

# LIVE WELL NURSING

## NURSE'S NOTES

*By: Angela Mitchell, CNO*

### Continuous Learning for Nurses: Enhancing Knowledge, Skills, and Patient Outcomes



Nursing is a dynamic and evolving profession, where the demand for continuous learning is not only beneficial but indeed necessary. As nurses, we are at the front lines of patient care, and our ability to provide the best possible care is directly linked to our ongoing education and training (American Nurses Association, 2020).

Research shows that continual learning in nursing significantly contributes to improved patient outcomes (Reilly & Orsini, 2015). In a rapidly evolving healthcare landscape, diseases mutate, new treatments emerge, and protocols change. Staying abreast of these changes is a requirement for safe, effective, and patient-centered care. It also helps nurses better understand patients' needs and challenges, which is crucial in developing personalized care strategies (Johnson, 2019).

In addition, ongoing learning promotes professional growth, increasing job satisfaction, and reducing burnout (Kutney-Lee et al., 2015). It helps us to be innovative and adaptive, to think critically, and to make effective decisions in complex and stressful situations. Consequently, this not only benefits our patients but also enhances our professional satisfaction and career longevity.

Furthermore, many nursing regulatory bodies require continuous professional development for licensure renewal (National Council of State Boards of Nursing, 2019). These requirements underscore the importance of lifelong learning in maintaining competence and ensuring the highest standards of nursing practice.

Continuous learning is a cornerstone of our nursing practice. It is essential for maintaining competence, improving patient outcomes, promoting professional growth, and maintaining eligibility for licensure. As the healthcare landscape continues to evolve, so too must our knowledge and skills, ensuring that we provide the best possible care for our clients.

American Nurses Association. (2020). The importance of lifelong learning in nursing. Nursing World. <https://www.nursingworld.org/>

Johnson, B. (2019). The role of continuous learning in nursing. Journal of Nursing Education and Practice, 9(4), 100-105.

Kutney-Lee, A., Germack, H., Hatfield, L., Kelly, S., Maguire, P., Dierkes, A., Del Guidice, M., & Aiken, L. (2015). Nurse Engagement in Shared Governance and Patient and Nurse Outcomes. Journal of Nursing Administration, 45(11), 605-612.

National Council of State Boards of Nursing. (2019). Continued competence: Ensuring lifelong professional competency in nursing. <https://www.ncsbn.org/>

Reilly, C. M., & Orsini, C. (2015). A comprehensive review of the impact of continuing education programs on nurses' clinical competence and self-efficacy. Nurse Education Today, 35(5), 632-638.

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## SUBMISSIONS

Please e-mail submissions (ideas, photos, articles, trainings, dates, accolades, local or national news, etc.) to:  
**[davina.trejo-valdez@sdcounty.ca.gov](mailto:davina.trejo-valdez@sdcounty.ca.gov)**

For consideration in the next issue, please submit entries by close of business on October 16, 2023. Submission limits: 125-275 words

## Never Stop Learning...From Our Clients!

*By Kathleen Sorahan, RN, Aging & Independence Services, Adult Protective Services*

The County of San Diego, Health and Human Services Agency has made it its mission to join the movement to participate and encourage our partners to participate in becoming an age-friendly health system. Angela Mitchell, Chief Nursing Officer, recently presented on the 4Ms Framework of an Age-Friendly Health System during the virtual G.R.E.A.T. presentation on July 11, 2023. Her presentation reminded me that despite decades of experience we never stop learning and most often our clients are our best teachers.

“What is it important for me to know about you?” This intentionally vague, open-ended question may be the most fruitful one we ask when interviewing clients as nurses with Adult Protective Services (APS). The responses range from a bit of an autobiography to critical information about abuse they are suffering at the hands of a caregiver.

When we make our unannounced visits to the homes of seniors, APS nurses come prepared with a long list of probing questions to assess everything from the person’s medical history to their financial situation – and no shortage of follow-up questions to get needed information about allegations of abuse, neglect or mental suffering.

As espoused by the 4M Framework of an Age-Friendly Health System, taking the time to directly address “What Matters” to the client is often what gives us the most useful information and leaves the client feeling recognized and understood. And frankly, taking that few minutes to make direct eye contact and clearly ask the person what is most important to them, can make our surprise visits and lengthy interviews feel far less intrusive and exhausting, and more like a visit from a caring nurse.

Institute for Healthcare Improvement, Age-Friendly Health Systems, retrieved 8/29/23, <https://www.ihl.org/Engage/Initiatives/Age-Friendly-Health-Systems/Pages/default.aspx#:~:text=Becoming%20an%20Age%2DFriendly%20Health,Medication%2C%20Mentation%2C%20and%20Mobility>.

