

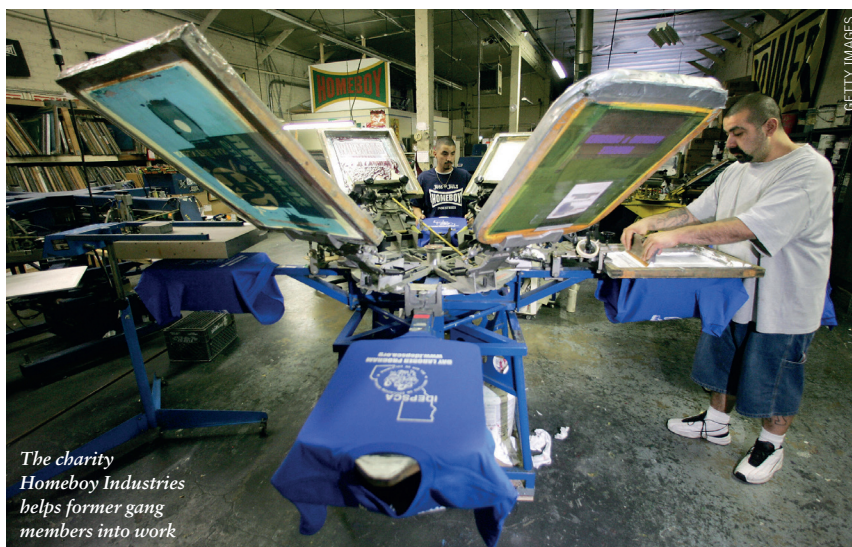
TICKET TO A LEARNING OPPORTUNITY

Nightingale scholars Jane Padmore and Rebecca Blackwell preview material from masterclasses they have prepared for an upcoming conference

As a nurse consultant in the national forensic child and adolescent mental health service (CAMHS) at South London and Maudsley NHS Foundation Trust, I will be speaking at the Florence Nightingale Foundation's annual conference about my travel scholarship, funded by the foundation.

My job involves assessment and treatment of adolescents involved in offending behaviour. I am the CAMHS diversity and human rights lead and provide clinical and research supervision to professionals and students from many disciplines. I also co-lead the Star project for services to young people involved in serious violent offences and gang related offending.

I travelled to Florida and California to study mental



The charity Homeboy Industries helps former gang members into work

health services for young people involved in gangs, the subject of my doctorate. Having shown that those involved in gangs often had severe mental health needs, I wanted to examine successful interventions elsewhere.

In California, I visited Homeboy Industries, a charity that helps ex-gang members back into work, and also the Los Angeles mayor's office for youth development. In Florida I visited the state's forensic mental health services and met members

of the American Association of Psychiatric Nurses. My object was to identify ideas for multi-site research studies. The scholarship led to me joining a new team to take the work further.

To anyone thinking of applying for a foundation scholarship, go for it – you never know what opportunities it might open up **NS**

Jane Padmore is consultant nurse at South London and the Maudsley NHS Trust

RESOURCES

The Florence Nightingale Foundation annual conference is held at the Queen Elizabeth II conference centre on February 27 and 28. The event is primarily a learning opportunity and involves a series of masterclasses, networking sessions and keynote presentations. www.florencenightingale.glasgows.co.uk

NOTICE BOARD



Commonwealth Nurses Federation

Conference The second Commonwealth Nurses Federation conference will take place on March 8-9 at the Royal College of Physicians in Regent's Park, London. Themes include maternal and child health, mental health, public and primary health, and acute and chronic care. Nurses and midwives will be showcasing their practice and sharing their contributions to improving the health of Commonwealth citizens. The conference precedes Commonwealth Week on March 10-14 when there will be many other events in London. tinyurl.com/CNF2014

Awards and fellowships The RCN Awards of Merit and Fellowships are presented to people who have shown exceptional contributions to the RCN and to nursing.

New fellows and honorary fellows are entitled to the letters FRCN after their name. For winners to be presented with their award at Congress 2014, please return the form by January 23. tinyurl.com/RCNAMF

Health and safety Run by Unionlearn, the training arm of the Trades Union Congress, a stage 1 certificate in health and safety focuses on the role and functions of health and safety representatives, organising for health and safety, preventing accidents and ill health and other key skills. The course aims to help union representatives to identify problems, improve health and safety, use information and the law and achieve results. The course runs from January 24 to April 4 at New College, Swindon. www.unionlearn.org.uk/TUEd/HandS1

FOCUS ON OLDER PEOPLE

I am a palliative care nurse. My PhD study is entitled 'Improving the experience of palliative care for older patients in the emergency department using experience-based co-design'.

