

WYOMING NURSE

The Official Publication of The Wyoming Nurses Association

Quarterly publication direct mailed to approximately 13,000 RNs and LPNs in Wyoming.



2019 WNA Nurses Day at the Legislature



**ANA Webinar Series
Thursday, April 11, 2019**



Cost Analysis and Nurse Leadership

President's Message

There are many exciting things going on with the Wyoming Nurses Association and the American Nurses Association! I wanted to fill you in on some of the work done in Washington at the November 2018 Leadership Summit. The two-day conference is broken into a professional development day and then a day addressing items that the ANA and C/SNA's (Constituents and State Nurses Associations) can work on for the future.



**Kathy Luzmoor,
MS, RN, CNE**

The ANA includes C/SNA in the important conversations. They work hard to keep the states up to date and informed, and they take input on how they can improve both relationships and what ANA has to offer. In a survey from members, the top three ANA offers members value are: The national legislative agenda (See full agenda: <https://www.nursingworld.org/practice-policy/advocacy/federal/>), national policies that advance the profession of nursing, and promoting awareness of the nursing profession. The attendees of the Leadership Summit were updated on the Value Price Pilot Program, the program that has expanded to over twenty states, standardizes ANA/C-SNA's membership across the organization. For Wyoming, this will lower monthly rates. The theory behind the pilot was that lowering dues would increase membership. In all states that were piloted, membership increased significantly. This proposal will be voted on at the Membership Assembly in June.

The ANA requested Leadership Summit attendees input on the 2017-2020 Strategic Plan to assist staff in their focus on work for 2019. The goals and shortened follow up conversation include:

Strategic Goal 1: Increase the Number and Engagement of Nurses with ANA

- Focus on engaging nurses first, then focus on increasing the numbers.
- How is "engagement" defined?
- Use multi and varied engagement strategies.
- Minimize duplication of effort between ANA and C/SNAs to operationalize and implement the strategic goals.
- Include work to advance "nurse imperative" issues (e.g., staffing [from crisis to proactive], workplace violence).

Strategic Goal 2: Stimulate and Disseminate Innovation that Increases Recognition of the Value of Nurses and Drives Improvement in Health and Health Care

- Increase nurses' awareness of innovation. Nurses do not view themselves as "innovators."
- Provide nurses with resources to help them learn how to operationalize an innovative idea (e.g., Incubators).
- Provide innovation grants to support nurses' engagement in innovation.
- Pursue partnerships to expand innovation capability (e.g., interprofessional collaboration for development of apps) and think more broadly to ensure nursing has a seat at as many tables as possible.

President's Message continued on page 2

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President's Message continued from page 1**Strategic Goal 3: Leverage the ANA Enterprise to position nurses as integral partners in consumers' health and health care journeys**

- Determine what the consumer needs (e.g., Access to care in rural communities).
- Solicit and compile activities in which C/SNAs are engaged.
- Clarify Strategic Goal 3 by defining "partner" and the role of nurses as "integral partners."
- Share stories via various communication channels that relay the contribution of nurses to positive patient outcomes.
- Capitalize on nursing as THE most trusted profession (e.g., during flu season, Ebola outbreak).
- Promote nurses through leadership (e.g., subject matter expert interviews on television, radio, etc.).
- Communicate the depth and breadth of the nurses' involvement in patient care, administering medications, in addition to checking labs and ordering tests.
- Create a branding campaign to promote "My name is XXX; I am YOUR nurse."

The ANA's strategic plan can be found here: <https://www.nursingworld.org/ana/about-ana/strategic-plan/>.

