

# *A World Without Nurses*

## Audio Documentary Facilitation & Action Guide

July 2026



### Overview:

*A World Without Nurses*... It's a future no one wants to imagine, but doing so brings into sharp focus just how essential nurses are today.

In a new collaboration between the R<sup>3</sup>: Resilient Nurses of Maryland team and the Dracopoulos-Bloomberg iDeas Lab at the Johns Hopkins Berman Institute of Bioethics, we've created an audio documentary that transports listeners into this dystopian scenario through immersive sound design, **ultimately serving as a call to action** for the public.

**This guide is designed to help you use *A World Without Nurses* as a tool to spark conversations and change in your own community. Help us — help you...**

Listen to the full audio documentary on the R<sup>3</sup> website [here](#).

### How to Use This Guide:

This facilitation guide is a flexible resource. You can adapt it based on your setting, time, and goals. You might use it to:

- Host a community listening session (*recommended*). (For reference, an example of a virtual community listening session can be found [here](#).)
- Facilitate a classroom or training discussion
- Spark conversation in a staff meeting or professional gathering
- Engage a local community or advocacy group
- Get a conversation going in online communities or networks

### Goals:

By engaging with this audio documentary in the context of a facilitated discussion, participants will:

- Reflect on the essential role nurses play in healthcare and in their own communities.
- Share personal experiences and perspectives in a supportive environment.
- Explore what is at stake when nursing's contributions are unrecognized or undervalued

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- Identify practical actions that individuals and organizations can take to strengthen and support the nursing workforce.
- Continue the conversation within their own workplaces and communities to rehumanize healthcare for everyone..
- Provide feedback to R<sup>3</sup> and the iDEAS Lab on the potential impact of this initiative through the Event Feedback Form.

### Suggested Facilitated-Discussion Formats:

- 1. Listening Session:** Hosting a listening session is a way to bring people together around a shared experience, deepen understanding of the role nurses play, and spark conversations that can lead to meaningful change — within your workplace, community, or network. As you plan your engagement, consider who the participants will be—nurses? Other healthcare workers? Public? Combination?

#### *Suggested flow (60–90 minutes):*

- Welcome & framing (5-10 min)
  - Listen to the audio documentary (25 min)
  - Small group or paired discussion (15-20 min)
  - Full group reflection (10-15 min)
  - Action brainstorming & commitments (10-15 min)
- 2. Pre-Listening + Discussion:** Participants listen on their own, then come together to discuss, reflect, and act.
  - 3. Short-Form Integration:** Use clips or excerpts to spark discussion in an existing meeting or class.

### Materials:

Technical hiccups can disrupt the flow of a reflective experience like this. A little preparation goes a long way — making sure everything is set up in advance will help the session run smoothly and keep participants engaged.

### *Essential:*

- Audio playback (speaker or headphones)
- Access to the [audio documentary](#) (streaming link + internet access)
- A way to share the [Event Feedback Form link](#) and the [facilitation guide link](#) with participants

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### *Optional, but recommended:*

- Printed or digital discussion prompts
- A way for participants to take individual notes while listening (facilitator-provided pens and paper or personal notebooks, laptops, phones, etc.)
- Flip chart or shared doc for capturing group ideas
- [Link to downloadable artwork for the documentary](#) (for use in promotion of your listening event or social media sharing)
- Testimonials from DAISY foundation nominations - see below\*\*
- Smartphone or other device to take a photo of the group (with permission) to share on Instagram using the hashtag **#worldwithoutnurses** and tagging the Berman Institute @bermaninstitute

**\*\*DAISY Foundation nominations** - Hearing first-person stories from patients or families in conjunction with the audio documentary can deepen its impact, which is part of what's so powerful about hosting listening sessions where community members have the opportunity to share their own stories. We are grateful to the DAISY Foundation for providing us with 3 testimonials that can be used during the listening sessions (see appendix). When you're entering the discussion portion of your session, reading one of these testimonies aloud can be an effective way to break the ice and set the tone. Thank you to the DAISY Foundation for collecting and sharing these stories, and for all the work they do to celebrate nurses."

### Facilitator Preparation:

#### *Before your session:*

- Listen to the documentary in full.
- Consider your audience. What pressures or realities are they navigating? What kinds of actions are realistic in their context?
- Think about your goal: Reflection? Community-building? Advocacy? All three?
- Plan your discussion prompts with your goals in mind (*suggestions below*).
- Reflect on your own personal responses to your discussion prompts.

### Creating the Space:

Begin by setting a tone of openness and trust. You might say:

*"This is a space to reflect, share, and think together. There's no pressure to have the 'right' response — just to be present and honest."*

Suggested norms to communicate:

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- One person speaks at a time
- Speak from your own experience
- Listen generously
- Allow space for silence and reflection
- No need to fix or solve — just understand
- Engage respectfully—even if we don't agree

### Framing the Experience:

Before listening, offer a brief framing:

*“This documentary asks us to imagine a world without nurses — not just as a thought experiment, but as a way of understanding the essential role nurses play in holding our healthcare systems and communities together.”*

Encourage participants to notice as they listen:

- Emotional reactions
- Physical responses
- Moments that resonate or challenge them

### Discussion & Reflection:

These suggested questions are designed to help guide discussion. You do not need to use all of them — choose what best fits your group, time, and goals.

