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Empowering the Nurse Entrepreneur in Business and Work/Life Balance

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Nurse entrepreneurship is a growing trend in healthcare. Nurse entrepreneurs fill gaps in the current healthcare delivery system by supporting the development of targeted products and services, enhanced technology, software, and safety systems. As more nurses move beyond the bedside to explore entrepreneurship, it is important to identify best practices and the skill sets that are transferable from direct caregiving to business leadership. It is also important to learn about how nurses have shifted perspective to make the transition. The current state of healthcare in the United States and the climate of healthcare reform have led nurse entrepreneurs to focus on alternative models of care to provide patients and clients with a higher quality of life at more affordable prices and often with quicker access. Recent trends include steeply rising costs, changes in healthcare reimbursement, increased competition, an aging population, an increase in chronic illness, the advance and integration of technology, and increased population diversity (Guo, 2009). There has been a call to develop "creative, innovative, and entrepreneurial" approaches to fill the gaps in care to address these issues and others (Darbyshire, 2014, p. 9). Many of these trends have shifted our healthcare focus from an acute care model to one of prevention and detection. Historically, the structure of the healthcare system and academic and clinical training programs have in large part not supported the development of nurse leadership competencies necessary for success in entrepreneurship. Per the Institute of Medicine's (IOM) Initiative on the Future of Nursing (2011), nurses are not generally provided with education or socialization related to administrative and leadership skills and roles in their academic programs. This IOM report suggests that nurses must not only access education to develop competencies outside of their clinical expertise, such as attending business classes, but that they must also shift their perspective on their professional roles. In the absence of formal education, training, or institutional support, nurse entrepreneurs typically have had to develop their own knowledge base and best practices. Additionally, although many nurses have turned to entrepreneurship as a vehicle to prevent burnout (Podlesni, 2013), financial demands often require nurse business owners to continue to hold part- or full-time organizational positions. At the same time, the unique challenges of the entrepreneurial context, such as having to fulfill multiple professional roles, may also present obstacles to maintaining self-care practices that would prevent burnout. Some research has suggested that control over one's work is a mediator in the stress/self-employment relationship (Hessels, Reitveld & van der Zwan, 2016). This presentation will discuss results of an exploratory study that aimed to better understand the experiences and challenges of nurse entrepreneurs. Nurse entrepreneurs (n = 44) reported on their transitions from employment to entrepreneurship, key motivators in the decision to start a business, and the challenges they face as entrepreneurs in the healthcare field. Additionally, participants completed the 33-item Mindful Self-Care Scale – Short (Cook-Cottone & Guyker, 2016), which measured their self-care activities and behaviors in 6 domains: Physical Care, Supportive Relationships, Mindful Awareness, Self-Compassion and Purpose, Mindful Relaxation, and Supportive Structure. Nurse entrepreneurs reported higher rates of self-care practices than a normed community sample, and age was positively correlated with higher rates of self-care practices. Some work/life balance challenges, such as juggling multiple roles in a business, balancing one's own needs with those of others, time management, and addressing both family and business needs were associated with fewer self-care behaviors. Participants highlighted the need for business knowledge and the difficulty in accessing this knowledge. The biggest challenges to future success identified, such as implementing a marketing strategy, networking, and accessing mentorship, were all related to relying on connections with others. Implications of this study for nurse education and
training will be discussed. Additionally, practice implications will be discussed, including benefits to nurse entrepreneurs, potential nurse entrepreneurs, and others in the healthcare delivery system.

**Title:**
Empowering the Nurse Entrepreneur in Business and Work/Life Balance

**Keywords:**
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**References:**


Podlesni, M.D. (2013). *UNconventional nurse: Going from burnout to bliss!,* (n.p.): Author.

**Abstract Summary:**
Nurse entrepreneurship is a fast-growing trend. This presentation provides findings of a study of nurse entrepreneur experiences in transitioning from employment to business, the challenges they face, and the strategies they implement to enhance work/life balance. Implications for academic training and practice are discussed.

**Content Outline:**
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1. Introduction
   1. Healthcare trends contributing to expansion of nurse entrepreneurship
   2. What do nurse entrepreneurs do?
   3. Impact of nurse entrepreneurs
   4. Review of existing literature about nurse entrepreneurship
2. Our study
   1. Purpose
   2. Methods
   3. Results
3. Implications
   1. Empowerment needs and the transition from employment to entrepreneurship
   2. Challenges to work/life balance and self-care strategies
3. Challenges and supporting elements to business success
4. Implications for academic and clinical training

First Primary Presenting Author

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Professional Experience: 2009-present Associate Professor in Clinical Psychology at Adler University (Conduct research related to wellbeing, self-care, and clinical training 2001-present Licensed Clinical Psychologist (provide psychotherapy to adults and couples; teach mindfulness; provide consultation to organizations related to wellbeing; serve as media expert for various outlets) 2006-2009 Chicago School of Professional Psychology (developed and directed clinical training programs in psychology) 2000-2001 Deloitte Touche Tomatsu - Senior Consultant (provided consultation related to healthcare delivery) 1998-2000 Post-Doctoral Fellow; Michael Reese Hospital (developed and implemented employee wellness programs; provided clinical services to families and adults; worked with medical staff as part of an interdisciplinary team)

Author Summary: Marla Vannucci completed her PhD in Counseling Psychology from Northwestern University. She is an Associate Professor in Clinical Psychology at Adler University. Additionally, she is a Licensed Clinical Psychologist in private practice. She conducts research and writes about work/life balance and self-care, as well as clinical supervision and training issues. She has been featured in The Economist, Foxnews.com, Chicago Public Radio, and Mom Talk Radio discussing parenting, trauma response, and the psychology of social media.

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Professional Experience: As founder and president of the Global Education Development Institute (gedinfp.com), the presenter has extensive experience in international health. She developed the International Nursing Leadership Institute (INLI), and was instrumental in the creation of multiple nursing associations and nursing programs throughout the NIS/CEE countries. She speaks and writes globally on sustainability and the workforce.

Author Summary: Sharon is one of 23 nurses in the world to hold the Certified Speaking Professional(CSP)credential. Co-author of Nursing without Borders, she brings over 40 years of nursing experience in all clinical and academic settings to the program. Past president of the Infusion Nurses Society and past chair of the Infusion Nurses Certification Corporation, she is President of the National Speakers Association-DC and former Dean of the National Speakers Association Speaker Academy.