An introduction to Gemma Stacy, IPDJ Academic Editor

As a newly qualified mental health nurse I was fortunate to obtain my first post in an accredited practice development unit. Reflecting back on that experience enables me to recognise how the unit’s culture and leadership embedded the values of person-centred care in my practice. This continues to underpin my teaching and research in my current role as Associate Professor in the School of Health Sciences at the University of Nottingham. The unit functioned as a whole, and person-centred care guided our clinical interactions, our nursing processes and our approach to documentation. Care plans were focused on the goals of the person and handovers were dominated by the achievements and successes of the day.

The reason I describe this experience as ‘fortunate’ is because I have gone on to encounter numerous individuals and teams who regard this culture as ‘the ideal’ and receive my accounts with scepticism and distrust. As an example, a senior nurse once offhandedly remarked, ‘wouldn’t it be wonderful if we could all view the world through rose tinted glasses Gemma’. I am able to maintain this commitment to person-centred care because I have a concrete experience of the transformational and emancipatory impact on staff and patient experience when practice development runs through the fabric of the organisation.

I am not suggesting that the approach adopted in my experience offers a formula which can be standardised, replicated and rolled out. Each setting and team requires its own method, which is defined by the people using and working within the specific service. However, there is so much to be learnt from the successes and challenges of others who are sharing the commitment to person-centred care. The more concrete experiences we are aware of, the less able it is to be labelled as ideal and unrealistic. So for me, a core aspect of a practice development culture incorporates permission and support for nurses and teams to innovate, evaluate and disseminate their practices.

The opportunity to support a platform which promotes critical dialog around practice development and enables dissemination of knowledge was my motivation to apply for the role of Academic Editor of the International Practice Development Journal. I am pleased to bring my experience of encouraging novice writers in my previous editorial role at Nurse Education in Practice to the journal. Along with my commitment to valuing what is unique and distinct about practice development initiatives. My hope is to develop the opportunities for IPDJ authors to widen the impact of their work on the international practice development community by considering the transferability of their learning and maximising the networks publishing in association with FoNS, IPDC and PcP-ICoP offers.

It is with great excitement that I am working and learning from Professor Dewing, the journal team and our associated partners to uphold the principles of IPDJ and maintain the quality and accessibility of published articles. Please do get in touch with your ideas and ambitions for the journal. I’m looking forward to getting the conversations started.

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