## The Journey of Learning

*By Mary Algiers, Sr. PHN, Aging & Independence Services*

One thing for sure is you’ve hit gold with nursing if you are a lifelong learner. There is no end to the learning we must do in our work. From rare diseases to latest treatments to evidence based best practices, we are constantly motivated to incorporate new information into our profession. As nurses, we are expected to be Subject Matter Experts on a multitude of topics. In my early years of nursing, I used to be terrified when someone would ask me a question, feeling certain I would not know the answer.

This continuous learning curve can be a little wearing, frustrating and even overwhelming at times. When I’m feeling this way, I reflect on something that one of my professors said, “You have to love the questions. You have to learn to be comfortable with the uncomfortable feeling of not knowing everything.”

That was one of those light bulb moments for me. To become comfortable with the often-uncomfortable process of learning something new. To recognize the feelings of frustration, uncertainty and anxiety that come up when we are confronted with a challenging learning situation and accept they are part of the process. We don’t need to panic, run away, avoid or put off the situation. Leaning into those feelings are a necessary part of the journey.

Now, when I’m talking with people and they get that look in their eyes and say, “Hey, you’re a nurse, what about...?” I don’t feel terrified or intimidated by the possibility I may not have an answer, instead, I look forward to another opportunity to learn something new.

## **LIFE is a JOURNEY and we Never Stop Learning**

*By Susan Capati, RN, Edgemoor*

This is a story of a journey, a migration that took Emelinda Dizon just like most Filipinos miles from motherland, the Philippines. A journey from being a Certified Nurse Assistant to a Registered Nurse.

Emelinda graduated with the Bachelor of Nursing degree in 1992 from Pines Doctor Hospital in Baguio City, the summer capital of the Philippines. Right after passing the Nurses' Board Exam, she worked in a local hospital for two years. After 5 years, Emelinda and her family migrated to US, they arrived in Florida in 1997. Emelinda's first job was Underwriter for two years at the Quality Control Department of Poe and Brown Law Firm. Together with her family, they moved to Las Vegas to join her sister in 1999. While working as Data Encoder in a financial firm, she took and passed the CNA test in 2000. She believed that working as a CNA seemed like the most logical job. It was also an opportunity to not only care for people but also to gain more exposure to nursing profession.

Emelinda and family finally moved to San Diego in January of 2000 and worked as CNA for UNI at Edgemoor Hospital at the old site on same year. Miss Kim, Nurse Supervisor encouraged her to apply as regular CNA at Edgemoor and the rest is history, she has been a CNA for twenty years. Emelinda challenged the NCLEX-RN exam in 2010; unfortunately, she did not pass.

Life has been very challenging specially during Covid-19 pandemic, it was during the height of pandemic that Emelinda lost her husband to Covid-19. She fought depression and loneliness for the sake of her only child/son, her husband's memory helped her through. Emelinda dreamed of providing a comfortable life for her son, she knew that the road to RN is best possible way to fulfill her dream. She reviewed hard for NCLEX-RN; she took her second chance in 2023. Because of hard work in keeping up her nursing knowledge and perseverance, Emelinda passed the exam!

Emelinda was hired as a Staff Nurse at Edgemoor DPSNF on June 2, 2023. Kudos to you Emelinda! May your story inspire others who dream of being an RN.

"It always seems impossible until it is done." – Nelson Mandela

**Access the County's [EBSCO Health Homepage](#)  
using a universal link**



**<https://my.openathens.net/>**

# Public Health Nurses Leaning into Learning: Collaborating & Building Bridges

*By: Jonae Goleta, Jamie Felice, Kimberly Ayala, Jennifer Abreni, Maria Eisenmann, & Florence Bernal, Sr PHNs & Claire Lynch-Dwight, PHN Sup with Maternal, Child, and Family Health Services*

Can you remember your first public health nursing experience? For many of us, it was a semester in nursing school. We continue to progress professionally through a unique PHN lens – advancing health equity, racial reckoning, and climate change mitigation. Public health nursing is a complex and ever-changing specialty of nursing that requires us to proactively seek opportunities to expand one’s awareness and education. County of San Diego PHNs were fortunate to attend the Association of Community Health Nursing Educators (ACHNE) and Association of Public Health Nursing (APHN) Joint Conference here in San Diego from June 5 to June 8, 2023. The theme of this conference, “Stronger Together – Bridging Academia and Practice,” addressed racial reckoning, workforce issues, and environmental impacts in Public Health Nursing.

A 2022 Journal of Public Health editorial article suggested that to prepare student nurses, the branches of public health i.e., social determinants of health, health equity, environmental science, epidemiology, disease prevention, and disaster preparedness are interweaved throughout the nursing curriculum (Jones, K. L., Edwards, L. A., & Alexander, G. K., 2022). Several ACHNE and APHN Conference sessions centered on including public health nursing in all courses throughout the nursing curriculum. At the County, we partner with local universities to offer nursing student clinicals and graduate student preceptorships to provide practical field experiences. In our scope of work, all populations deserve equitable care by providing upstream interventions – prevention, early intervention, and education to promote healthy lifestyles. There is opportunity to advance health equity, racial reckoning, and climate change mitigation in partnering with nursing educators and students as our discipline evolves and grows – we should never stop learning together.