I mentioned in my first article that the Wyoming Nurses Association Board of Directors spent considerable time in early November working on our Strategic Plan (The 2019 strategic plan was approved during the January 30th board meeting and can be found at www.wyournurse.org). As you will see, it has four key pillars, each including a goal with multiple strategies. The first is **Policy Influence**, with the **Goal: Serve as the voice of nursing on important issues and policies that impact the nursing community. We work with local state and federal officials advocating for the profession.**

I can truly say that your board of directors takes this goal seriously and are tireless advocates on your behalf. There are over 13,000 nurses in Wyoming. The WNA has 400+ members. There are several other nursing

organizations active in WY that are affiliate members of the WNA, these include: Wyoming School Nurses and Wyoming Council for Advanced Practice Nurses. We work for all nurses in Wyoming and the profession. We try to engage nurses in advocacy and policy development through our event *Nurses Day at the Legislature*, mailings, publications, and Facebook page posts. We hired a lobbyist, Toni Decklever, to follow legislation that affects nursing and health care, not only during a legislative session, but throughout the year. With Toni's help we recommend areas of study or legislation to our state governing body. We were successful this year with continuation of WYIN funding (see Toni's column) and very proud of our part in it. See also the WNA's Legislative Agenda on our website.

Area 2: Profession of Nursing. Goal: Educate the public on the value of the nursing profession and the value we provide. Nurses are not good at advertising our successes! We need to improve. WNA will be rolling out some initiatives to spotlight nurses in 2019. It would be great if nurses or employers in each community or region could do the same. If you have a great story, tell it to your local media. (And send it to WNA at nursing@wyournurse.org) As the ANA points out above, communicate the depth and breadth of the nurses' involvement in patient care!

Area 3: Membership Management. Goal: To maintain and grow our membership engagement, we will deliver solutions, programs and opportunities that add value to all nurses in Wyoming. There's that word engagement again! I mentioned it in my last article, the ANA is discussing, and WNA is still discussing. The Northwest region has polled their members on what engagement means to them and the WNA staff will be assisting the remaining regions to obtain the same information from members. Many of you reading this are not WNA members, but I encourage you to contact myself or nurse@wyournurse.org with your thoughts on your values and what opportunities engage you! At our most recent conference, *Nurses Day at the Legislature*, we had for the first time in many years, breakout sessions that we hoped would be interesting to a wide audience of nurses and these were well received.

Area 4: Health Nurse. Goal: We will continue to lead efforts that foster a safe, ethical environment that supports the health and wellness of nurses in all settings. It has taken too many years for nurses to demand a healthy work environment. This goes to the core of health, not only in workplace safety, but taking care of ourselves. We are excited to offer a Nurse (along with family/friends) Run/Walk in conjunction with National Nurses Week in May. There are so many ways we can improve our health. It is my hope is that each of you finds a way to make a health commitment that works for you in 2019.

We hope you will reach out to the leadership of WNA with questions and suggestions! Thank you!

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Executive Director's Message



National Nurses Week is a time for individuals, employers, other health care professionals, community leaders and nurses to recognize the vast contributions and positive impact of America's four million registered nurses.



Tobi Lyon Moore, MBA

- Nurses are everywhere we live, work, play, learn, and worship; and in every health care setting providing care to millions of people. In fact, about one in every 100 Americans is a registered nurse.
- Nurses are closest to patients, providing care from birth to the end of life, and practicing in settings that include hospitals, schools, home care, private practices and clinics, long term care facilities, hospice and many others.
- Through sheer numbers and wide-ranging roles, nurses have an unmatched perspective on prevention, wellness and delivery of health care services.
- More than four million registered nurses comprise the largest group of health care professionals in the United States.

- Nurses are highly educated professionals, can become certified in a wide range of clinical specialties and/or patient populations and hold a wide range of positions including in direct care, in executive leadership, research, academia and policy.
- For 17 consecutive years, the American public has ranked nurses as the professionals with the highest honesty and ethical standards. These results underscore the deep trust that the public has in nurses.

This year's National Nurses Week is 4 Million Reasons to Celebrate – a nod to nurses' sheer numbers and an open invitation to #ThankaNurse for enriching our lives and the world we live in.

