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Adam Burns

A POSTGRADUATE NURSE'S NOTES FROM THE FIELD

I am a registered nurse currently completing a postgraduate mental health nursing program with NorthWestern Mental Health and The University of Melbourne.

In this paper, I would like to share with you some of my journey into psychiatric nursing and my experiences over the last year and a half as an entry-level clinician. Before I begin, I would like you to cast your mind back to your first day as a psychiatric nurse and think about what it was like for you.

My first placement as a registered nurse was on an acute psychiatric inpatient unit. I was very nervous on my first day and much confronted by the chaos of an acute inpatient unit, as I had no exposure to this work environment as an undergraduate student. My one undergraduate mental health placement was with a homeless outreach psychiatry service (HOPS), which, as it turned out, could not have been further from the type of work I was faced with when on my first rotation as a graduate nurse.

The minimal exposure to psychiatry in the undergraduate nursing degree makes those placements precious opportunities to inspire the next generation of psychiatric nurses. My placement with Inner West HOPS was just that, and inspired me to choose a career I had not previously considered. My student placement was the start of a partnership that allowed me to complete a year of research in my honours year. My research topic was

long-term homelessness in men with psychosis. The findings of this research project were published recently in the International Journal of Mental Health Nursing. After that I was accepted into the Graduate Program with NorthWestern Mental Health.

I found the transition from student to professional extremely difficult, and nearly quit just three months into my career. I am grateful I didn't throw in the towel, as I feel this job, more than any other, impels you to explore your own mental frailties. As it turned out, mental health nursing has been a great source of growth and increase in self-awareness for me.

I have now found my niche in psychosocial rehabilitation working with the Northern, Mobile Support and Treatment Team, and relish the challenge of managing clients with complex needs. This area of work has allowed me to utilise skills I have outside nursing such as landscaping, music, sport and exercise to engage clients in meaningful activities.

The limited exposure to psychiatry in undergraduate nursing and the lack of a clear career pathway contributed to a double-edged sword for me.

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EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEWS WITH VICTORIA'S TWO MOST RECENTLY ENDORSED MENTAL HEALTH NURSE PRACTITIONERS



Nick Gaynor

NICK GAYNOR

What inspired you to take on a Nurse Practitioner candidature?

I became interested in the Nurse Practitioner role when I started working in the Austin Hospital Emergency Department. There were two Emergency Nurse

Practitioners working in the fast track area of the department. I wanted to complete a mental health therapeutic gap I encountered when I undertook assessments and interventions with clients and was required to either talk with or ring a registrar for medication.

What did being a Nurse Practitioner candidate involve?

The candidature involved undertaking a Master of Nursing through La Trobe University. I completed the requisite therapeutic medication component through Monash University as a distance education module. My specialty is acute adult psychiatry either in the Emergency Department or the community.

I received clinical supervision from the Crisis, Assessment and Treatment Team's consultant psychiatrists. Closer to the NBV expert panel examination, my supervision involved practicing my examination technique including case presentations and pharmacology. Throughout my candidacy I also received regular professional supervision from the former senior psychiatric nurse Dr. Daniel Nicholls. This involved strategic and supportive supervision that helped me map my journey.

What did the Nurse Practitioner endorsement process involve?

The endorsement process proper probably starts about 6 months out from the date of the oral examination. I started to consolidate the articulation of my model of care with an emphasis on how it will fill a service gap, how clients will experience enhanced/more responsive clinical care and how clients enter and leave my scope of practice. I also compiled my professional portfolio - this is essential and needed to articulate how I have met the national competencies for Nurse Practitioners established by the Australian Nursing and Midwifery Council.

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MENTAL HEALTH NURSE PRACTITIONER INTERVIEWS

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What difference has Nurse Practitioner candidature and endorsement made to you and your practice?

This is not an easy question to answer. I have nearly 30 years of postgraduate experience however I am now a novice Nurse Practitioner. As a person I have confidence in my ability to set goals and achieve them through persistence and patience. I now feel professionally I am able to compliment my extensive clinical experience with the extensions of practice to provide a complete package of care for the clients I work with.

