

CENTER FOR NURSING

ADVANCEMENT

THOUGHTS FROM THE FRONTLINE

OCTOBER 2024

Community Resilience in the Face of Hurricane Helene Flooding

East Tennessee and Appalachian Highlands — In the wake of Hurricane Helene's devastating flooding, our community has faced unprecedented challenges. The torrential rains and rising waters have impacted countless families, leaving destruction in their wake. As healthcare professionals, particularly in the nursing community, our role extends beyond providing medical care; it encompasses support, compassion, and solidarity for one another during these trying times.

Prioritizing Nurse Wellbeing

The pressures of the recent flooding have highlighted the importance of prioritizing our own mental and emotional wellbeing. Nurses are often on the frontlines, caring for those affected by disasters, but it is essential to take the time to care for ourselves. Acknowledging the emotional toll that such crises can take on health professionals is crucial.

During times of crisis, it's vital to check in with each other. We must foster a culture where seeking support is encouraged and where we actively listen to one another's experiences and feelings.

Building a Support Network

As we navigate the recovery process, let us remind ourselves of the power of community. The bonds we share as healthcare providers are vital. Organizing support groups and informal gatherings can create safe spaces for sharing experiences, processing emotions, and discussing coping strategies.

Nurses are encouraged to reach out to colleagues, share resources, and offer assistance where possible. Whether it's helping with childcare, sharing meals, or simply being a listening ear, these acts of kindness can significantly uplift our spirits and reinforce our resilience.

Looking Ahead: Resources and Support

In response to the flooding, several local organizations and mental health resources are available to support nurses and healthcare workers. The American Red Cross is actively providing disaster relief and mental health support services for those affected, ensuring that everyone has access to the assistance they need. For immediate help, you can reach the American Red Cross Disaster Distress Hotline at 1-800-985-5990. Additionally, for more information on available resources or ways you can contribute, please visit the [Tennessee Emergency Management Agency website](#).

As we work towards recovery, let us remember the importance of self-care. Take breaks when needed, practice mindfulness, and do not hesitate to seek professional help if you are feeling overwhelmed.

Together, We Will Heal

The effects of Hurricane Helene will be felt for months to come, but as a united community of nurses, we will emerge stronger. By prioritizing our wellbeing and supporting one another, we can continue to provide the exceptional care our community relies on.

In these challenging times, let's commit to being there for one another, cultivating a spirit of resilience and compassion. Together, we will heal, rebuild, and support the East Tennessee and Appalachian Highlands region as it recovers from this disaster.

Stay connected. Stay strong. We are in this together.

Celebrating Our First Nurse Leadership Program Graduates

On September 12, the Center proudly celebrated the graduation of the first cohort from its Nurse Leadership Program, a transformative three-month course aimed at empowering nurse leaders across the state. Developed in partnership with OpusVi, this intensive program equipped participants with practical leadership skills that can be immediately applied in their professional environments.

The program attracted 14 dedicated nurse leaders, all eager to enhance their performance and navigate the complexities of today's healthcare landscape. Feedback from participants underscored a strong desire for more leadership opportunities, especially for those mentoring both new and experienced nurses.

Among the distinguished graduates was Sherrie Davis, ER Nurse Manager at Greeneville Community Hospital. Sherrie found the program invaluable, particularly in addressing critical issues like burnout among nurse leaders. "The emphasis on self-care and establishing boundaries was eye-opening," she remarked. "I'm excited to apply what I've learned to better support my team."

Josh Sims, Nursing Director of the Neurology Step-down and ICU units at Jackson-Madison County General Hospital, echoed these sentiments. Encouraged by his former Chief Nursing Officer to enroll, Josh praised the course as an excellent opportunity for professional growth. "I now feel more prepared to navigate the constant changes within healthcare and look forward to sharing my insights with colleagues," he stated.

Over the course of 12 weeks, the cohort dedicated an impressive 504 hours to complete 154 exercises, culminating in a comprehensive learning experience. Initial surveys revealed that 100% of participants enrolled to enhance their performance, while 93% sought a deeper understanding of themselves as leaders, with the goal of positively impacting their teams and learning strategies to manage energy and prevent burnout.

Post-course surveys demonstrated the program's effectiveness, with 92% of nurse leaders reporting increased knowledge in leading and managing change, and 84% gaining a better understanding of how to overcome resistance to change.