- Let's celebrate nurses' commitment to addressing many public health challenges to transforming health care to focusing on health and wellness, in addition to illness care.
- Let's celebrate nurses' commitment to delivering culturally competent care and increasing diversity and inclusion in nursing.
- Let's celebrate nurses' ground-breaking work as researchers, executives, educators and innovators on national and global initiatives.
- Let's celebrate nurses' influence in shaping health policy decisions that ensure *all* Americans have

access to high-quality, affordable health care coverage.

- Let's celebrate nurses' role as a trusted advocate to ensure that individuals, families, groups, communities, and populations receive quality patient care and services.
- Let's celebrate nurses' voice on important issues like immunization, health behaviors, natural disaster preparedness, education, and violence prevention.
- Let's celebrate nurses' leadership in their organizations, on boards of directors and as elected officials at the local, state and federal levels.
- Let's celebrate nurses' stories of strength, resilience and determination while navigating an ever-changing and complex health care landscape.

New this year, WNA will be holding a state-wide virtual race on **Saturday, May 11th. WHAT IS A VIRTUAL RACE?** A virtual race is a race that can be run (or walked) from any location you choose. You can run, jog, or walk on the road, on the trail, on the treadmill, at the gym or on the track (or even at another race). You get to run your own race, at your own pace, and time it yourself. We will also be holding "meet ups" on Saturday morning at 8:00 am in the following locations for everyone to gather to walk/run together if you choose. (Rock Springs, Casper, Gillette, Sheridan, Cheyenne, Laramie and Powell). Stay tuned to WNA Facebook, website and upcoming newsletters for more details on this state-wide event. Proceeds from this event will be donated to charity. This event is open to anyone across the country, you don't need to be a nurse to participate, and we encourage everyone to connect with everyone from across the state on May 11th to show our four million reasons to celebrate!



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2019

We kicked off **2019 Nurses Day at the Legislature** at Little America Hotel & Resort in Cheyenne, Wyoming. There were about 300 student nurses, nurse leaders, faculty and more in attendance.

They started the morning with ReaAnna Marchisio doing some yoga. Then Kathy Luzmoor, WNA President, welcomed everyone to start the day off. Toni Decklever presented on *I'm Just a Bill*, getting the audience members engaged!

Later in the day, we welcomed the always energetic Rodney Wambeam. He presented on *When Public Health Meets Rugged Individualism*.



After hearing from our informative speakers, the attendees were able to network and visit with our exhibitors. This is always a great period for attendees to meet other people in a similar field, and gain insight into various facets of nursing.



We had an exciting visit from the Wyoming Governor, Mark Gordon, who was kind enough to take the time out of his day to join us.

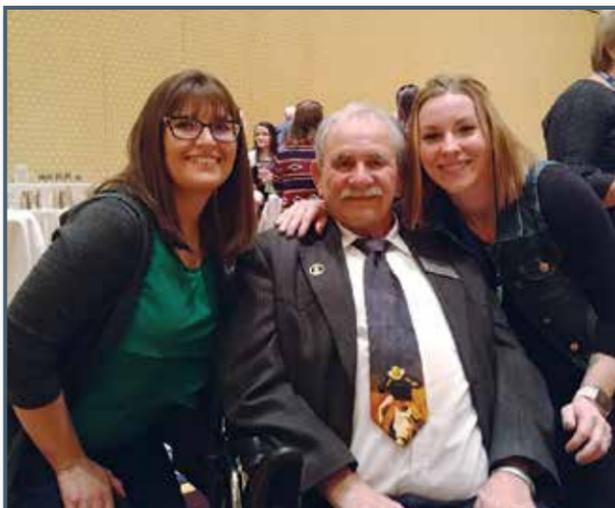


Selina Hoflund was our keynote speaker of the day, and she presented on *Moral Courage*.

Dr. Selina Hoflund has 30-years of experience as an HR Professional working for organizations in the Manufacturing, Energy, and Healthcare industries. Her passion in the study of the relationship between human behaviors and performance sets her apart from others in her field. Her zone of genius lies in mentoring individuals and teams and showing them how to break behavior and thought patterns that derail them in their pursuit of personal excellence and prevent them from effectively serving their organizations.



