



APRIL, 2022

# SPRING NEWSLETTER

Mental Health Nursing Interest Group of RNAO



## Mental Health Nursing INTEREST GROUP



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# Mental Health Nursing

## INTEREST GROUP

### President's Message

SHAUNA GRAF

Dear MHNIG Members,

I hope this message finds you well. Spring is a time to renew ourselves. It is also opportunity to reflect on challenges we have just faced over the winter, and what we have been able to overcome.

To our new members, thank you for joining the RAO Mental Health Nursing Interest Group. We look forward to connecting with you, and we welcome you to take part in all the activities and perks of being an MHNIG member. To our returning members, thank you for your commitment to the MHNIG. It is our goal as members of the executive committee to meet your educational needs, provide opportunities for political action and advocacy, offer speaker events, and represent you at our various events well.

We are very proud to share with you our activities since our last newsletter- the MHNIG Member's Voice for Fall 2021.

In October 2021, MHNIG was a silver level sponsor for the Canadian Federation of Mental Health Nurses (CFMHN) Annual Fall Conference themed Human Rights and Mental Health Nursing: Equity & Inclusion. MHNIG made available a \$200 grant for five members. The MHNIG held a virtual booth featuring our new website, offered prizes, links to our social media, and a video of our member's voice activities. MHNIG has been heavily involved in advocacy work around the issue of RN Psychotherapy for some time, The MHNIG submitted an abstract and presented Continuing the Conversation on the Provision of Psychotherapy by Nurses. Through this discussion, we highlighted past accomplishments in this work as well as outlined the current environment around the issue as well and discuss future goals.

On January 28, 2022, MHNIG held the Annual General Meeting featuring three highly engaging educational sessions and provided an opportunity for connecting with membership, meeting new executive committee members, member's voice updates, and previews of the upcoming year's activities.

Please check out the recordings in the member's only area of our website:

1. Anti-Human Trafficking by: Kelly Tallon, Founder and Chief Executive Director of Courage for Freedom. With Introduction from Racheal Radyk, Indigenous Nurses and Allies Interest Group Chair
2. Nurses and Forensic Psychiatric Review Board Hearings by: Jean-Laurent Domingue
3. Stress, Compassion Fatigue and Building Resiliency by: Mary-Lou Martin

Live life when  
you have it.  
Life is a  
splendid gift  
– there is  
nothing small  
about it.

FLORENCE NIGHTINGALE





# Mental Health Nursing

## INTEREST GROUP

### President's Message- Continued

SHAUNA GRAF

MHNIG promotes Mental Health Nursing education and advancement through varying Research scholarships, free membership opportunities, and Mental Health related conference registration grants. This year MHNIG has provided the following financial opportunities:

- Dr. Hildegard E. Peplau Award – Mental Health Nursing Interest Group (MHNIG) (1 x \$1,000) - acclaimed

Note MHNIG provided - Research in Mental Health Nursing Awards - Mental Health Nursing Interest Group (MHNIG) (2 x \$1,500) but was not acclaimed through RNFOO. Please check out this link for more details on how to apply. However, MHNIG provided a \$1500 Research Grant to Fanshawe College to support nursing student research focusing on 'Vaping Practices Among College Students' lead.

We continue to make every possible effort to reach out to our 734 members, including 700 RNs and 34 students. I encourage you to keep an eye on your emails- we offer discounts to educational events and conferences, and we hold an annual membership survey where participants are entered into a free MHNIG membership as a small token of thank you. It is your opportunity to share your goals and needs over the next year as members.

Our Social media team kept our Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram accounts alive and engaging through daily and weekly postings of issues that matter to MHNIG members and the overall nursing community which lead to significant growth of our Facebook followers. Our [website](#), launched in spring 2021, continues to be a great source of information for our members.

Over the past year, we have turned a special focus to the wellness of nurses, and caring for the caregivers. The MHNIG Executive Committee members continue to sign action alert letters that speak out about important issues that can promote mental health and addiction care and services to push for a response or an action from the government officials and/or other organizations. I appreciate the opportunity to sit as the new chair of the MHNIG. It is a special and exciting experience, and I look forward to the advocacy ahead.

Shauna Graf, RN, BScN, CPMHN (C)  
MHNIG Chair

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FLORENCE NIGHTINGALE





## The Mental Health Crisis in Nursing

BY TARA KUTHUN-BERLASTY

As the rest of the world focuses on moving past Covid-19 and upcoming provincial elections, nurses are left dealing with an ever-present threat in a system that is underfunded and overextended, little support and no end in sight. While the College of Nurses of Ontario (CNO) reports an increase in new registrants, particularly among Internationally Educated Nurses (IEN's), growth rates are not keeping up with the record number of nurses leaving the profession, not to mention the effects the chronic level of understaffing in Ontario which predates the pandemic. Promoting the value of recruiting and retaining highly qualified IEN's in assisting with the growing nursing shortage in Ontario is something for which RNAO has been advocating for over the last two decades. Notwithstanding, the consensus among nurses in Ontario, including in my area of Windsor-Essex (Region 1), is that nurses who were pushed to the brink before the Covid-19 pandemic are burning out, suffering from poor mental health outcomes, unable to keep up with ever-increasing demands, while working short-staffed, with unsafe nurse to patient ratios.