Another feature of the role that is starting to hit home is that there are a lot of rather lofty ideals attached to the Nurse Practitioner, and achieving these could actually take me away from clinical service delivery. The role is not management however contributes to clinical governance, research and education; so I hope the 'leadership in the field' parameters of the role will not be too time consuming.

What tips have you got for other nurses thinking about undertaking Nurse Practitioner roles in the future?

A person thinking about undertaking a Nurse Practitioner role needs to be prepared to put in some long hard yards - only they can do the academic study. They have to be prepared to enter a period of robust critique whilst developing their model of care and case presentations to ensure they can articulate it at the expert panel examination. They need to join the Mental Health Nurse Practitioner Collaborative to minimise false starts or periods of time and effort they may pursue that will not stand up to the rigor required.

Thank you Nick and congratulations.



Neville Baker

NEVILLE BAKER

What inspired you to take on a Nurse Practitioner candidature?

I have been inspired to move my career as a mental health nurse into a Nurse Practitioner position due to wanting to influence the advancement

of clinical roles for nurses and legitimise the roles and recognition that senior clinical nurses have in mental health. I hold to the belief that psychiatric/mental health nurses have skills and a nature of being responsive to 'change'.

What did being a Nurse Practitioner candidate involve?

My specialty area of practice involves early intervention and youth first episode psychosis, in the community context. My academic preparation over the years has involved an education degree and a postgraduate diploma in family therapy; this has aided my development as a nurse and enhanced my clinical skill base. Prior to moving into a candidate position I graduated from my Masters in Nursing Science (Nurse Practitioner) at the University of South Australia in 2007.

During my candidacy I received supervision from the clinical director of the area mental health service (North East AMHS – Austin Health) and the senior mental health nurse. Support was provided to me by colleagues who were also Nurse Practitioner candidates at the service and allied to the service in which I work. Senior management was also very supportive of the role and its development.

What did the Nurse Practitioner endorsement process involve?

The process of the endorsement involved developing the model of care (Nurse Practitioner youth early psychosis) and scope of practice, as well as the formulary of medications in the context of the wider service model of the area mental health service. Individually I had to prepare my skill base to incorporate extensions to practice, an emerging leadership role, and continual promotion of the possibilities for the future of mental health nursing. Individually I was also required to present my work as a nurse to the scrutiny of an expert panel appointed by the NBV. This involved a Mental Health Nurse Practitioner from NSW, a pharmacologist from NSW and a psychiatrist whom is also a director of training in Melbourne.

What difference has Nurse Practitioner candidature and endorsement made to you and your practice?

The difference this has made to me personally is to give me additional drive to further my career in nursing and consider further academic endeavours. I now have a sense of hope for a path that experienced and skilled clinical nurses can take. As Nurse Practitioner roles develop into the future to be a bigger part of primary care in the community, this role will enable an avenue to promote our expertise as nurses.

What tips have you got for other nurses thinking about undertaking Nurse Practitioner roles in the future?

Self motivation and drive. The role requires a large amount of self drive in terms of not only the academic requirements, but being able to progress your own development and way of thinking as a nurse in public mental health.

Change development in nursing. Change is a significant part of developing a Mental Health Nurse Practitioner role and can involve uncertainty. Our current profession needs to have the role demystified and defined in terms of a unique advanced clinical practice.

Support systems in place. In the sense of developing a new role you need the support locally of management and senior nursing. I would suggest also the utility of the Victorian Statewide Collaborative Mental Health Nurse Practitioners Group via the senior psychiatric nurses group.

A vision for where mental health nursing can progress. It is worth reminding yourself that change is occurring in regards to how we deliver mental health care and the nurse's role in this. I would advocate research and publication of all areas pertinent to Nurse Practitioners in mental health at this early stage.

Thank you Neville and congratulations.

A POSTGRADUATE NURSE'S NOTES FROM THE FIELD

Continued from page 1

When starting out as an entry-level mental health nurse I had a limited knowledge base and only a three-week placement to hang my hat on. I now understand how much a positive clinical experience is worth.