#### **1. Initial Reactions**

- What stood out to you most?
- What surprised you?
- What stayed with you after listening?

#### **2. Meaning & Impact**

- What did imagining a world without nurses make you feel?
- What does this reveal about how nursing is currently valued — or undervalued?
- What felt most urgent or important in what you heard?

#### **3. Personal Connection**

*If your audience includes nurses:*

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- How did this connect to your own experience as a nurse (or working with nurses)?
- Did anything reflect something you've experienced but rarely see acknowledged?

*If your audience includes members of the public:*

- How did the content connect to your own experience as a patient or a person interacting with the healthcare system?
- Did anything reflect something you've experienced but rarely see acknowledged?

### **4. The Bigger Picture**

- What narratives about nursing does this challenge or reinforce?
- Where do you see gaps between the reality of nursing and how it is perceived?
- How might nurses and the public be a voice for change?
- What ways might you engage the public to: "Help us—help you"?

→ *From Reflection to Action: This is the most important part of the experience.*

### **5. Sharing & Amplification**

- Who in your life or work needs to hear this message?
- Where could this documentary be shared?
  - Workplaces
  - Classrooms
  - Family gatherings
  - Professional organizations
  - Faith-based community groups
  - Senior centers
  - Libraries or town halls
  - Online communities
  - Others

### **6. Hosting Your Own Conversation**

- What would it look like to host a listening session like this in your own community?
- What setting would make the most sense?
- Who would you invite?

### **7. Local Action**

- What issues in your local context does this connect to?

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- What is one *specific, realistic action* you could take?

*Examples:*

- Starting a conversation with leadership
- Bringing this into training or education
- Advocating for resources or policy changes
- Creating space for nurses to share their stories

### 8. Commitment

Invite each participant to identify one thing they will do in the next 1-2 weeks as a result of this experience.

This could be:

- Sharing the documentary
- Starting a conversation
- Planning a listening session
- Reaching out to someone

### Closing the Session:

Bring the group back together and invite brief reflections: *What is one insight you're taking with you? What is one action you're considering?*

Take a few moments for everyone (including you as the facilitator) to complete the [Event Feedback Form](#).

You can also scan this QR code to access the feedback form



With the group's permission, take a photo of the listening session to share on Instagram using the hashtag **#worldwithoutnurses** and tagging the Berman Institute @bermaninstitute — this helps connect your work as an ambassador of this project to a

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broader community and amplify the collective impact of these conversations. (Be sure to include a link to the documentary in your post.)

Then, close with gratitude:

*“Thank you for taking the time to reflect and share together. The impact of this work doesn’t end here — it continues in the conversations and actions you take forward.”*

To continue the momentum, encourage participants once again to:

- **Share**
  - Send the documentary to colleagues or peers
  - Post in internal forums or newsletters
  - Share the documentary on social media
- **Convene**
  - Host a listening session or discussion
  - Bring it into meetings, classrooms, or trainings
  - Share a photo of *their* convening on Instagram using the hashtag **#worldwithoutnurses** and tagging the Berman Institute @bermaninstitute
- **Advocate**
  - Use it as a conversation starter with leadership
  - Connect it to ongoing policy issues

### Final Note:

*Stories have the power to shape how we see the world, but also how we change it. This audio documentary is one story. **What happens next depends on how you carry it forward.***

If you’d like to get in touch, you can reach us at [r3inquiries@jh.edu](mailto:r3inquiries@jh.edu). Thank you!



*A World Without Nurses*  
Written and Produced by Simon Adler

## "A World Without Nurses" Facilitation Guide Appendix



**May 2023 — Hana Lee , RN, Mother & Baby, Adventist HealthCare Shady Grove Medical Center  
Rockville, MD, United States**

My wife was admitted to Shady Grove Hospital in the 25th week of her pregnancy due to gestational hypertension and we have been in the hospital for 16 days. In late December, my wife and I had the hardest day in our lives when our beloved son passed away in the NICU within 48 hours of his unexpected early birthday. We were heartbroken, devastated, and feeling hopeless. Our son's little heart stopped in front of our eyes, and we were taken into a room to grieve while it was still dark outside.

As the sun was slowly rising in the cold Rockville morning, our nurse, Ms. Hana, was starting her shift. She gently entered our grieving room and immediately started taking care of my wife with enormous love and compassion. I was still in the shock of losing the first and only child I ever had, but I was also extremely worried about the health of my wife, who still had serious, life-threatening postpartum hypertension.

In the next two days, we felt so fortunate that Ms. Hana was assigned as the day nurse for my wife. Hana not only provided exceptional clinical care to my wife, but she also provided her with tremendous emotional support. Every single time she entered the room, she had an extremely pleasant and positive attitude, which helped my wife to cope with the loss and to continue taking her medications.

