



The Breakthrough to Nursing column presents ideas and perspectives about the importance of cultural diversity in nursing and general recruitment into nursing.

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HEALTHY — An Adjective or a Verb?

The goal of Breakthrough to Nursing does not only include recruiting students into nursing, but also *retaining* them so that they graduate and enter the nursing workforce. Keeping all of our members healthy will help us to meet our goals. We must remind our fellow students (and remind ourselves) to integrate healthier choices into our lifestyle. Staying strong and healthy will contribute to our success in nursing school.

It's that time of year where we begin to realize that we haven't even thought about those New Year's resolutions we made back in January; or maybe we started off the year strong, and have slowly found ourselves to have a little "less pep in our step." The beginning of the year is when the number of new gym memberships skyrockets as people strive to maintain a healthier lifestyle. According to Merriam-Webster, "healthy" is an adjective, meant to describe a noun (you). However, if we start looking at it as a verb, then wouldn't we get more done? We can constantly remind ourselves that health is a state of continuous action (not a description to be obtained). Being "healthy" does not only include a state of physical health, but also social, psychological, and spiritual health as well. You only can help others if you help yourself first—and you need to help yourself before reaching out to others in mentorship, and when recruiting high school students, our peers, and under-represented populations into nursing.

Physical Health

Did you know that stress is directly correlated to many physical illnesses? You may not have had to walk into a doctor's office for a problem in your entire life—until you started nursing school of course. **Exercise** naturally de-stresses our bodies (and not to mention prevents that famous fifteen pound weight gain during nursing school). You can put your flashcards, book, or notes on top of a treadmill, elliptical, or stationary bike in order to "kill two birds with one stone". Also, **eating more high-energy foods** like fruits, veggies, and nuts keeps our engines running.

Psychological Health

Obviously, nursing students are familiar with stress. Try keeping a journal to express issues that you're facing (only you can fully understand yourself). Also, you'll find yourself creating your own solutions to your issues because you're forced to think them out. "Acknowledge that nursing is emotional work; validate your role as simply being present in the healing process" (Bartholemew, 2010). Your peers in nursing school are most likely going through the same things as you! Don't be afraid to express your feelings, and then decide to look at the situation with a positive attitude *together*.

It's usually a lot of little things that stress nursing students out, instead of a few "big" things. Here are a few tips: write

down your goals; manage your time effectively; read actively; organize and review class notes; join the right study group; verify your sources; and get help early (Dreher, 200). Don't wait until it's too late to reach out to your instructors!

Social Health

It is important to network and stay connected with your cohorts and others in the nursing profession. We all come from different walks of life, and staying in a constant attitude of learning is vital in order to become and *stay* successful. Find a mentor! This is the step in the equation that many do not discover until later on in life—don't wait. Find a mentor that is willing to guide you and has reached the same goals that you which to obtain in life. When finding the "right" mentor consider that a mentor: should be welcome to the joy of listening; uses strengths to correct mistakes; is goal-oriented and curious about possibilities; focuses of thriving with minimal-stress; and values self and others (Taylor, Mpofo, 2010). Also, consider becoming a mentor! Give back to those who are currently going through what you went through.

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HEALTHY — An Adjective or a Verb?

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Spiritual Health

Reach out to your community and profession. There is no doubt that nursing is a compassionate and caring career. We are constantly on guard to answer any distress call that comes our way. However, sometimes we don't realize that the most subtle distress calls are the ones that need the most help. There are many individuals from under-represented minority groups (including men and the disabled) that focus many obstacles on the road to nursing. Reach out to schools of all levels and put in their hands the resources to battle the obstacles that many of them encounter. Make self-mental assessments. We're so used to only having to do these on patients, but really evaluate yourself and your feelings.

We all come from different religious, cultural and ethnic backgrounds; embrace them because it makes you who you are. In a profession where our patients come from such diverse backgrounds, it's important to embrace this diversity and express our strengths. ∞

References

- Taylor C., and Mpofu F. (2010) Embracing Mentors and Facing Tormentors. *Imprint* 57(5).
Dreher, H. and Smith, M. (2000) A Formula for Academic Success. *Imprint* 47(4).
Bartholomew, K. (2010). Stress: The Heart of the Matter. *Imprint* 57(2).

Meeting the Members' Wants and Needs: Planning a Successful Convention or Meeting

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The theme sets the tone for the convention or meeting and should be an action statement that reflects the direction of the association and nursing students. On page 5 of the guidelines booklet, there are several tips on how to select a theme such as selecting a theme that is catchy and easy to remember, or selecting a theme that emphasizes a particular issue, such as politics, social roles, the nursing role, etc.

Once the theme has been selected, you may use it as the title of your keynote address, which will allow the speaker to really captivate the purpose of the theme to the audience. The workshops or breakout sessions may also touch on the theme but could also pertain to something else that is of interest to the attendees. This will allow for the program to expand and cater to different interests of the attendees.

As far as the format of your program, it is beneficial to have diverse types of programming throughout the conference. Some ideas might include a panel of different specialty nurses or an interactive workshop where students

can share their ideas and passions for a certain topic of interest. If you're unsure of who you would like to speak at your conference, look for speakers that have appeared at past NSNA events. It is very important to use your resources, such as your faculty or a fellow Board member's faculty, to see if they can speak or know anyone who would like to contribute to your event. This allows for great networking and utilizing the connections you have with professionals around you.

There are many aspects that are essential to planning a successful convention. As I mentioned before, utilizing the information provided for you within the *Guidelines for Planning Meetings & Convention* is extremely helpful and will allow your Board to have a very successful meeting or convention. Although planning an event takes an immense amount of time and energy, helping students to come together, network, and learn is truly priceless. Always keep your fellow students' best interest in mind and remain dedicated to helping future nurses succeed. ∞

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