



Tips for Rounding and One-on-One Organizing Conversations

Ease Into It – It’s always good to start rounding on units where you’re pretty sure you can have productive conversations. You should try and hit a mix of units—some easier, some tougher—and identify strong supporters on those units (as well as anti-union members) ahead of time.

Listening is the Most Important Part – Of all the things to do during rounding, listening is *the* most important part. When we’re rounding we should be listening 80 percent of the time and talking about 20 percent of the time.

Members Are Often Comfortable Letting You Talk. You Have to Ask Questions – Listening more than you talk is hard, because you often will know more about what’s going on in the union than the person you’re talking to. And members often defer to the union “leaders.” The way to reverse that dynamic is asking open ended questions.

“I Don’t Know” is a Really Good Answer – When you’re rounding you will inevitably face questions you don’t know the answer to. That’s OK! You can’t know the answer to everything, and it’s fine to tell someone you don’t know, or that you’ll have to look into it. Make a note of their name, unit, and contact information so you can follow up.

Time & Space! Gauge how busy the nurse you want to talk with is, and also what the vibe on the unit is. The nurse may only be able to talk for a minute, they may have a lot time, they may be able to talk in the hallway outside a patients room, or they may be more comfortable talking in lounge. Be aware of management and other RNs. Sometimes a group chat is the way to go, other times it is better to have a short one-on-one.

Building Power is the Goal – You also need to be clear with members that our goal is building power for nurses at the bedside and we do that by working together and sticking up for each other. Management will use every trick in the book to keep us divided, because if we’re fighting with each other then they can get away with anything.

Take Notes – Always carry a notebook or pad of paper with you so you can write down people's contact information and the issues they raise with you, so that you can follow-up with them. Stay aware of the unit and the people you spoke to so you and your NYSNA Rep can later determine if this unit is strong or may need more support.

Your Rights to Round!

Know Your Rights – You have the right to talk to nurses in non-work areas during non-work times, but sometimes a conversation may come up outside of that context. If a manager confronts you about this, let them know you are on your way to the lounge. Stay confident and document any harassment by management.

Move People Into Break Room – While we have the right to talk to members on non-work time in non-work areas, oftentimes the unit is short-staffed and nurses are working through their breaks. One proven technique is to talk to people on the unit to see if they can cover for one another for a few minutes so you can have the conversation in the break room, away from prying eyes. Ask the charge nurse to get everyone in the unit to cycle through, either individually or in small groups.

Know the Lay of the Land – Get to know the units you're visiting, especially the physical layout. Where can you have a private conversation? What units are locked and will need access to visit? If a manager approaches you on the unit, just let them know you're on the way to the break room. Stay confident and document any harassment by management.

Night Shift is Prime Time – The same goes for weekends and holidays. Not only are there fewer supervisors, there is often more opportunity to have in-depth conversations with nurses on the night shift. This is really important for another reason: nurses on the night shift are often less involved, or feel less connected to the union.

Be on the Lookout – We try to round in pairs for lots of reasons, when we can, but one of them is so we can be on the lookout for supervisors. Usually we want to have our conversations with

members out of sight (and earshot) from management. However, even when we can't round in pairs, remember: organizing together with your co-workers through rounding makes the union stronger and every member safer.

Be Strategic – Sometimes, however, we want management to see what we're doing, and even confront them about our right to talk to members and do union work in the facility. Nothing cuts through member fear like seeing a NYSNA leader exercise their right to speak with co-workers on non-work time in non-work areas.