I think a useful way of ensuring a positive experience for new students is to recognise that when a student is in your workplace, you are working with someone who is beginning their journey. Cast your mind back to what your first day was like - it is very important to make early experiences as interesting and supported as possible. Think about what legacy you want to leave behind for your profession. Finally, I will leave you with some words of a song that sums up for me what it means to be a mental health nurse and what people working in the field of mental health do on a daily basis:

Giving to Those in Need

*May I be calm at all times both now and forever
A protector for those without protection
A guide for those who have lost their way
A bridge for those with rivers to cross
A sanctuary for those in danger
A lamp for those without light
A place of refuge for those who lack shelter
Jane Winther – 'Compassion'*

Adam Burns

Postgraduate Nurse, NorthWestern Mental Health

SHIFTING SANDS



Dr Natisha Sands

After 6 years at the helm of the University of Melbourne's postgraduate mental health nursing program, Dr Natisha Sands has resigned to take up an exciting new position at Deakin University. Natisha has been appointed as Associate Professor of Nursing and Midwifery and Deakin Waterfront Campus Leader.

Those of us who know Natisha appreciate her as a passionate and committed mental health nurse who has followed up her ground-breaking PhD research in the field of mental health triage with a focussed research and training program. Her successful national Mental Health Training program has been delivered in most Australian states and she is currently engaged in high level negotiations with several overseas services.

Natisha is excited about taking up her new role, which will involve broader administrative responsibilities for Deakin's Waterfront campus. Importantly, her new office is only 10 minutes from her home and Natisha is looking forward to spending some more quality time on her beloved 13th Beach. Natisha will maintain her connections with researchers at the University of Melbourne and the Centre for Psychiatric Nursing through an honorary appointment as a Principal Research Fellow with the CPN. We congratulate Associate Professor Natisha Sands on her new appointment and look forward to continuing to work productively with her into the future.

SEASON'S GREETINGS FROM THE CPN

This has been a year of achievements, celebrations and changes at the Centre for Psychiatric Nursing. With several of our research personnel leaving at the end of last year and Teresa Kelly's return to Northern Area Mental Health Service, we have had a major turnover of staff. The processes of replacing personnel are never as quick as we would like and it took a few months for us to once again achieve our full staffing complement. We were pleased to welcome Dr Zewdu Wereta and Ms Roshani Prematunga as research assistants and Ms Finbar Hopkins as a lecturer in mental health nursing this year. With diverse cultural and professional backgrounds, Zewdu, Roshani and Finbar bring fresh new perspectives to our ongoing program of work.

On the 26th of November we celebrated 10 years of the Centre's operations. The achievements of the Centre over this past decade have only been possible because of the passion and commitment of a great many people including staff members, past and present, and the vast range of stakeholders who have worked with and supported our work in so many different ways. There is always some risk associated with naming, or forgetting to name, individuals but I would particularly like to acknowledge the ongoing support of Professor Sanchia Aranda, Head of Nursing at the University of Melbourne, Greg Miller, Senior Psychiatric Nurse at NorthWestern Mental Health and Chair of the Centre's Executive Committee, and Tracy Beaton, Senior Nurse Advisor to the Mental Health and Drugs Division of the Victorian Department of Health.

Many Carillon readers will know that as well as marking the end of 10 years of operation, the 25th of November was also the date on which the Centre's funding agreement with the Department

of Health was due to end. I am very pleased to report here that we have received formal advice from the Executive Director of Mental Health and Drugs Division that the Department now regards its commitment to the Centre for Psychiatric Nursing to be a recurrent one. We are acutely aware that this commitment places us in a very privileged position and we regard the ongoing financial support from the Department as a solid base from which to further develop our programs of research and practice development.

I look forward to working with Victorian mental health nurses and other important stakeholders to further develop the contribution of nurses to the improvement of mental health in Australian society. On behalf of the staff and Executive Committee of the Centre for Psychiatric Nursing, I wish you all a very merry Christmas and a happy, safe and productive New Year.

Associate Professor Stephen Elsom
Director, Centre for Psychiatric Nursing

ROUND THE BEND: A HISTORY OF PSYCHIATRIC NURSING IN VICTORIA

Over the last three years, Associate Professor Natisha Sands and John Vokoun (Alfred Homeless Outreach Psychiatric Service) have been making a documentary on the history of psychiatric nursing in Victoria from 1848 to deinstitutionalisation.

The project has involved conducting interviews with past and present Victorian Psychiatric Nurses (commencing with the 1930's), tracking down historical photographs, and an extensive review of historical documents to develop a narrative of this unique, hitherto untold history.