Attendees then went into breakout sessions, new to NDL this year but this change was well received.



WNA NURSES DAY AT THE LEGISLATURE



The day ended at the Legislative Day Reception where we were visited by many senators and legislators. We were so grateful to them for taking time out of their day to come hear from Wyoming Nurses. Their support and dedication is appreciated by us all!

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Legislative Update



Wyoming Legislative Session

January 8th marked the first day of the 40 Day General Session for the Wyoming State Legislature. During this session, many pieces of legislation try to make it through the process of becoming a law. Some of these bills are the product of interim committee work that has been in process since May of 2018. Some bills are from individual legislators with issues that have been brought up by their constituents.



**Toni Decklever,
MA, RN
WNA Lobbyist**

The Wyoming Nurses Association follows the bills that address the association's Legislative Agenda and those that come out of the Labor, Health and Social Services Committee (LHSS). This committee has been working for the past year to address several pieces of legislation.

A total of 503 bills were filed with the Legislative Service Office. Three hundred and sixteen were House Bills and 166 were Senate Files. There were also 21 resolutions filed. In the first few days of the session, bills were introduced and assigned to a committee where they were discussed and debated. If the bill passed out of committee, it moved on to the Senate or House floor. Over half of the bills that were filed did not make it through the entire process. Some bills, like the Medicaid Expansion Study and Medicaid work requirements died on the last day of the session.



Bills that WNA followed that did make it to the Governor's desk include:

Wyoming Investment in Nursing – Sunset date -

This program was mandated to sunset in 2020, so Representative Henderson filed legislation that would extend the program to 2030. Representative Brown amended this to remove the sunset date entirely and it stayed that way through the rest of the process. The work that will need to be continued is to fund the program – which is currently at a little over 2.5 million a year. This funding provides for nursing faculty at the Wyoming colleges and student loans for those pursuing their RN or graduate degrees in nursing.

Opioid prescription limits –

Originally this bill stated that practitioners could only prescribe to opioid naïve patients for 14 days and then require a reassessment. This was amended to 7 days and passed with this amendment. There are exceptions within the legislation for patients with chronic pain,



terminal illness, palliative care and other clinically appropriate exceptions.

Controlled Substance Administration and Education –

This legislation requires prescribers of controlled substances to register with the Prescription Drug Monitoring Program (PDMP). There are also continuing education requirements for those practitioners with prescriptive authority. This includes: Physicians and Surgeons, APRN's, Dentists, Optometrists, Podiatrists and Pharmacists.

Other bills of interest that made it to the Governor's desk were:

Medical Alert on Driver's Licenses –

This allows a place on a driver's license for a person to put the words, "medical alert."

Healthcare Innovation –

This authorizes the Department of Health to award funds to individuals, groups or companies for innovative projects. The Department of Health was given one million dollars for this project. The actual language of the bill is as follows:

"Innovative study" means a randomized, controlled trial, pilot project, model or analysis conducted under scientific conditions for:

(A) Assessing a new approach to the provision of long-term care, care of chronic diseases, early detection or other health care services which have no substantially comparable, widely available analogue in Wyoming;

(B) Testing of non-invasive diagnostic equipment. As used in this paragraph, "non-invasive" means equipment that does not cause mental or physical effects on the human body.

There is a company that is already looking to pilot their project. <https://www.spiral.health/>

They would like to set up their devices at Wyoming Health Fair locations and possibly other sites in the state.

Though many bills do not make it through the entire process, it is possible that the committee or legislative sponsor will try to get it through next year when the body meets for the 20 Day Budget Session.

The Senators and Representatives heard suggestions for interim topics and will develop the priorities to be studied during the interim. The resounding priority was Long Term Care Workforce, followed by Mental Health and then Nicotine containing products. Other suggestions were also submitted. Management Council will review the list and assign topics to the Labor Health and Social Service Committee. Committees will begin meeting as early as May of 2019 to begin working on studies and issues that could possibly become draft legislation for next year.

