



MAY, 2023

SPRING NEWSLETTER

Mental Health Nursing Interest Group of RNAO



Mental Health Nursing INTEREST GROUP

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President's Message

SHAUNA GRAF

Dear Mental Health Nursing Interest Group Members,

I want to start by wishing you all a Happy Nursing Week. Thank you - the impact you have on your patients, families, loved ones, and communities as a whole is immeasurable. I am so glad you have found the opportunity to read our 2023 Spring newsletter. There is a lot to do this time of year, between busy work and home schedules, finding time for personal self-care, tackling spring cleaning and planning for the summer ahead.

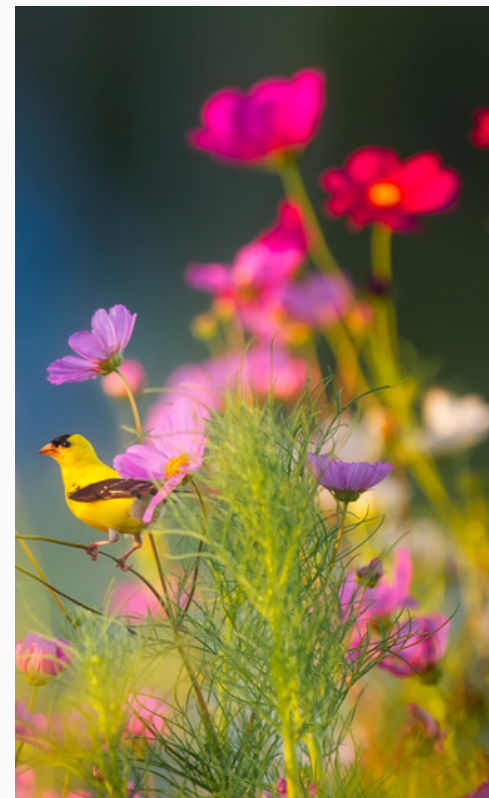
It is a pleasure to share with you our activities since the last newsletter. MHNIG has continued to focus on nursing psychotherapy. A meeting occurred at Queen's Park in October 2022, focused on Psychotherapy and Overdose Crisis with the Associate Minister of Mental Health and Addictions (Michael Tibollo), alongside RNAO Leadership, CEO Doris Grinspun, Irmajean Bajnok, and Matthew Kelloway, RNAO Senior Policy Analysts, and members of the MHNIG psychotherapy subcommittee. Please join us on facebook for the latest information on this topic.

In December 2022, the MHNIG Executive Team held our annual planning retreat to review your responses from the membership survey and plan for the year ahead. Our goal is to fulfill our duties to you, our members, from a policy and political action, education, and communication lens. During this time, the executive team established two subcommittees: a CFMHN subcommittee, and a Social Media subcommittee, which will allow us to better meet your needs.

This past January MHNIG took part in a nursing student event with the University of Toronto, alongside the RNAO Pediatric Nurses Interest Group. The interest group chairs provided presentations on the interest groups, highlighting the student representative position, and students were provided the opportunity to ask questions about how to get more involved with RNAO.

**Let us be grateful
to people who
make us happy,
they are the
charming
gardeners who
make our souls
blossom.**

MARCEL PROUST





President's Message- Continued

SHAUNA GRAF

This spring, the focus has been on building partnerships and education. RNAO is collaborating with the Harm Reduction Nurses Association (HRNA), Community Health Nurses' Interest Group (CHNIG), Mental Health Nurses Interest Group (MHNIG), MOMS Stop the Harm and the National Safer Supply Community of Practice (NSS-CoP) to develop a 5-part webinar series. You will see more information and an invitation to register for the first event, *Harm reduction 101: A social justice approach to Nursing* from RNAO soon.

MHNIG provided the following financial opportunities through RNFOO: the Dr. Hildegard E. Peplau Award for \$1,000, and the Research in Mental Health Nursing Awards – this year only one of two \$1500 awards were claimed. We encourage you to apply to the 2024 RNFOO Awards, and we look forward to announcing the names of this year's winners soon.

As always, we continue to make every effort to reach out to our 771 members, including 740 RNs and 31 students. I encourage you to keep an eye on your emails. We strive to provide value to you through your membership, including connecting you to various presentations, educational events, research and stakeholder feedback opportunities, as well as providing you with tailored resources and self-care tips.

We hope to continue to meet your needs and represent you well as the MHNIG Executive. As we approach the 98th RNAO Annual General Meeting in late June, it is our hope that we might see you there in person!

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

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MARCEL PROUST





Pursuing Education in Mental Health Nursing: Where do I start?

BY DANICA KAPLAN BSCN, RN

If you've ever thought to yourself "I want to know more but I don't know where to start" - you are not alone! Those initial thoughts and questions went through my mind as well.