Jones, K. L., Edwards, L. A., & Alexander, G. K. (2022). Shoring Up the Frontline of Prevention: Strengthening Curricula with Community and Public Health Nursing. *American Journal of Public Health*, 112, S237–S240.



Public Health Nurses with Rear Admiral Aisha K. Mix, Chief Nurse Officer with the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services

From Left to Right: Jocelyn Waters, Jamie Felice, Denise Lozares, Florence Bernal, Jonae Goleta, and Claire Lynch-Dwight





## Never Stop Learning

By: Anna Vanpagehem, Staff Nurse, North Coastal PHC

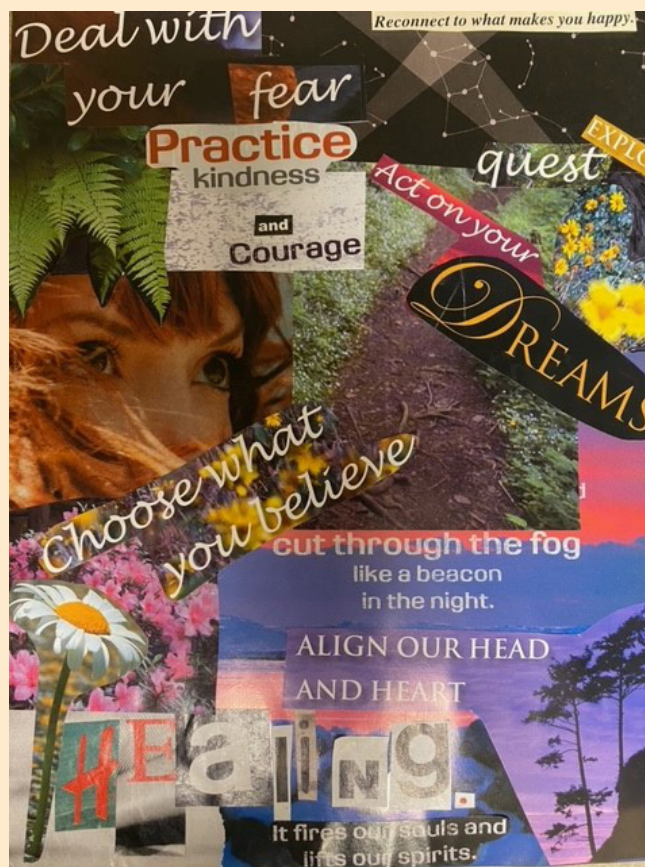


Learning is a form of self-care. Self-care means taking time to get to know yourself better and doing things to improve yourself (Lukin, 2020). It can inspire and empower us as individuals. More than 4 million registered nurses comprise the largest and one of the most trusted groups of healthcare professionals in the United States today and should engage in daily self-care strategies so that they can ultimately better care for others (Esposito, 2023).

As nurses and individuals, we all have an inner flame that we must tend to and keep lit. Over time, unfortunately, complacency and routine can creep-in, and our light can become dim. Learning new information about ourselves and our profession can keep us engaged and passionate. The Learning Management System (LMS) and the Knowledge Center (TKC) offers free classes to advance professionally and fight burn-out. For example, TKC hosts “Trauma and Healing”, “Grief and Gratitude”, and “Burnout and Renewal”. All of which can be found in LMS. These courses help give us the tools to learn about ourselves, escape our daily routines, and become better equipped, trauma-informed agents. Check them out and take a moment to learn something new today.

Esposito EdD.JD.MS, RN-BC, NPD, C. L. (2023). Self-Care as a Nurse’s Right and Responsibility. Journal of the New York Nurse’s Association, 50(1), 5–5.

Lukin Ph.D., K. (2020, June 3). Reflections on self-development and self-care. Psychology Today. <https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/the-man-cave/202006/reflections-self-development-and-self-care>



Collage activity made by Anna at a Trauma & Healing course

## Never Stop Learning

*By: Amy Dull BSN, RN, PHN Rural Health Discharge Program*

After graduating from San Diego City College in 2006 with my Associate of Science Degree in Nursing (ADN), I was ready to tackle my new profession with the skills and knowledge I gained in the classroom and in clinical rotations. I quickly realized that nothing can fully prepare you for the challenges you will face, whether as an Emergency Room, ICU, Med-Surg, L&D, or Public Health nurse. Each clinic, hospital, nursing home, school, and doctor's office have very different protocols and procedures for patient care. As I moved around and tried to learn which specialty was best for me, I was always learning something new or re-learning a different way to do the same task.