The project has produced a DVD that portrays the development and history of Psychiatric Nursing in Victoria.

The Centre for Psychiatric Nursing will be hosting the launch of this valuable historical resource into Victorian Psychiatric Nursing early in 2010, so keep an eye out for the official invitation to this landmark event.



CLINICAL RESEARCH FELLOWSHIP PROGRAM 2010

The existence of gaps between theory and practice and between research evidence and evidence utilisation has been well documented in the academic literature. One way in which the Centre for Psychiatric Nursing (CPN) is addressing these gaps is through educating clinicians about research. The Clinical Research Fellowship (CRF) program aims to develop clinician's confidence and skills in the critical consumption of research, the findings of which can be used to inform their practice. At the beginning of March, 2010 the CPN will begin another 10-week Clinical Research Fellowship program.

The CRF program requires each fellow to work in the program for two days per week during the 10 weeks. Each fellow spends one day per week at the Centre for Psychiatric Nursing where they are receiving tuition on various aspects of the research process. Fellows spend the other day each week working on individual research projects that are to be conducted in their own organisations.

CPN staff teach the fellows a wide range of research skills. The material in the program has been directed towards locating and evaluating published research, and using and disseminating research in practice. Some of the topics in which fellows have received education include: searching the research literature, appraising research articles using a critical framework, developing research questions, using appropriate research designs, writing conference abstracts, developing conference posters, understanding basic statistics, presenting research to audiences, implementing research in practice.

Alongside the tuition that the fellows receive in these topics, they will work on their own research projects. As part of the application process for the CRF, nurses are asked to identify an issue in their practice that they would like to address through examining the literature and conducting an appraisal of the evidence. Staff from the Centre for Psychiatric Nursing will mentor the fellows in the development of their projects.

If you are interested in applying to do the CRF program you can get further information and the application forms on line at:

http://www.cpn.unimelb.edu.au/education_and_practice_development/practice_development_workshops/clinical_research_fellowships

Applications for the Clinical Research Fellowships close on the Friday 5th February 2010.

11th

VICTORIAN COLLABORATIVE PSYCHIATRIC NURSING CONFERENCE

CALL FOR ABSTRACTS

12 & 13
August 2010

Call for Abstracts

As joint hosts the **Centre for Psychiatric Nursing, The Australian College of Mental Health Nurses (Vic Branch), The Health and Community Services Union** and the **Australian Nursing Federation** invite you to attend this exciting conference.

The aim of this conference is to focus on the practice of psychiatric nursing and how this practice contributes to better health outcomes for the consumers of services.

Abstracts of no more than 200 words are invited for 30 minute paper, poster and 60 or 90 minute workshop presentations that focus on the practice of psychiatric nursing. All posters submitted for the conference will be entered into the Conference Poster Competition with a \$100 Gift Voucher going to the winning entry. Papers with a focus on recovery from mental health problems are particularly encouraged. Themes below are listed for your consideration but papers need not be restricted to only those shown.

Papers from practicing clinicians and post graduate students undertaking clinical projects are particularly encouraged.

If you are interested in presenting a paper but would like more information, support or guidance please contact **Steve Elsom** at CPN:

T: 8344 9460
E: sjelsom@unimelb.edu.au

Abstracts can be submitted electronically. The instructions and format for the submission of abstracts are located on the CPN website: www.cpn.unimelb.edu.au

If you are unable to submit an abstract electronically please contact the CPN:

T: (03) 8344 9626
E: cpn@nursing.unimelb.edu.au
F: (03) 9347 4375

DEADLINE FOR
ABSTRACT SUBMISSION:

Friday
26 February
2010

Themes

- Innovation in practice
- Sustainability of psychiatric nursing
- Consumer perspectives
- Carer perspectives
- Clinically-based research and evaluation
- Psychiatric nursing across the life-span
- Rural issues
- Cultural and indigenous issues
- Dual diagnosis
- Dual disability
- Recovery



MAILING DETAILS HERE

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If undeliverable return to:
Centre for Psychiatric Nursing
School of Nursing and Social Work
The University of Melbourne
Level 5 234 Queensberry Street Carlton VIC 3053