They also precipitated my journey to continuing my education to pursuing a masters degree. Pursuing education for your passion can be exhilarating, fulfilling... and also nerve wracking. There are many options to consider and explore, though there is no "right" or "wrong" way... only your own way. That being said - I hope my story can help you if you've ever wondered what else is out there for you.

I initially started my nursing career in orthopaedic surgery shortly after graduating nursing. I pursued my passion of mental health and pivoted career paths - one of the scariest moments in my nursing career. Once I had established what my passion was, I then was met with the next interesting thought: "What now?"

The first step in anyone's journey to continuing education is helpful to start with asking yourself "why." Identifying the "why(s)" that are important and meaningful to you to pursue your education of any kind is crucial to your success. Your "why" will guide you in times of doubt and/or lack of motivation (which I will reference later in this article) as pursuing education is not always linear.

There are challenges just like there are in any other area of our lives. Once I had established my personal reasons for continuing education I then had to decide what I wanted to do! This can be an overwhelming step as there are many options available such as virtual courses and seminars, or more longer term options such as a Masters or certificate program.

I reached out to coworkers and friends at MHNIG as well as supportive and trustworthy people in my support network of my interest in continuing education in mental health. I was given such incredible and insightful information and was blown away by how many different opportunities there were. I was not quite ready to commit to a Masters program and so I had decided to start with a six-week virtual cognitive behavioural therapy program which involved one 3 hour session a week.

I was unaware educational opportunities such as these existed and it was an amazing way to explore how I felt pursuing education again. It also gave me the insight and self awareness I needed to feel like I was ready to pursue a Masters.

(Note: MHNIG also offers financial assistance where possible for you to continue your education!) Reaching out to those who are already doing or have done what you are thinking of doing is a great resource to find out of opportunities you may not have ever thought existed!



Pursuing Education in Mental Health Nursing: Where do I start? (Cont'd)

BY DANICA KAPLAN BSCN, RN

Once I had decided I was ready to pursue my Masters, I had to find a program that fit with my current full time job that would also allow me to maintain my mental health.

I researched multiple universities and spoke with various program advisors as well with people I knew who had previously taken the program. Once decided on which top two options I was to consider, I evaluated how I pictured each program fitting into my life in regards to balancing social life, financial goals, family and time for myself. I sat down and listed out all my “non-negotiables” that I had learned from my undergrad that would help protect my mental health such as “weekly study commitment that allows for minimum 7 hours of sleep per week”. Your “non-negotiables” will look different to you.

I also wrote out a potential study plan based on how many hours I wanted to commit per week that aligned with the feedback I had received from the program advisors and friends who had taken the program. I thought of every pro versus con and decided to pursue my masters of choice.

Currently, I am eight months into my program and am loving and appreciating every moment being a student again. Writing down my expectations and “non-negotiables” before applying has had huge benefits within my program. I feel it is manageable and I am proud of myself for pursuing something I

never initially thought I would do. There have been challenges where I've felt lost and had to revisit my list of why's which have reminded me of all the amazing reasons I've wanted to push myself academically.

If the thought of pursuing education has ever crossed your mind, I hope my story helps in knowing it's okay to take chances and to not know what you want to do. Take your time in finding out what it is you truly want out of pursuing your education and why, and then don't be afraid to go after what you want!





Skills Development: Motivational Interviewing

BY EMMA QUINN

One of the principal tasks that Nurses have in their clinical practice is developing an effective working alliance with the clients whom they consult.

It is thus important for all Nurses to seek out and gain skills that provide them the ability to interact with the clients they consult in the most effective manner possible.

Motivational Interviewing (MI) is one of the developments in mental health that is directly applicable to all aspects of Nursing practice and when engaged effectively, MI provides for increased efficacy in clinical interactions between Nurse and client.

Thankfully, Stephen Rollnick, one of the developers of MI has partnered with the British Medical Journal (BMJ) Learning service and has produced a phenomenally educational hour long lecture that is free about MI.

The link to register and engage in this training for MI is found online at:

<https://new-learning.bmj.com/course/10051582%20>





Dealing with Stress in Nursing School

BY UGOCHI NWOJI

‘Nursing school is stressful’, is a popular belief shared by many nursing students, which coloured my perception as a new student and made me extremely anxious. Having completed six semesters of nursing school, I am beginning to reevaluate this standpoint to identify other factors which may be at play. While there are undoubtedly difficult aspects to the nursing curriculum and the profession as a whole, I have realized that some of the stress associated with nursing school may actually be self-imposed stress or caused by other factors outside of the nursing school itself. For example, may experience stress related to personal factors, such as financial concerns, family responsibilities, mental health issues, high expectations, and pressure to perform well. Others may be related to individual habits like procrastination, disorganization, and poor time management. These stressors can make the demands of nursing school feel even more challenging. These expectations and pressure, combined with rigorous coursework, clinical hours, and exams can be overwhelming, leading to feelings of anxiety and burnout. Effectively identifying and managing these stressors may help to reduce the overall burden of nursing school.