A recent study conducted by a team of Psychology and Nursing Faculty at the University of Windsor reveals that large numbers of nurses have taken early retirement, stress leave, or have altogether left the profession. This exodus has left nursing colleagues, who are often new to their environment, bearing the brunt of

unreasonable workloads, with no time to care for their mental and physical health, let alone finding time for loved ones and leisure (Ralph et al., 2021). This begs the questions; With large vacancies in nursing, especially among seasoned and experienced staff, who is going to offer support and mentorship to those taking their place? What happens when the people who play a crucial role in the provision of mental health services to individuals, families and communities experience a mental health breakdown of their own? Based on interviews with local nurses, the Ralph et al. (2021) study made several recommendations; Among them was a push-back from over-reliance on EAP and other virtual care approaches with a demand for employers and administrators to take a more active role in transparency, visibility, tangible support for work-life balance, and ensuring access to mental health services through trusted providers, managers, and peers. As we move forward, RNAO's Mental Health Nursing Interest Group (MHNIG) will play a key function in education, peer support, policy development and advocacy for the mental health of all members of our community, including nurses and nursing students.

### References

Ralph, J., Freeman, L.A., Ménard, A.D. & Soucie, K. (2022). Practical strategies and the need for psychological support: Recommendation from nurses working in hospitals during the COVID-19 pandemic. *Journal of Health Organization and Management*, 36(2), 240-255.  
<https://doi.org/10.1108/JHOM-02-2021-0051>



## Breaking Burnout: A Student-Led Presentation on Resilience in a Time of COVID-19

Over the past few years, students Cynthia, Joanne and Reilly have noticed an increase in burnout and others mental health issues among nursing students. As the COVID-19 pandemic affected learning, the students noticed that these issues were becoming more prevalent due to a shift to online learning, decreased clinical placement hours, and reduced socialization among nursing peers.

Together with presenters Kim McMillan (RN, PhD, CHPCN(C)/Inf, PhD, CHPCN(C)) and Carmen Hust (RN, PhD, MScN, CPMHN (C)), a province-wide presentation on ways to assist nursing student's mental health was held. The presentation was aimed towards nursing students, nursing educators, and those who wish to employ nursing students so that they may better understand the experience of nursing students during the COVID-19 pandemic, as well as to address how these students could be better supported during their transition from university to employment.

Cynthia, Joanne, and Reilly discussed both barriers and benefits of being a student during these times. Common themes that presented as barriers included reduced socialization with nursing peers due to online learning, difficulty adapting to the online learning environment, and reduced clinical hours leading students to feel as though they were lacking required nursing skills. Benefits included a perceived sense of resilience among

the students, as well as seeing an increase from faculty towards student mental health, and more flexible learning schedules.

Presenter Kim McMillan discussed her study of new graduate transition into the workplace during the COVID-19 pandemic. Many of the themes discovered echoed what the students' voices were saying during the presentation, including that the newly graduated nurses did not feel they had all of the necessary skills to enter the workforce and that they felt they were lacking support necessary for the transition. Past the barriers for new graduates to make their transition to nursing employment, these new nurses were found to be more resilient, more likely to address unsafe nursing practices, and were more likely to be politically involved.

The consensus of the student panel was that the best way of supporting students during this pandemic is that they need mental health support, open channels of communication with their professors, and further opportunities to continue practicing psychomotor nursing skills.

**Read about the presenters  
on the next page!**



# Mental Health Nursing

## INTEREST GROUP

### Authors & Presenters

**Cynthia Rajkumar** is a fourth year BScN student at the University of Ottawa. She is a co-president of the student lead group Beating Burnout which aims to address burnout and mental health issues among nursing students.

**Joanne Hsueh** is a third year BScN student at the University of Ottawa. She is a co-president of Beating Burnout.

**Reilly Carey** is a third year BScN student in the collaborative nursing program between the University of Ottawa and Algonquin College. She is the Student Liaison for MHNIG.