Committee meetings are open meetings that anyone can attend. The schedule will be posted on the Wyoming Legislative Website – wyoleg.gov – when it is formulated. WNA members are encouraged to attend these meetings in order to provide information to the LHSS committee. For more information or if you have questions, please contact Toni Decklever at tonisrn@gmail.com

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Start Now to Reduce One of the Most Significant Challenges in Nursing: Bullying in the Workplace

Thursday, April 11, 2019
1:00 to 2:30 PM EST
Attendance is free

Register by March 1, 2019 to receive a free registration gift, a mini e-book, "How to Address Difficult Communications...positively."

It exists – and we all know we have to do something about it. Bullying is one of the most intractable challenges nursing leaders face in all settings – one that proves very resistant to our many well-intentioned efforts. A 2018 survey of ANA members revealed that 87% of the respondents had experienced bullying at least once in their careers.

This live, free and interactive webinar will highlight actions you can take IMMEDIATELY to begin to lessen bullying and its negative impact on your staff. Don't miss this opportunity to join an intimate conversation with an accomplished nursing leader about one of our profession's most significant challenges.

Topics include:

- Seemingly small actions you can take right now to begin to successfully address bullying
- How to get your staff involved in positive, productive ways
- Supporting and helping the most vulnerable populations: Early career and older RNs
- How "down in the weeds" do you get?: How to recognize what is going on and intervene when you are removed from day-to-day bullying situations
- Self inventory and knowing how you are perceived: You can't bully others into being more civil

Bullying will probably never be completely eliminated. Dramatically lowering the incidence of bullying, however, starts with the leader. There are actions you can take to begin, little by little, over time, to lessen the occurrences of bullying as well as provide help and support to the RNs who are vulnerable to being bullied. This webinar will give you valuable tools to begin to make a difference.

Who should attend: Nursing Leaders

Additional information: Register no later than April 10, 2019 at 1 pm ET to receive 24/7 access to this webinar so even if you can't attend the live webinar, you can still benefit from this information at a later time. A link will be emailed to all registrants the day after the webinar so you can view the webinar at your convenience.

Visit www.wyonurse.org to REGISTER TODAY!

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Northwest Region Scholarships

Wyoming Nurses Association Northwest Region would like to recognize the hardworking nurses of Wyoming, in an effort to do this, have made available several different scholarships. Visit www.wyonurse.org website for the application. All applications must be submitted to christina.brewer@nwc.edu by April 1st.

CONTINUING EDUCATION SCHOLARSHIP 2019

The purpose of this scholarship is to promote the health and welfare of the citizens of Wyoming through nurturing the future of nurses and drawing attention to the need for future promotion of health in Wyoming. Applicants must submit an essay explaining how this scholarship would help them achieve the goal of promoting a healthier Wyoming and what continuing education will they use the scholarship funds toward. Applicants must then **submit application to christina.brewer@nwc.edu**. www.wyonurse.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/02/Continuing-Education-application-2019.pdf

PRE-LICENSURE NURSE SCHOLARSHIP 2019

The purpose of this scholarship is to support nursing education for future nurses of the Northwest Region of Wyoming. Applicants for this scholarship must explain why they selected nursing as a career. They must say which characteristics they feel they possess that would bring strength and insight into the nursing profession and describe any plans for future education and/or for advancing their nursing career. Applicants must then **submit application to christina.brewer@nwc.edu**. www.wyonurse.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/02/Prelicensure-Application-2019.pdf

WNA MEMBERSHIP SCHOLARSHIP 2019

The purpose of this scholarship is to continue to grow membership in the Northwest Region of the Wyoming Nurses Association in order to promote leadership and continue to be a supporting voice for nursing in the state of Wyoming. Applicants need to write an essay stating why they are interested in membership to the Wyoming Nurses Association and what they hope to achieve by obtaining a membership, as well as ideas they have to increase engagement and connection between members of the Wyoming Nurses Association.

