



# THE CORRECTIONAL NURSE

Inspiring

## Professional Correctional Nursing Practice

December 2020

It is hard to believe that we are at the end of 2020! It seems like yesterday that we were welcoming in "the 20's." This year has brought "unprecedented times," which I am sorry to say are no longer "unprecedented" as we endure yet another surge in COVID-19 cases and deaths. From the adversity, however, has come well-deserved appreciation for the work done by nurses, nurse practitioners, physicians, physician assistants and everyone involved in healthcare.

As holiday-time approaches, please remember that we usually see an increase in attempted self-harm and suicide. Be especially aware of changes in behavior and attitude of your patients, and never be afraid to ask (anyone - inside or outside our walls) if someone is thinking of suicide. It could save a life!

This time of year reminds me of a program I was involved in organizing years ago called "Parents - Inside and Out." I know that today there are many similar parenting programs, but then, there were not. The program was quite demanding, and included mandatory attendance at all classes, successful completion of weekly homework assignments and active participation in the classes. The Mental Health professional who conducted the program required the participants to engage in self-reflection and honest assessment of past behaviors, which made many of them very uncomfortable. Some participants dropped out, and some participants were released unexpectedly, but for those who completed the program, we were able to have a graduation ceremony. The very first graduation was around this time of year, and with the support of the Sheriff, the participants were able to invite their families to see them graduate, have refreshments and spend time together. This was a facility that had no-contact visitation, and so this celebration was a very big deal!

That first graduation day, each participant had to stand at the podium and share something about the program – what they learned, what it meant to them, and/or why they signed up for it. I still remember one gentleman saying he signed up to get out of his cell twice a week, but what he got was an understanding of what it meant to be a parent and tools he could use to be a better one. Another noted that his adult daughter refused to come to the ceremony, telling him no class could make up for the horrible father he had been to her. He ended by saying that he did not blame her for feeling that way, and he wasn't giving up on a future relationship with her. At that first graduation, and also at subsequent ones, I witnessed fathers holding their infants, born during their incarceration, for the first time. I saw hugs and tears (some of them mine!), and determination to make the future better than the past. I heard a Sheriff say when this crazy woman came to him proposing a parenting program for detainees, he said yes because he thought we could never pull it off; now, after seeing the program in action, he was so pleased that we had chosen his jail. The most surprising thing to me was that the children of these incarcerated individuals ranged in age from infants and younger children to teenagers and adults with children of their own. I guess I thought that only parents of younger children would participate; what I learned was that parents of all ages want to do better, and in some cases, be the parent they never had been in the past.

Think of all the individuals positively impacted by that one program – the participants, their children, their significant others, their grandchildren and those all around them; and now, think about what you do every day in your Correctional Nursing practice. We, in Correctional Nursing and correctional healthcare, are seeds of good! You never know the impact you are making, so keep your words positive and kind.

I wish you and all those surrounding you a safe and happy Holiday Season!

### Newsorthy Notes

The Correctional Nursing: Scope and Standards of Practice is finally available!! It can be found on [the ANA website](#), and I encourage all to get a copy (it is available in both printed and electronic form).

The American Correctional Association is holding its Hybrid 2021 ACA Winter Conference on February 4-9, 2021. Onsite activities will include Board of Governors, Delegate Assembly, General Session, Plenaries, Accreditation Panels and other specialized events. Virtual activities will include all workshops, Exhibit Hall and simulcast of Orlando sessions. More information is available on the [ACA website](#).

Don't forget to check back often on the [American Correctional Nurses Association website](#), where new announcements of interest are posted often. All are welcome to join!!

Remember that you can find our past Newsletters on the CorrectionalNurse.Net website in the Newsletter Archive.

Thanks for all you do, and Be Safe!!

## CorrectionalNurse.Net

This month, **CorrectionalNurse.Net** will continue our discussion of common mental health conditions we see in the correctional environment.

We will also continue our professional practice discussion about the new Correctional Nursing: Scope and Standards of Practice. As always, announcements for new blog posts will be posted on our FaceBook pages.

Please **FOLLOW US** and check back often to ensure that you get notification of new posts!

**VISIT CORRECTIONALNURSE.NET NOW**

## Correctional Nurse Educator

Our 50% off featured class this month is [Common Mental Health Conditions for the Correctional Nurse](#).

I hope that you enjoy it!

**VISIT THE CORRECTIONAL NURSE EDUCATOR NOW**

## Nursing Behind the Wall

This month at **Nursing Behind the Wall**, you will meet Mr. Greenleaf, a gentleman with Bipolar Disorder, alcoholism and back pain.

**VISIT NURSING BEHIND THE WALL NOW**

In closing, I appreciate you taking the time to read this newsletter, and I hope that you will find our sites interesting and educational. Our profession of Correctional Nursing is unique and sometimes challenging, but always very important to our patients. The impact we make is far-reaching, even if it is not always evident as we care for our patients. I have ALWAYS been proud to say that I am a Correctional Nurse – I hope that you are as well!

*Lori*

## Inspiration

When someone tells me "no,"  
it doesn't mean I can't do it,  
it simply means I can't do it with them.

~Karen E. Quinones Miller

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