Some of the practical strategies that have helped me in managing nursing school stress and prevent burnout include:

- Developing a schedule that includes time for studying, clinical hours, and personal time and

sticking to the schedule as much as possible.

- Prioritizing self-care by making time for activities that promote relaxation and well-being, such as exercise, meditation, or spending time with loved ones.
- Seeking support from classmates, clinical teachers, and professors, to share experiences, receive feedback, and seek guidance.
- Using effective study strategies that work best for me such as flashcards, practice tests, and

group study sessions.

- Using time management tools, such as calendars or to-do lists, to prioritize tasks and reduce
- procrastination.
- Staying organized by keeping track of assignments, due dates, and clinical hours in a planner or calendar.
 - Getting enough sleep (7-8 hours daily) to improve focus and reduce fatigue.
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In conclusion, it is important to remember that nursing school is designed to prepare students for a demanding and rewarding profession. By pushing ourselves to succeed, we can build the skills and resilience necessary to thrive as nurses.



Mental Health Nursing

INTEREST GROUP

Meet Our Team!

Lizette Keenan RN, PhD

Region 1 Representative



Lizette Keenan completed her diploma in nursing at St. Clair College in Windsor Ontario and her BScN and MN at the University of Windsor. She finished her PhD in Nursing at Walden University with a focus on medication assisted treatment in substance use disorders in women. Lizette has worked as a registered nurse in various areas like medical surgical, dialysis, and community mental health. Throughout her journey, mental health has been a common thread affecting all patients. From an early age, Lizette was exposed to substance use disorders from her father experiencing addiction and eventually becoming a substance abuse counsellor for over 20 years before his death. These experiences, professionally and personally, have fostered a passion for mental health especially those who require care and advocacy. Lizette is always looking for ways to improve her practice and serve the populations that need it most. Most recently, she completed a research study working with nursing students to provide exposure and foster learning with individuals experiencing homelessness. Lizette's current role is Professor, School of Nursing, St. Clair College where she teaches a variety of courses including mental health nursing. Lizette's hobbies are spending time with her teenage children Owen and Zoe, mostly as a cab or bank machine. As well, she enjoys being one with nature and spinning vinyl records.



Ugochi is a fourth-year nursing student at Humber College, Ontario. She has a master's degree in Environmental Management and has previously worked as an environmental project manager before deciding to study nursing because of a life-long passion to positively impact people's lives. In the past, she has participated in several projects that were geared towards promoting safe biological, social-economic, and political environments for rural communities in Nigeria. She hopes that the nursing profession will provide her with more opportunities to make a real difference in the lives of others through direct care, knowledge sharing, and advocacy. Her interest in mental health was sparked during her clinical placement at Oakville Trafalgar Memorial Hospital. She hopes to gain more knowledge, skills, and resources to help her better advocate for mental health issues in Canada, as well as her home country, Nigeria.

UGOCHI NWOJI, NURSING STUDENT REP





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.

Stay tuned to your email for details!

Also Coming Soon! Please share your voice with the 2023 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 2024!

Please keep your eye on your email for more information!



Mental Health Nursing
INTEREST GROUP

Wishing you a Happy Nursing Week 2023!

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

Check out our website
and Follow us on social
media!



Upcoming Events, Resources & Educational Opportunities

**INTERCHURCH HEALTH MINISTRIES CANADA WILL HOST ITS 2023 ANNUAL MEETING ON:
JUNE 7TH STARTING AT 6:30 PM EDT**

OPENING THE EVENT THIS YEAR IS [DANIEL WHITEHEAD, CEO OF SANCTUARY MENTAL HEALTH MINISTRIES](#). DANIEL SPEARHEADS THE MOVEMENT TO EQUIP CHURCHES TO SUPPORT MENTAL HEALTH AND WELL BEING IN THEIR COMMUNITY. REGISTRATION IS FREE FOR ICHM COMMUNITY MEMBERS. REGISTER TODAY. GUESTS ARE WELCOME TO ATTEND, WITH A DONATION OF \$25, AT GUEST REGISTRATION

<https://www.canadahelps.org/en/dn/m/80639?v2=true>

Cognitive Processing Therapy (CPT)

<https://cpt2.musc.edu/AspxAutoDetectCookieSupport=1#>

University of Alberta Indigenous Canada Course

<https://www.coursera.org/learn/indigenous-canada#enroll>

Macneil, C. A., Hasty, M. K., Conus, P., & Berk, M. (2012). Is diagnosis enough to guide interventions in mental health? Using case formulation in clinical practice. *BMC Medicine*, 10, 111. <https://doi.org/10.1186/1741-7015-10-111>