

NURSING'S VOICE - SUPPORTING MENTAL HEALTH REDESIGN VIA NURSING

PROJECT SUPPORT PROVIDED BY THE ROBERT
WOOD JOHNSON & NW HEALTH FOUNDATIONS
THROUGH PARTNERS INVESTING IN NURSING'S
FUTURE (PIN)

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PRESENTATION FOR MILWAUKEE COUNTY MENTAL HEALTH
REDESIGN & IMPLEMENTATION TASK FORCE
NOVEMBER 6, 2013

Presenters: Sue Schuler & Scott Gelzer, assistance
provided by Rob Henken & Susan Leuck.

Nursing's Voice is Data-Informed through Original Research

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The research agenda is to:

- Assess supply and demand challenges regarding mental health nurses in Greater Milwaukee.
- Create data-informed strategies that will upgrade the skills and knowledge base of practicing mental health nurses.
- Document factors that will encourage student nurses to choose mental health as a focal point in their career.

Research is carried out through a partnership involving the Public Policy Forum and two Jonas Scholars (Jonas Center for Nursing Excellence) who are PhD students at Marquette & UW-Milwaukee. Assistance has also been provided by the WI Center for Nursing.

Long Range Goal: Data-informed strategies and actions for a redesigned mental health system, and an updated role for nurses. Through this approach, *Nursing's Voice* can improve the quality of service for and quality of life of consumers.

State Nursing Supply, Demand & Demographic Issues

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- The state RN survey in 2010 found only 494 WI nurses identified as MH nurses (Source: WI Center for Nursing)
- 90% are Caucasian, 6% are African American
- 93% are female
- 41% are over 50 years of age
- 41% work in acute care setting
- Fewer than 4% have a Masters Degree

Mental Health Employers & Nurses in Milwaukee County

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120 mental health nurses and 34 employers responded to a 2012 Public Policy Forum survey, developed in consultation with the WI Center for Nursing.

Survey questions addressed nursing skills & competencies of existing workforce and recent nursing graduates, as well as employer demand and employee satisfaction.

This research is being applied by Nursing's Voice in several related projects.



Mental Health Nurses and their Employers See Enhanced Role for Nursing in Milwaukee County's Mental Health System

The Forum surveyed 120 mental health nurses and 34 employers this year as part of the *Nursing's Voice* project, intended to better understand the capacity and capabilities of the local mental health nurse workforce and gather the insights of nurses to inform mental health redesign planning in Milwaukee County. The findings highlight the potential for an enhanced role for nurses in the county's mental health care delivery system. In addition, *Nursing's Voice* survey data will help public and private sector employers gauge the challenges associated with securing an appropriately trained nursing workforce for Milwaukee's outpatient settings, hospitals, and rehabilitation centers.

Mental health nurses in Milwaukee County and their employers agree that among the nursing skills most important for treating patients with mental illness is an understanding of dual or co-occurring disorders, in which mental health issues are accompanied by substance abuse and/or addiction. The importance of understanding treatment options and protocols also is important, but understanding the individual patient's needs is seen as perhaps more important. Both the nurses and their employers also agree that the nurse workforce in the county requires more training in dual or co-occurring disorder treatments. Nurses see their understanding of patients' and clients' needs in this area to be among their greatest strengths, however, while employers see opportunities for greater understanding of those needs (Table 1).

Table 1: Important nursing skills most frequently cited by both nurses and nurse employers

| Frequency of respondents citing... | Nurses | | Nurse employers | |
|---|------------------------------|--------------------------|-----------------------------|------------------------------------|
| | Among own greatest strengths | In need of more training | Among most important skills | Among most commonly lacking skills |
| <i>Understands the needs of persons with mental illness, co-occurring disorders, and complex biopsychosocial and spiritual issues</i> | 77% | | 75% | 35% |
| <i>Understands dual disorder treatment/recovery and the impact of substance abuse on a person's mental health</i> | | 36% | 40% | 59% |

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Key Findings – Employers & Nurses

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- Findings showed both agreement and debate on current skills, training needs and job satisfaction.
- Employer respondents projected a demand for additional nurses in mental health.
- Priority Nursing skills include: understanding dual diagnosis and/or co-occurring disorders, including appropriate treatment options or protocols.
- Most important is to understand the person's bio-psychosocial and spiritual needs.

Employer-Nurse Findings

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- There is a definite need for nurses with an interest in mental health now and in the future.
- Few area nurses are nationally certified or advanced practice nurses (APN's).
- Schools of Nursing are providing a *basic* foundation in mental health nursing. However, deeper knowledge and clinical experience is lacking in many of the programs.
- RN role in MH settings is often unclear. Redesign should consider the optimal role for RN's and APN's, both working solo and in teams with allied professions, including certified peer specialists and counselors.

Employer-Nurse Findings (continued)

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- Mental health nurse satisfaction comes from working with patients.
- Employers and nurses disagree about the most important skills and competencies for a patient's recovery.
- However, there is agreement about specific skills.

For instance, co-occurring treatment is a priority for both sets of respondents, ongoing training for nurses in multiple areas is imperative.

Barriers to a Adequate, Skilled, Mental Health Nurse Workforce

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- Aging MH nurse workforce
- Retirements related to the easing of the recession
- Reduction of MH curriculum in some area Schools of Nursing; fewer courses and less practical experience are the result.
- Students often encouraged to go in to acute care nursing or other area prior to selecting a specialty

Sources include Nursing's Voice Survey, WCN statewide nursing survey – The WI Nursing WF – Status & Recommendations, 2013, assessments from members of the Nursing's Voice Project Advisory Committee.

Mental Health Student Nurse Survey

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- Well over 200 undergraduate students from all eight nursing schools in Milwaukee County responded to a 2013 survey
- The focus of the survey was to measure the nursing student's attitudes toward and interest in mental health nursing
- This is the first known survey of nursing students of this magnitude in the United States.
- Survey results show that stigma is a challenge for many nursing students; the good news is that there are available educational strategies which appear to reduce it

Data Collection of Survey Results

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- IRB approval obtained from all eight nursing schools in Milwaukee County
 - ▣ 7 BSN, 1 ADN

- Online survey created through Survey Monkey
 - ▣ Modified from Australian survey and piloted before use
 - ▣ Consists of six subscales

Nursing's Voice Action Agenda

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- Create a mechanism for continuing education in mental health
- Support updates & revisions in Bachelor's level nursing education
- Support for academic progression, i.e., Bachelors to APN
- Support selected pilot projects
- Clarify the role of the nurse in outpatient (community) settings, as part of a team approach to recovery
- Create additional opportunities for students interested in MH nursing
- Seek partners to sustain these efforts beyond project sunset of August 31, 2014
- Align Faye McBeath funding in mental health with research and information generated by Nursing's Voice

Resources

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- <http://publicpolicyforum.org/sites/default/files/NursingsVoiceSurveyBrief.pdf>
- <http://www.partnersinnursing.org/>