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Leading the Way

Cost Analysis and Nurse Leadership



Reprinted from American Nurse Today

Debra Hampton
PhD, MSN, RN, FACHE, NEA-BC, CENP

Implementing projects and purchases requires an understanding of costs and benefits

YOUR ORGANIZATION has a computed tomography (CT) scanner that's six years old. Because of technology upgrades and advances in care, the organization is considering whether it's time to replace the equipment. The cost of a new CT scanner ranges from \$1 million to more than \$2.5 million, depending on the scanner type. These questions need to be answered:

- Is it necessary to replace this machine at this time?
- What CT scanner should your organization purchase to get the best return on investment (ROI)?

To make this important decision, your organization needs to perform a cost analysis. The purpose of a cost analysis is to determine the total cost of an item, program, or project—in this case, a new CT scanner.

We use three primary types of cost analysis in healthcare: cost-benefit analysis, cost-effectiveness analysis, and cost-utility analysis. As nursing leaders, we can do cost analyses:

- to justify the purchase of new equipment
- to outline the costs compared to the benefits of beginning a new program
- to support the need for adding staffing positions or increasing staffing in the unit or department
- to justify why we need to implement specific safety or quality initiatives.

Let's learn about each type of analysis, decide which option (or options) will help you make the best CT scanner purchase, and how nurse leaders can use cost analyses to justify the purchase of equipment or the implementation of new programs or services.

Cost-benefit analysis

A cost-benefit analysis allows us to compare the costs of a purchase or a new program to the benefits obtained. The first step is determining the objectives—tangible and measurable—you hope to achieve. For example, a cost-benefit analysis will help you determine the impact of increasing staffing on nursing-sensitive outcomes and staff satisfaction.

After determining the objectives, determine the cost of the equipment, service, or program and all other associated costs (including the purchase cost and all costs associated with executing the venture, such as any related equipment, supplies, staffing/labor, development, and implementation). Then quantify the benefits (including assigning a dollar value to each) and determine the ratio between the costs versus the benefits. Do the benefits exceed the costs and if so, by how much? When doing a cost-benefit analysis, every benefit should have a dollar value assigned to it. For example, if a new piece of equipment will reduce repair costs, how much have repairs cost in the past year? If increasing staffing will reduce falls, patient infections, or other patient complications, what is the average cost of a fall or a catheter-associated infection and how many falls or infections will be prevented.

Cost-effectiveness analysis

In cost-effectiveness analysis, we consider the value of our purchase and determine if the value and usage is going to be worth what we paid. Usually when doing a cost-effectiveness analysis, we look at two alternatives and try to determine which is the most cost-effective. As a nursing leader, you might do a cost-effectiveness analysis to determine the value of one type of skin pressure-relieving support surface over another. You could do this by trialing both products and comparing the outcomes, taking into account patient comfort, ease of caring for patients on each type of surface, nursing care, patient skin condition, and cost.

Once you've quantified value in terms of benefits, you can compare the benefits of both products in relation to the cost. The question to ask in cost-effectiveness analysis is: Which alternative returns the most value in relation to the overall cost? Nursing literature includes several examples of cost-effectiveness analysis. For instance, to answer the question about the cost-effectiveness of higher hour per patient day staffing targets, Twigg et al published a systematic review of the impact of increased staffing on patient outcomes.

We could do the same type of analysis related to the CT scanner purchase. After we narrow our choice to two or three different manufacturers and determine the objectives we want to meet—such as image area scanned, image resolution, and radiation dosage—we can obtain the cost of CT scanners with varied features and then quantify the value of additional features.

Cost-utility analysis

A cost-utility analysis can be used to determine the value of a product or medication on the maintenance and improvement of the length and quality of a

Quality adjusted life year

A commonly used measure of utility is quality adjusted life year (QALY), which is calculated by estimating life years gained from a treatment or therapy and then weighting each year to reflect the quality of one's life during the year.