In 2012, an item in the New York Times about a geriatric-only emergency department (ED) at Mount Sinai Hospital (MSH) inspired me to apply for a foundation travel scholarship.

Older people often report poor experiences in the ED and staff feel frustrated when they are unable to meet patients' needs. The aim of my trip was to identify any elements that could translate into design principles for NHS hospitals.

The MSH model of holistic care extends to every area of hospital life. Measures such as hearing aids and stress balls are used to reduce the aggravations of older people and could be used in the UK. For nurses who need time and money to develop an idea, I cannot recommend the scholarship highly enough **NS**

Rebecca Blackwell is a doctoral student at the Florence Nightingale School at King's College, London

Nicola Davies on providing individual attention to patients

Never be too busy to care

No one could accuse nurses of slacking on the job; most nurses hardly seem to have a chance to catch their breath and there is no doubt that nursing staff are stretched far too thinly.

Nurses are responsible for providing excellent care for more patients than ever before, no matter what the circumstances. Exhaustion can lead to mistakes and overworked nurses can overlook early signs of a deteriorating patient.

So, do patients suffer when nurses are busy? If so, how can nurses ensure this does not happen?

Opening up

For a start, when approaching a patient, centre yourself, breathe deeply and push other concerns out of your mind. Open yourself up to the situation at hand.

Approach the patient with a smile and a kind word and ask: 'How are you?' Really listen to the answer and be on the alert for clues to the patient's physical and mental condition.

If the patient maintains that they are 'fine,' but speaking is obviously an effort or painful for them, gently probe further. Even a few words, when heard with total engagement, can expose the subtle changes that mark the start of a decline.

At busy times, there may be a tendency to ignore the patient in favour of their chart – after all, it has all the answers, right? Wrong. Certainly, the chart is

important, but the patient is likely to disclose more about their condition personally. By taking a few moments to see the patient, as opposed to seeing their chart, nurses can avert disaster, relieve anxiety and identify other needs.

Individual patients' stories may have profound effects on staff who are already overstretched. Listening to an angry parent, a grieving spouse or a frightened child can leave nurses feeling drained and helpless. But good teamwork – knowing that colleagues can lean on each other when necessary – will lessen the pressure felt by individual nurses when the going gets tough.

If you are truly overwhelmed, stop for two minutes. Even a short break can help refocus energy.

If nurses cannot provide the emotional care that patients need, physical ailments can be exacerbated, resulting in poorer care and a busier working day. It may seem that nurses have little time for patients, but time invested in patients is time well spent for nurses **NS**

Nicola Davies is a health psychologist and writer

RESOURCES

Time management tips

tinyurl.com/pgsmovz

Tips from Mayo Clinic

tinyurl.com/Tips-Mayo-Clinic

Practice nursing The Integrated Mental Health Programme Team at UCLPartners and Health Education North Central and East London is running a free mental health awareness training programme for practice nurses. It consists of five face-to-face and five e-learning modules delivered via half-day sessions by expert nurse educators from mental health trusts. Classes are intended to improve case identification and early intervention, boost communication between primary and secondary care and decrease stigma. tinyurl.com/UCLPMHclasses

Seminar RCN Wales will be hosting a morning seminar on hypercholesterolaemia on February 3 at the RCN office, Ty Maeth, Cardiff. Suzanne Watkins, clinical nurse specialist in the Cardiff lipid unit, will be explaining the basic principles of lipids; lipid levels markers; management and treatment of

abnormal cholesterol levels; familial hypercholesterolaemia and its treatment. She will also explain how nurses can play a vital part in early diagnosis, cascade screening and treatment. tinyurl.com/HCHiddenCV



Survey A survey of people in the last stages of life and their carers is being undertaken by the Palliative and End of Life Care Priority Setting Partnership. The survey asks what research questions are important to them and where future research should be prioritised. The partnership, led by Marie Curie Cancer Care, is keen to hear from as many people and communities as possible, including black and ethnic minority groups, professionals and young people. For the survey and details about the partnership see www.palliativecarePSP.org.uk