

## Nursing and Women's Month



When celebrating Women's Month, we are inevitably celebrating nurses and what nurses do. The celebrations focus on the many achievements of women and the role women play at home and in the economy. August is a month when women are honoured for their achievements as business and community lead-

ers, they are celebrated for their selflessness and their continuous efforts to improve the circumstances of those in need.

Nursing portrays the soul of a woman as it is all about caring; caring for the vulnerable, caring for those who cannot care for themselves and caring for the ones nearest to our hearts. How can we keep up with the ever-increasing demands of our families and our communities? The time has come where we as carers should take a moment and realise that we cannot keep up the pace if we don't take some time to care for ourselves. How often does it happen that there is just no time to take a break, to actually admire the environment, to cherish the wonder of a newborn, the wisdom of an elderly or the energy of a young child?

There is no easy recipe or a quick fix; the change to make time for your own needs can only start with changing from within. It is important to keep reminding ourselves that the only way to really care for others starts with caring for ourselves. Let our celebrations of Women's Month also include teaching ourselves and our fellow nurses ways to care for the self.

In 2011 John L Peterson suggested that memory capacity will continue to double every 18 months but it is also known that knowledge in the healthcare professions doubles every six years. (Nursingworld.org/the online journal of Issues in Nursing). For nurses to keep up with all the available information, adult learning is now a requirement for those members of the

profession that want to be part of the future. Long gone are the days where we could depend solely on what we were taught; the realisation of the importance of keeping up to date with the latest developments in your field of specialisation is fundamental in establishing the ideal environment for caring for our patients.

How can we keep ourselves up to date with the latest information and developments in health care? It seems to be impossible to stay in touch with all that is happening in the world of knowledge. We cannot only rely on other healthcare professionals to change our world; nurses must be part of the development of the health profession and the knowledge needed to ensure an optimal caring environment for our patients. Sharing of information and experience has become the essence of the development and application of best practices. Nurses need to be experts not only in what they do but also in the sharing of information. Information technology such as computers, smart phones and the internet is readily available and is a gateway to a wealth of information to be explored and applied by nurses. Computers and phones play a significant role in the acquisition of knowledge and the distribution of information.

The availability of various social media platforms to collect and disseminate best practices is becoming an easy way for nurses to get support and information when desperately needed. The effective use of the connectivity on our mobile phones is but one avenue to be explored for the sharing of best practices and to provide easy access to information.

In our preparation to introduce the new nursing qualification programmes in our healthcare facilities, keep in mind the importance of competent, skilled and knowledgeable mentors to facilitate the learning and experience of the new generation of nurses in our country.

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