

BACCN Annual Conference Attendance – Michelle Treacy

I had the pleasure of attending the 34th Annual BACCN Conference on the 16th and 17th September 2019. This year's theme; Moral Courage: Meeting the Challenges of a Contemporary Healthcare System, comes at an ideal time where challenges are faced daily. The opening keynote from the Salisbury Critical Care Team, was a stark reminder of the unpredictable nature of intensive care and the need to care for each other as well as the patients. Having attended the BACCN conferences in years gone by, I felt this year was particularly superb, with what I can only describe as an energy created by delegates, a synergy if you will, of coming together and refuelling, dare I say reigniting our professional passion.

During the conference I attended several sessions, a personal highlight was a session titled, 'What lessons can we learn from patient experience?'. This session involved an individual tell of his experience of being a patient on the intensive care unit. In the ICU we can be so focused on organ support that we can inadvertently neglect the impact this has on the person. Hearing from a patient first-hand the reality of being an intensive care patient, the impact on their life during and after the event made me realise the importance of communication, of being an advocate and including family in the care. As nurses, we are in an ideal situation to be the primary communicator and initiate the conversations regarding the reality of ICU, notably delirium and all the unpleasantness that goes with it.

A keynote speech on Day 2 titled, 'Finding Joy in Work: A roadmap to clinical engagement', truly resonated with me. The challenges faced in the current climate, yes, they are real and impatient but our responses to these are down to us, no one else. We need to reconnect with our personal values as healthcare professionals and feel empowered to react in a way that is proactive and productive to conquering challenges. However, our values as a whole need to marry up. Making and prioritising time to recharge our batteries, highlighting the need for our own self-care. To help overcome the challenges of our current health care system, we need to work together to create an enriched working environment. Creating therapeutic working relationships with colleagues is a crucial component.

We discussed the future of nursing; it is an exciting time to be part of a continuously evolving profession. In a time where artificial intelligence (AI) is making definite impacts in other industries, AI is expected to enhance the art of nursing and healthcare. I left the conference with an insight into contemporary research studies and guidance on implementation, together

with enthusiasm to share this with colleagues and determination to have patients as the benefactors of this.