Looking ahead, the Center plans to distribute a three-month post-program survey, along with a supervisor survey, to further assess the program's impact. The data collected will be analyzed and submitted for publication, ensuring that the insights gained can benefit future nurse leaders.

Excitingly, the next Nurse Leadership Program cohort is set to begin early next year, alongside the exploration of a Nurse Leadership Mentor Program. This initiative aims to build on the successes of the inaugural program, fostering a supportive network for nurse leaders across the state.

Congratulations to our first cohort of Nurse Leadership Program graduates! Your commitment to personal and professional growth will undoubtedly inspire others in the nursing community. Stay tuned for more updates on future opportunities to enhance leadership in nursing!

For media coverage of the event, please find links to the coverage here: [WJHL](#); [JC Press](#); [ETSU Press](#).



L- Nurse Leader Cohort

R- Dean Byrd, Dr. Monaco Briggs, Dr. Yan Cao, Angie Clark, Dr. Roz Robinson



Center's Search for Executive Director Update

We're excited to announce that, in partnership with Parker Executive Search, the Center is actively seeking our next Executive Director! This vital role will lead our dedicated team in developing and implementing strategies to address key challenges in recruiting, retaining, and advancing our healthcare workforce, with a particular focus on nursing across our region and state.

We have narrowed our search to three outstanding candidates, and in-person interviews will take place the week of October 7. Each candidate will present their vision for the Center to the Advisory Board.

For more details about the role and to view the job posting, click [HERE](#).



Nurse Narratives Initiative: Empowering Voices Through Storytelling

The Center has partnered with StoryCollab and Ballad Health to create the Nurse Narratives Initiative. This program offers a series of digital storytelling workshops designed to help nurses and patients share their true personal stories in a first-person voice.

Faculty Workshops

The Faculty workshops consist of a comprehensive 6-week online program. Participants will engage in five group Zoom meetings, along with individual sessions with facilitators. The workshops will culminate in the creation of short digital videos (2-3 minutes) that vividly illustrate their narratives. Preparation materials, including sample stories and writing prompts, will be provided in advance to support participants in their storytelling journey.

The Faculty I workshop is currently underway, with 8 participants actively involved in meaningful storytelling and collaboration. The Faculty II workshop is scheduled to begin on October 17th. We currently have 5 faculty members registered.

Student Workshops

The Student workshops also span six weeks, mirroring the structure of the faculty program. Students will attend five group Zoom meetings, each lasting two hours. Local nursing students from Walters State, Northeast State, Milligan University, Emory & Henry College, Mountain Empire Community College, and King University have been invited to participate.

The Student I workshop starts this Friday, with 4 participants registered. While we hope for a few more attendees, we understand recent events may impact turnout. We are looking forward to a productive session. The Student II workshop is scheduled to begin on November 1st. Recruitment for this session will commence once we ensure a strong turnout for the first workshop.

Patient Workshop

The Patient workshop invites participants to share their healthcare experiences in a similar format, focusing on their personal journeys. The stories shared will contribute to a curriculum resource for nursing students, enhancing their understanding of patient experiences and fostering empathy in future care.

The Patient workshop is set for November 1-3, with 2 participants registered so far.

Stay Connected with Us on Social Media!

We're excited to announce that the Center is actively engaging with our community on Facebook, Instagram, and LinkedIn! Follow us for the latest updates, inspiring stories, and valuable resources that can enhance your professional journey.

Join Our Online Community!

Facebook: Stay informed about upcoming events, workshops, and community initiatives. Join the conversation and connect with fellow professionals!

Instagram: Experience a visual journey through our programs, success stories, and behind-the-scenes moments. Follow us for inspiring content and engaging posts!

LinkedIn: Network with industry leaders and stay updated on professional development opportunities. Connect with us to expand your professional horizons!

Win a Prize Pack!

To celebrate our growing social media presence, we're offering an exciting opportunity! Follow us on any of our social media platforms, and you'll be entered to win a fantastic prize pack. It's our way of saying thank you for being part of our community!

How to Participate:

Follow Us: Scan the QR codes below to follow us on your preferred platform.

Stay Engaged: Like, share, and comment on our posts to increase your chances of winning!

Scan the QR Codes Below!

Don't miss out on this chance to connect with us and enhance your professional network. We can't wait to see you online!

Terms and Conditions: Contest runs until October 31. Winners will be announced on November 1. Make sure your profile is public so we can verify your entry!

