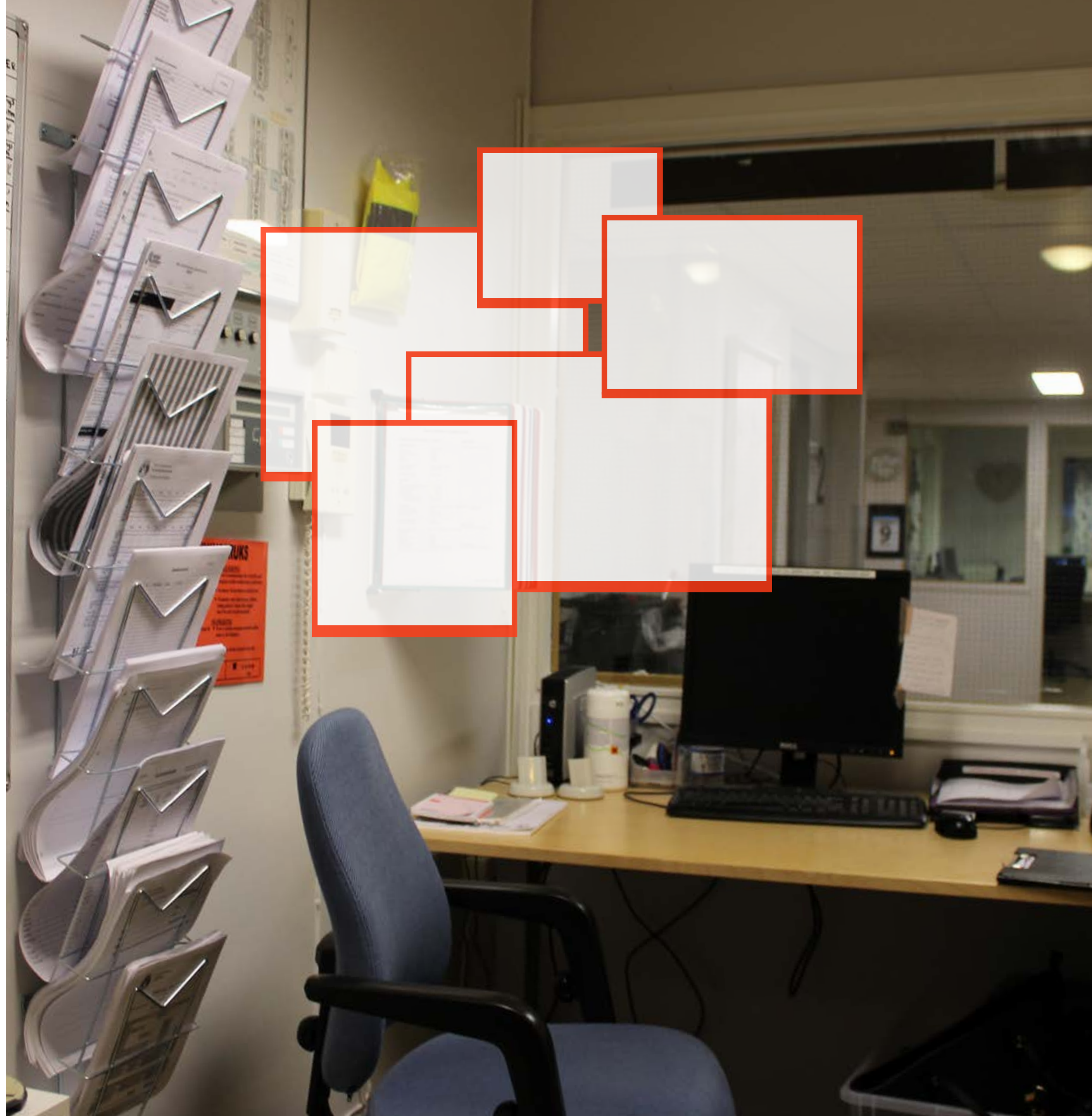
Potential Projects

Before You Begin

Legacy Systems

When new tech solutions are introduced into the homes, they are piled on top of existing ones, some digital, some paper. Instead of making things easier to work with, this creates a maze for the staff to navigate.

Technology should be holistic. These systems don't talk to each other, so they end up writing things in multiple places, which takes even more time. When you can't use the new system on the same machine as other systems, it creates a problem for work rooms that have only one computer.



Potential Projects

These projects use technology to make less work for the staff. They allow them to easily access the information they need, communicate efficiently, and work better together.



Collective Schedules

Rather than just knowing who is working during a shift, it would be better to know what people are doing. During the morning meeting, the team can go over not just what needs to be done, but make a group schedule of when those tasks will be done. Scheduling something makes it much more likely to get finished. It also makes sure that each tasks has the time set aside to do it properly.

Potential Benefits

- more accountability across the teams
- better overview of what is happening for the day
- more transparent workloads



New References

The reference material for the staff are in large binders in the staff rooms. This presents a few different issues. They take up precious space in such a small room. It's also hard to find something amid the wall of information. A new learning system would make it easy to find and update information. It could be a city-wide system that makes it easy to update everyone on new policies.

Potential Benefits

- frees up precious physical space in the work rooms
- easier to keep references up to date
- faster spread of new techniques and requirements










Staff App

Currently, the staff use an internal phone system. This set up is cumbersome and difficult to use. Putting an app on their existing phones would be simpler, and could utilize smart phone technology. It could allow them ready access to see shower schedules, or request assistance from someone.

Potential Benefits

- more intuitive than current internal phone system
- less likely to be interrupted by outside phone calls
- allows quicker communication

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Before You Begin

Technological solutions are not just about digital screens, but also incorporating systems that are currently in paper form. A good tech system will understand the environment it's working in, when the staff will use it, and whether this might create even more work.

Project Theme Goal:

Keep technology efficient & supportive, not dominant.

Project Factors:



High Cost

Tech changes involve outside contractors, designers, developers, etc.



Long Time Frame

The complexity of these systems means it will take longer to build, test, and implement.



High Risk

Risk can be mitigated by doing lots of testing, but if it fails, it will have a negative impact on future attempts to make big changes.



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Team:

The team for this project needs to involve major change makers. These are people in the organization that are able to make wide sweeping changes. It will need to have a broader reach than the other two themes.

The team also depends if you are creating something that will be used in more than one home. With such a large investment of time and money, it would be better to disperse the responsibility over several homes. It's also better to test in as many different environments as possible. That way, you can be sure it will work in different homes across the city.

Key Questions:

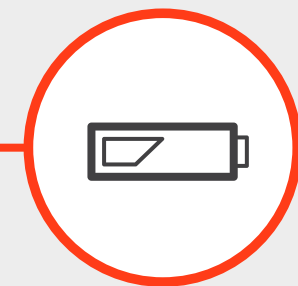
1. Are there any privacy or confidentiality issues we have to address?
2. Are we putting tech security as a priority over patient care?
3. Have we considered the benefits of the paper systems? How can we keep the good parts?
4. Do any new mobile solutions make it feel like the staff is always on their phones?

Activities/phases:



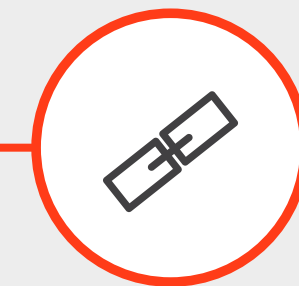
Tech Audit

Make sure you know what other systems are being used and what you need to work with.



Development

Working with designers and developers to make a robust and intelligent system.



Testing

Prototyping will take some time. It has to work perfectly for such a critical environment.



Implement

Making the system live across different homes and wards in the city.