In 2015, I returned to school to continue my learning journey, enrolling and graduating from Point Loma Nazarene University through their RN-BSN program. While I learned much about nursing through this incredible program, I also discovered my passion for Public Health Nursing. When I was hired earlier this year by the County, I was lucky to be part of the Public Health Nurse Residency Program-Cohort 9. It provided a robust learning experience rotating through the various County of San Diego departments. Upon completion, I was hired to work in Maternal Child Health. I was excited to be able to work with mothers and babies through the home visiting program. Shortly after starting at East, I was asked to become part of the Rural Health Discharge Pilot Program. This collaborative effort between Sharp Grossmont, CAL Fire, and the County of San Diego pairs a PHN with a Fire Captain Paramedic to visit patients recently discharged from the hospital who live in rural East County.

There was no 'playbook' or standard operating procedures to learn as a pilot program. Younger me may have been intimidated by this, but this is the reason I love this program so much. Each patient has unique circumstances that require slightly different needs. Our Rural team gets to continually research, learn, and grow while connecting our patients to the many resources our county provides. Every day is a new chance to learn what works and what doesn't and adjust. Our patients love being part of this pilot, feeling seen and heard when we ask for their input on what they liked about the program and how we can improve it for future patients. They take pride in knowing that they are part of this program, which aims to bring much needed resources and medical services closer to the rural areas of San Diego.

In stepping into this new role, one of the most important things I've learned is to be open to new opportunities. I never would have dreamed I'd be working in this area, but I have learned it is where I am meant to be. As much as we might teach our patients, they have taught me the meaning of perseverance, overcoming hardships in unimaginable circumstances, and most importantly, the power of kindness.

## Never Stop Learning

*By Roland Bolor, Supervising Nurse, Psychiatric Hospital*



Nursing is a critical and constantly evolving profession that requires a lifelong commitment to learning and professional development. By staying current with the latest trends and specialties of interest can help build a great foundation to advance your career. Attend workshops, seminars, conferences, webinars, take CEU courses, enroll in eLearning's, join professional nursing organizations, and work towards an advanced nursing degree. This allows opportunities to review your knowledge and improve your skills as a nurse and keeps you up to date with the best practices for the duties you perform on a regular basis.

Medicine is constantly changing with new advances, treatments, and new discoveries. You will gain knowledge about new treatment strategies and new indications for existing treatments. New clinical skills and better nursing practices, such as new procedures, can enhance your professional competence and help you better perform your job duties. You will gain knowledge about changes in the health care industry, such as advances in medical technology, and you will be equipped with knowledge and skills necessary to provide high quality care and ensure safety to patients. Advancement in knowledge, can position you as a trusted resource, role model, and a leader in your field, which can strengthen your position at your workplace.

"Let us never consider ourselves finished nurses...we must be learning all of our lives." —Florence Nightingale

# We Never Stop Learning in Public Health

*By: Mariana Badial, PHN Manager, Office of Nursing Excellence*

“The expert in anything was once a beginner.” -Helen Hayes

Learning for the Office of Nursing Excellence team is knowledge, staying current, inspiration, curiosity, intellectuality, self-improvement, and best practice.

Did you know information in the brain travels up to 268 miles per hour (Northwestern University, 2019)! Learning is part of our day-to-day activities as nurses and can be endless. Having technology at our fingertips gives us an opportunity to continuously learn and improve our knowledge base. Additionally, utilizing digital technologies allows for greater flexibility in busy schedules and expands training opportunities to help enhance and strengthen existing knowledge (Lattouf, 2022).

Learning can also be social, as learning is enhanced by sharing or reporting out your newly acquired knowledge. Sharing what you have learned not only gives others the opportunity to also learn but it also helps strengthen your personal learning (University of Washington, 2023). The Office of Nursing Excellence supports lifelong learning and continues to provide learning opportunities to nurses in the department. The department has added a Lactation Education Counselor course and Certified Lactation Counselor (CLC) credential as part of the Home Visiting trainings for Public Health Nurses so we can provide valuable resources to the families we serve.

Cheers to limitless learning!

Please contact the Office of Nursing Excellence at [MCSDNursingAdmin.HHSA@sdcounty.ca.gov](mailto:MCSDNursingAdmin.HHSA@sdcounty.ca.gov) for any questions.

Lattouf, O. M. (2022). Impact of digital transformation on the future of medical education and practice. *Journal of Cardiac Surgery*, 37(9), 2799–2808. <https://doi.org/10.1111/jocs.16642>

Northwestern University. (2019). 11 fun facts about your brain. *Northwestern Medicine*. <https://www.nm.org/healthbeat/healthy-tips/11-fun-facts-about-your-brain>

University of Washington. (2023). Brain Basics. How do I learn. <https://www.washington.edu/howdoilearn/brain-basics/>