**Carmen Hust** the chair of the nursing program at Algonquin College. She is the CFMHN representative for MHNIG.

**Kim McMillan** is an assistant professor in the nursing program at the University of Ottawa. Her research on New Graduate Nurse Transition: Navigating Entry to Practice Amidst the COVID-19 Pandemic can be found here: <https://kimmcmillan.wordpress.com/publications/>



Full recording available for members on our [website](#)



# Mental Health Nursing

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## INTEREST GROUP

### Meet Our Team!

Hello, my name is Tara. I'm an RN with 22 years of experience and I'm also an RP in the qualifying category with CRPO. Half of my career has been spent working at the University of Michigan Medical Centre as a critical care nurse. The remainder of my work involved a variety of roles including, pain management, geriatrics, case management and psychiatry. I've recently graduated from Yorkville University with an MA in Counselling Psychology, I hold a BN from Athabasca University and a Diploma in Health Sciences – Nursing from St Clair College. I'm currently in the process of starting my own private counselling practice. I have additional training in violence de-escalation, Emotion Focused Mindfulness Therapy (EFMT), Motivational Interviewing (MI), Solution-Focused Therapy (SFT), Cognitive-Behavioural Therapy (CBT), Dialectical Behaviour Therapy (DBT) and positive psychology. My personal interests include motorcycling, kayaking, archery, camping and quality time with family. As I embark on this journey of being a regional representative for RNAO, I'm hoping to make use of my nursing experience and mental health knowledge to advance the mental health and wellbeing of Ontario nurses and the patients we serve.



## Tara Kuthun-Berlasty

**Region 1 Representative**



# Mental Health Nursing

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### **Joan Denley, BScN, RN, CPMHN(C): Communications**

Joan Denley graduated from the Collaborative Bachelor of Science in Nursing program at Sault College in 2015. During nursing school, she was an active member of many nursing organizations and activities. She served in the role of secretary for her class's BScN Student Chapter. She was a student member of RNAO and attended the AGMs in Toronto. She was also very involved with the Canadian Nursing Student Association (CNSA), serving as an associate delegate representing Sault College at CNSA activities and conferences. In addition, during 2013, she was the director of the planning committee for the CNSA Ontario Regional Conference which was hosted at Sault College. The CNSA Conference Planning Committee, under her leadership, won the Regional Excellence award at the CNSA National Conference that year. Following that success, she was elected to the CNSA Board of Directors for 2014/2015 as the Director of Career and Leadership Development.

After graduation, she began her nursing career in long-term care, and then transitioned to Sault Area Hospital, working in inpatient Mental Health and Addictions in March of 2016. In 2019, it was announced that the hospital would be transitioning to an updated version of our EMR as part of a Regional initiative they have called the "ONE Project", which stands for Ontario North East Project. The objective of the project is to have a single EMR system that is used by health institutions in the region to support the seamless portability of patient health records, regardless of where a patient may go to seek care. During this transition phase, she volunteered to be trained as a "Super User" for the system, which allowed me to provide "at the elbow" support to my colleagues and peers during training and after "go live".

In 2020, she transitioned away from bedside nursing and into the role of MDS Assessment RN.



Currently, her scope of work includes: the collection and management of patient data using the RAI MDS-MH tool; submission of the data to the Canadian Institute for Health Information (CIHI); and analysis of quarterly comparative reports from CIHI for quality improvement and transformation. In 2021, she successfully obtained CNA Certification in Psychiatric and Mental Health Nursing.

When not at work, Joan enjoys watching movies and anime with her partner Jordan, biking and cross country skijoring with her dogs Tuck and Auggie, cuddling her cats Leon and Lilith, and crocheting with her ball python Lindie. She is an avid gamer, spending time playing Animal Crossing New Horizons, New World and Destiny 2, and joining friends for board game nights on the weekends. She also plays Dungeons and Dragons 5e, and her current group has been playing together, twice a week, for over four years.





# Mental Health Nursing

## INTEREST GROUP

### Meet Our Team!

Andrew completed his BScN at McMaster University, his MN at Western University, and is currently completing an MBA at the Royal Military College of Canada. He has spent almost a decade working in a variety of clinical mental health nursing roles including as a frontline RN, a nurse educator, and an after hours supervisor. He has taught mental health nursing at Niagara College, Mohawk College, and Nipissing University, as well as healthcare management at Fanshawe College. He is currently the Manager of the Cowan Health Sciences Center at Conestoga College, leading their simulation based training programs for nursing and other healthcare programs.

Andrew is passionate about education, policy design, and prevention of violence in the workplace.

## **Andrew Marlowe, RN, MN, MBA (candidate)**

Finance Officer





# Mental Health Nursing

## INTEREST GROUP

### Executive Updates

What have we been working on?

#### FINANCES

Healthy financial status continues and MHNIG executives' activity related costs are covered as per RNAO guidelines. Of your \$35 MHNIG membership fee, \$20 per RN member includes your Canadian Federation of Mental Health Nurses (CFMHN) membership. Student membership fee is \$17.50. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic we have held fewer events than usual, we encourage each satellite group to host events as they are able.