This type of analysis can raise ethical issues because of the focus on valuing health or the improvement of health from the perception of the individual or society as a whole, but it's an essential tool in cost-quality focused healthcare.

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patient's life or the allocation of health resources. It compares the cost of different treatment options with their outcomes in terms of health utility. (See Quality-adjusted life year.)

Penner reminds us that cost and benefits aren't the only things that should be considered when making decisions about initiatives we want to implement. She notes that "neither the least costly nor the most costly intervention is certain to result in the best clinical outcomes." (See Comparative effectiveness research.)

ROI

A final term frequently used in healthcare is ROI, which means how much profit or loss is made from money invested in equipment (such as a CT scanner), programs, or projects. An ROI example is returning to school to obtain an advanced degree. The investment of your money and time can result in a promotion or new job opportunity that results in higher income and future career advancement.

Justifying the investment

Before making financial commitments in most healthcare settings, some type of cost analysis or ROI analysis is done to justify the investment. As leaders in today's value-based healthcare world, we must quantify the benefit of equipment we recommend, projects that need to be completed, or programs that we would like to implement. We should always consider the cost and benefit of requests. How will patient outcomes be affected? Will staff satisfaction be improved? Leaders at all levels must be competent at creating and presenting a business case that includes the appropriate type of cost analysis.

Comparative effectiveness research

Some situations call for comparative effectiveness research, which allows leaders to use existing research findings about various interventions and strategies to make evidence-based decisions about the most effective tests, therapies, procedures, and services.

Debra Hampton is an assistant professor and academic program coordinator of the Executive Leadership DNP and MSN to DNP programs at the University of Kentucky College of Nursing in Lexington.

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Mind/Body/Spirit WELLNESS 101

Spiritual wellness: A Journey Toward Wholeness



Reprinted from American Nurse Today

David Hrabe, PhD, RN, NC-BC; Bernadette Mazurek Melnyk, PhD, RN, APRN-CNP, FAANP, FNAP, FAAN; Susan Neale, MFA

Through spirituality, we connect with the world around us.

Editor's note: This is the last installment in a 10-article series on wellness. You can read all of articles in the series at americannursetoday.com/category/wellness101/. Thank you to the authors at The Ohio State University College of Nursing for their support of nurse wellness.

HAVE you ever felt like a “human doing” instead of a “human being?” As we fling ourselves from one activity to another, we sometimes find that getting beyond our list of “to do’s” and staying in touch with those aspects of our lives that mean the most to us is difficult. Remember that well-rounded self-care also involves spiritual wellness.

What is spirituality?

Barbara Dossey, a pioneer in the holistic nursing movement, writes that our spirituality involves a sense of connection outside ourselves and includes our values, meaning, and purpose. Your spiritual well-being isn’t what you own, your job, or even your physical health. It’s about what inspires you, what gives you hope, and what you feel strongly about. Your spirit is the seat of your deepest values and character. Whether or not you practice a religion, you can recognize that a

part of you exists beyond the analytical thinking of your intellect; it’s the part of you that feels, makes value judgments, and ponders your connection to others, to your moral values, and to the world. For this reason, spirituality frequently is discussed in terms of a search. Spiritual wellness is a continuing journey of seeking out answers and connections and seeing things in new ways. It also means finding your purpose in life and staying aligned with it.

History is replete with ordinary humans rising to challenges of the day in extraordinary ways.

Although religion and spirituality can be connected, they’re different. A faith community or organized religion can give you an outlet for your spirituality, but religion isn’t spirituality’s only expression. Hope, love, joy, meaning, purpose, connection, appreciation of beauty, and caring and compassion for others are associated with spiritual well-being.

Spirituality as part of nurses’ DNA

As nurses we’re fortunate that the very basis of our practice is grounded in spiritual ideals. From the beginning of our education, we learn about the importance of spirituality in relation to a person’s overall health. Even our ethics emphasize the value of a spiritual connection. Provision 1 of the *Code of Ethics for Nurses with Interpretive Statements* states, “The nurse practices with compassion and respect for the inherent dignity, worth, and unique attributes of every person.” But many nurses are surprised to find that Provision 5 extends this compassion and respect to nurses themselves: “The nurse owes the same duties to the self as to others, including the responsibility to promote health and safety, preserve wholeness of character and integrity, maintain competence, and continue personal and professional growth.” We have a responsibility to both our patients and to ourselves to honor our spiritual heritage.