We didn't have any family in the country to support us, and Hana even joined us while we were grieving. My wife requested a final service for our son in the hospital's healing garden, and Hana helped us to take our son along with a chaplain. Hana joined our prayers, and I noticed her prayers when my wife was saying goodbye to our son. Despite being so busy, and getting so many calls, Hana always treated my wife with patience and always listened to my wife entirely. Whenever I requested her help, Hana immediately responded with a big smile on her face, which gave so much hope to my wife to recover.

Hana is an extremely careful, professional, courteous, and compassionate nurse. During the 16 difficult days in the Shady Grove Medical Center, we met so many great nurses who provided great care. Hana stood out among all the nurses, and it has been our privilege to get to know her at the most difficult point of our lives.

My wife once told me that when Hana enters her room, she feels like the room is filled with sunshine. I am so grateful Hana happened to be our nurse on those two days because I am not sure how my wife's blood pressure would otherwise have gone back to relatively normal that quickly after all the trauma she has experienced.

It has been almost a month since we got discharged from the hospital, and my wife and I are still talking about Hana and sending her our prayers. We believe our son became an angel, and he sent us Hana as my wife's angel on that December morning. We are extremely blessed to know that nurses like Hana exist, and Hana further increased our respect and gratitude towards all healthcare workers. After seeing Hana's kindness, patience, compassion, and exceptional support to my wife, I feel obligated to pay it forward by striving to be a better person. We believe Hana is an influential nurse, and we hope she will be given opportunities and recognition to inspire many generations of great nurses.





**March 2023 — Casey Hershey , RN, Nelson 6, The Johns Hopkins Hospital, Baltimore , MD, United States**

The hospitalization of a family member can be an incredibly stressful experience, particularly when that family member has autism and intellectual disabilities, as is the case with my sister. However, Casey's exceptional care and attention during her recent hospitalization made all the difference.

From the moment we met Casey, her radiant, bright, and cheerful demeanor was contagious. She went above and beyond to ensure my sister felt comfortable and respected, treating her with genuine compassion and dignity. Casey embodies the values of Johns Hopkins Hospital, and we feel incredibly fortunate to have had her as my sister's nurse during this difficult time.

What sets Casey apart is not just her skill as a nurse, but her ability to connect with her patients on a personal level. She shared her heart with her, making the hospital feel less intimidating and scary for her. As family members, we were reassured knowing that she was in such capable and caring hands.

In addition to her clinical skills, Casey is a patient and thorough teacher. She came into the hospital on her day off and provided excellent in-depth and hands-on training to my family, covering the new equipment and procedures and ensuring we would be ready to care for my sister at home.

Casey's dedication and professionalism are unmatched. She is a true ambassador for Johns Hopkins Hospital, and her compassion and expertise make her an exemplary nurse.





**August 2025 — Michael Cox , RN, Medical Progressive Care Unit, The Johns, Hopkins Hospital, Baltimore , MD, United States**

Mike Cox was nothing short of an absolute hero to our family. My dear lifelong friend, G (he was a grandfather to me in everything but legal terms), was in the hospital with a collapsed lung. When he was admitted, we were still hopeful that he would be leaving the hospital and returning to the assisted living facility.

As things progressed, it became more and more clear that his options were either a fairly risky surgery with limited potential for improved quality of life, or making a very hard decision to discontinue supportive treatments and transition to keeping him comfortable while slowly removing him from the machines that were keeping him alive.

At the age of 94, G knew exactly what he wanted the rest of his life, and his final moments, to be like: comfortable. He was at peace. We, however, were in the early stages of true mourning, and as his POA, I was on deck for making some very hard calls, even though he had been clear with his wishes.

Mike came in the day G made his decision. He started by getting to know him and us as people. He asked us questions to really understand us and made sure we knew every resource that was available to us at the hospital, every step of the way.

He helped us advocate for him with his doctors and medical team, clearly and skillfully walked us through our medical options, and helped us navigate our incredibly difficult decisions with grace, humor, and kindness.

He distracted us with conversation when we needed a reprieve from sadness, telling us stories about his own life and nursing experiences with genuine empathy. Through the most tactful and gentle jokes, he helped us to smile and laugh between the tears. He made us feel so cared for and even gave me a big hug and a shoulder when I couldn't do anything but cry.

Towards the end, while tending to all his other patients and duties, knowing what was coming, he stationed himself in a chair and make-shift workstation outside G's room so he could be as present as possible to help us whenever we had questions, or whenever we needed him, so we didn't have to go find him.

He prepared us for what to expect each step of the way and monitored G closely, letting us know (without us asking) where we were in the process, tactfully balancing giving us room and privacy to process and ensuring we always knew what was happening.

He counseled us with thoughtful, beautiful advice on what to say to G as he slowly passed away. I cannot imagine what we would have done without Mike. I have spent a lot of time in hospitals this year and prior, and I truly have never experienced care that was this extraordinary. Mike is clearly gifted in both the art and the science of not just medicine, but true healing.

Not only was Mike a comfort and guide to G, the patient, but Mike's compassion and dedication to us, G's family, healed our spirits and hearts as well.