#### MEMBERSHIP/EDUCATION

We currently have 705 members including 677 RNs and 28 Students. MHNIG Membership and Education is currently working on various education sessions, and those dates will be released ASAP. Stay tuned for upcoming CFMHN opportunities also! If you are interested in helping develop a webinar on a topic you are passionate about please contact us at [mentalhealthnursingRNAO@gmail.com](mailto:mentalhealthnursingRNAO@gmail.com).

#### SOCIO-POLITICAL ACTION

Archana and Sophia continue to advocate for RN psychotherapy, and are keeping up to date on issues affecting mental health nurses and the populations they serve.

#### IT

The website is being updated on an ongoing basis. There is a plan in place this year for a more active social media presence. If members have posts or topics that they are passionate about, we are open to sharing so please contact us.

Group updates are being posted regularly on our social media so please follow our Facebook page, IG and Twitter.

#### REGION 5

Emma Quinn continues to work in advocacy work for RN Psychotherapists.

#### REGION 11

Katherine Harvey continues to advocate for the improvement of mental health care in the hospital in which I work. I am a member of several committees where I can influence positive changes to our mental health system. We are seeing positive improvements such as the introduction of peer support meetings, and more in-patient and out-patient group programming. We continue to be short on RNAO membership in our region, and are hoping that membership will expand. If you are in Region 11, please reach out. It would be great to connect!

# Join Our Team!



## Get Involved with MHNIG!

### MHNIG Bylaw Changes - Vote now!

As a result of increased workload and an increasing need to ensure we always have expertise on our executive team, we have revised our current bylaws to include two positions for the Policy and Political Action executive network officer, as well as the Membership and Education executive officer. The nominations for these positions will alternate years to ensure continuity of mentoring to the important work. Please view the bylaw changes which are highlighted in red.

**VOTE NOW! (In order to vote please make sure you log into your MyRNAO account FIRST)**

Please note voting closes **April 18th at 12pm** and results will be released to MHNIG membership by April 22, 2022.



## Get Involved with MHNIG!

**Coming Soon!**

### **MHNIG call for nominations!**

You're probably wondering how you can make an impact within your nursing community.

The answer is simple – **get involved with MHNIG's Executive Team!**

Now you're probably asking what the benefits are. Here are just a few:

- Increase awareness about the nursing profession in your area
- Network with local nurses & other healthcare practitioners.
- Help inform policy and direction of MHNIG.
- Connect with local politicians.
- Increase your professional capacity as a leader in RNAO's important work.

The MHNIG will be seeking nominees for the following positions:

- Membership and Education Executive Network Officer
- Policy and Political Action Executive Network Officer
- Social media and IT Executive Network Officer
- CFMHN Ontario Representative
- Student liaison Executive Network Officer
- Regions 2, 4, 6 (and 7 representing Toronto as a whole), 8, 10, 12 Satellite Representatives

**Also Coming Soon!** Please share your voice with the 2022 MHNIG Membership Survey.

Your participation is one of the many ways you can direct the work of the executive team.

For completing the survey you have a chance to win membership for the year 2023!

Congratulations to Julia Steels, Kristy Mikolich, and Maria Tandoc,  
our MHNIG Membership Winners for the year 2022 (\$35.00).

**Please keep your eye on your email for more information!**



Mental Health Nursing  
INTEREST GROUP

# Wishing you a Happy Nursing Week 2022!

From your colleagues on the Mental  
Health Nursing Interest Group  
Executive

Please take a moment to celebrate our profession and  
the contributions we have made towards progress in  
mental health.





If you would like to  
submit an entry for  
our next newsletter  
contact:

[mentalhealthnursingRNAO@gmail.com](mailto:mentalhealthnursingRNAO@gmail.com)

Follow us on social media!



# Upcoming Events

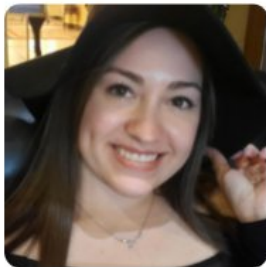


## WEBINAR



**"When you're in the office, it means you managed to get somewhere": perceptions of adolescents with anxiety or mood disorders of accessing primary care for mental health services**

**Thursday, April 21, 2022 7:00 - 7:30 pm ET**



**Lisa De Panfilis RN, BScN,  
MSc**

Quality and Risk Consultant  
St. Joseph's Healthcare  
Hamilton

**Crossing the Chasm: A Review of Mental Health Care Services for Transitional-Aged Youth**

**Thursday, April 21, 2022 7:30 - 8:00 pm ET**



**Brianna Jackson MScN, RN,  
CPMHN(C)**

Nursing PhD student, Research  
Assistant, & Teaching Fellow  
Yale University

Register here:

[https://www.cfmhn.ca/event\\_calendar/#id=164&cid=1590&wid=601](https://www.cfmhn.ca/event_calendar/#id=164&cid=1590&wid=601)