Think about your job and what you do every day. When do you feel most energized? Great satisfaction can come from learning a new skill and mastering it, and of course it’s vital that you complete your many tasks efficiently and competently, but there’s more. When asked about the times they felt most energized, many nurses cite moments when they really connected with another person—family, friends, colleagues, patients. This is the “more”—when we go beyond just our needs and wants to connect beyond ourselves. Humans are wired to be in relationship with others. Spirituality is fundamental to nursing practice.

Disconnected much?

Although most nurses would likely agree that spirituality is an important component in the care they provide and in their personal lives, too often the pressures of modern life interfere with what’s most important to us. Crushing workloads, family responsibilities, financial pressures, and fast-paced living create the perfect storm that makes acting on our values difficult. Many nurses suffer chronic illnesses, including depression, at a rate greater than the general population and other health professionals. In a study, Letvak and colleagues demonstrated that nurses are twice as depressed as the patients they serve. A study by Melnyk and colleagues of more than 2,000 nurses across the country found more than half of the nurses reported poor mental or physical health and depression. Additionally, nurses with “... worse health were associated with 26% to 71% higher likelihood of having medical errors.”

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Living life on purpose

In his groundbreaking work with professional athletes, performance psychologist Jim Loehr, EdD, argues that being out of touch with our life's purpose creates an extraordinary energy drain. People may run in marathons, eat the healthiest foods, and be at the top of their game professionally, but these really good things can become an end to themselves when they're disconnected from life's purpose. Without that connection, anything can become meaningless.

Joy in the journey

All of us experience tragedy, sadness, and grief; they're part of the human condition. If you're wondering if finding joy and peace is possible under what appear to be impossible conditions, remember this: History is replete with ordinary humans rising to challenges of the day in extraordinary ways. They were able to unlock that part of themselves that gave them the strength and courage to carry on.

Nurses are extraordinary—don't lose sight of the amazing work you do to improve the lives and comfort of the people you touch. It's never too late to make a positive change in your life.

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Continue the journey

Here are some ideas to consider as you continue your nursing journey. You'll notice that many are connected to recommendations we've made for other dimensions of wellness. This isn't a mistake. We're whole human beings, and these practices support multiple dimensions.

Reconnect/reimagine your life's purpose and passion: Set aside some time for a "retreat with yourself" to carefully consider your purpose and whether/how you're living it out. Where do you need to make adjustments? What do you need to stop doing? What do you need to start doing? What would you do in the next 5 to 10 years if you knew that you couldn't fail? Periodically "taking stock" is critical to staying on track.

Ramp up your positive outlook: In their work with people newly diagnosed with HIV, Moskowitz and colleagues developed an intervention to improve patients' emotional outlook even in the midst of a very challenging circumstance. The intervention involves cultivating positive emotions through these daily practices:

- Recognize a positive event each day.
- Savor that event and log it in a journal or tell someone about it.
- Start a daily gratitude journal.
- List a personal strength and note how you used it.
- Set an attainable goal and note your progress.
- Report a relatively minor stress and list ways to reappraise the event positively.
- Recognize and practice small acts of kindness daily.
- Practice mindfulness, focusing on the here and now rather than the past or future.
- Results were promising and showed that, over time, the positive effects increased. Cultivating an attitude of gratitude" is cited by many spiritual leaders from multiple faith traditions as essential to their daily practice.

Consider some kind of meditative practice: Traditional forms of meditation can include prayer, chanting, or sitting in stillness with a quiet mind. Some people prefer physical action that incorporates meditation, such as yoga, tai chi, gardening, or simply walking. Experiment to find what works for you.

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