

CARESEARCH: INTERNATIONAL NURSES DAY STORIES (CNIN: MAY 2010)

In the April 2010 edition of CNIN we acknowledged International Nurses Day, recognising that nurses are a vital part of the palliative care team. We then invited nurses to share their knowledge with the next generation working in palliative care. The two prize winning stories are below:

Palliative care involves many people and there are many facets to consider.

The main thing I'd like to impart to 'newcomers to this area' is to ensure your patient remains your focus. Enable them, in their last days, to control their own destiny with dignity and respect. Include family members, friends and church members (if appropriate) and have an open communication with your patient. They need to be able to trust you and depend on you.

Although a very intense time, ensure that you can empathise with your patient. Sympathising can often render you useless to them and remember this is their time, focus on their needs and wishes. It can be a very tiring time for nurses, both physically and emotionally but it so very rewarding to help facilitate a 'good death' for a patient. I feel privileged and humbled to be included by them in this, their most vulnerable time.

Paula Nicholson

Registered Nurse – Community. Primary Nurse. QLD

Yes you are special like everyone tells us... but the people you care for are even more so.

You're a nurse... Don't lose sight of this when you're planning or delivering care. It's doing the 'basics' really, really well that can sometimes lead to the most profound and positive outcomes. You can't fix everyone's problems... Trying to, and worse, thinking you have to do it by yourself, is the most effective way of burning out you'll encounter.

Palliative care can allow you to get much closer to patients and their families than in other professional settings. Embrace this as a pleasure and a privilege, but know there is a careful path to be trodden between being friend and health professional.

Never stop learning... The best way to know if you really understand something is to explain it to someone else... simply.

Wear sunscreen when you're doing home visits!

Peter Jenkin

Project Manager & Clinical Consultant, SA

CareSearch is an online resource funded by the Department of Health and Ageing to help clinicians and consumers find relevant evidence about palliative care. Available now at www.caresearch.com.au