

Pearls of Wisdom from ANA-Michigan Podcast, Voices for Nurses

By Wanda Chukwu, DNP, MSN, MA, CNEcl, RN

Serving as ANA of Michigan's first podcast host has been an amazing opportunity. Andrea Boyce, my co-host, is fun to work with and brings an exciting flair to the podcast. Having the opportunity to talk with all the different nurses reminded me why I love being a nurse, mentor, coach, educator, and nurse leader. This is a new adventure for me, but I feel so safe being with the podcast team. The entire team entered this adventure with me and Andrea being mindful, showing patience and kindness as we all learned together. I am grateful that I am an active member of the ANA of Michigan. Being an active member has provided me with the opportunity to learn from some amazing nurse leaders. I have developed additional leadership skills that I would not have developed. I also serve as the chair of the health and policy committee. Having the opportunity to serve as one of the first podcast co-hosts on Voices for Nurses is a dream come true. The preparation for developing a podcast was exhilarating. The team began with planning out the various episode topics months ahead of time; this included developing questions to ask each guest. The entire team has been committed to working out the additional challenges of learning how to use the software and liberating myself enough to know that this is new territory, and I have to be open to learning a new way of sharing our passion for nursing. I must be honest it did take me a while to go back and relisten to myself. I feel honored that ANA Michigan has selected me to serve in this capacity.

Episode 1: Our first episode was a nerve-racking yet enlightening experience. The guidance of our immediate past ANA-Michigan President Bridgett Leonard, and our current president Barb

Medvec, was instrumental in making it a smooth journey. Their leadership pearls are a must-listen for any leader, novice, or experienced nurse. Both ladies provided invaluable insights into the world of leadership.



Pearls: Every nurse is a leader; working toward developing your voice is essential for a nurse to develop their voice in today's complex healthcare environment. Both ladies shared what are some essential leadership qualities that every leader should consider: communication, emotional intelligence, self-awareness, reflection, creativity, integrity, delegation, and action orientation. Learning how not to be comfortable with the status quo and speak up to have your voice heard was also shared during this episode.

Episode 2: Speaking with Bethany Skillen and Josua Meringa concerning safe staffing was a topic that needed to be explored; safe staffing impacts patients and the nurses who provide care for their

patients. The safe staffing episode offers some essential pearls on issues affecting nurses in today's work environment. This episode explored the challenges of today's nurses: staffing, budgeting constraints, aging population, and illness, looking at pipelines that supply nursing students. Various specialties, such as the issue of nurses retiring, increase in patients' acuity levels, and some nurses deciding to leave the profession post-COVID. This episode also touched on the topic of exploring issues related to the importance of self-care.

Pearls: Finding ways to help nurses develop their voices to advocate for the profession and themselves was pivotal. This episode focused on nurses becoming involved in nurse-led staffing committees to facilitate conversations and create plans based on patient complexity and acuity levels. The guest shared that this approach would help develop a work culture that values nurses' opinions concerning safe staffing. Becoming involved is the key to beginning to implement the changes that are needed. Our guest on this episode empowered nurses to know that their voices can make a difference and that asking questions and finding out the organization's core values was the beginning step in learning how to use their voices as advocates for nursing.

Episode 3: Speaking with frontline nurses: Kelly May, Sue Renfer, and Jakara Ventour is an episode to remember. During this episode, I appreciated how Kelly and Sue immediately poured into Jakara as a new nurse.

Pearls: This was a fantastic episode, with three different nurses working at various levels; Kelly and Sue shared that they are leaders committed to supporting their staff. Jakara began working as a house-

keeper and is now a registered nurse. Self-care tips were shared with the listening audience. Jakara was so well-spoken and open to learning from experienced nurses. The advice given to nurses was to find mentorship to help navigate the nursing profession. The nurses shared with the listening audience some of the common health conditions they were seeing in the acute care setting: CHF, chronic health conditions, heart failure, mental health, anxiety, and depression. Being involved in hospital-driven committees, both senior nurses were also active members of the ANA-Michigan. Jakara has added the importance of having therapeutic communication and being present when providing patient care. Both nurse leaders shared the importance of ensuring that the staff trusts how they lead and are willing to support them. Each nurse leader supported Jakara and encouraged her to continue in the field of nursing. This show ended with everyone showing gratitude for their contribution to the world of nursing.

Episode 4: This episode focused on how to build a nurse, and Dr. Bobo and Dr. Wodwaski shared a wealth of knowledge concerning the steps to make this happen. Both guests discussed the importance of developing residency programs that support new nurses when they join the profession.

Pearls: Contributing to the nurse's confidence can help the novice nurse develop. Sharing the difference between residency programs and a transition to practice program was important to know that the training would be different. Novice nurses need to know the kind of training the healthcare facility offers. Having a mentor is essential. A mentor is

a trusted nurse or colleague with whom you can form a bond. A mentor can make a difference during the new nurse's career. Knowing where the novice nurse enters the field and creating an individualized plan can help the new nurse transition to practice—reminding the new nurses to give themselves some grace in their new role. Providing support to the preceptors and staff nurses in knowing how to incorporate adult learning theories offers additional support to the new nurse being trained. The projection of the nursing profession was discussed in detail, and both guests addressed the need for novice nurses to be flexible in planning their careers and look at other opportunities within the profession; novice nurses should also become exposed to the various roles and responsibilities of nurses working in multiple areas. Novice nurses should develop emotional intelligence to help manage their interactions with patients and staff. Both guests shared the importance of a welcoming environment to help novice nurses transition into practice effectively.

Episode 5: This podcast episode focused on ACEN and the Michigan Board of Nursing, providing information on accreditation and nursing regulation for nursing programs. It is a very informative podcast on accreditation standards ACEN and how our Michigan Board of Nursing is also involved in approving nursing programs. I had the opportunity to communicate with nurses who are ambassadors to the profession.

Pearls: The Michigan Board of Nursing and ACEN ensure that nursing programs maintain standards of practice for nursing programs. ACEN looks at program completion rates, first-time NCLEX pass rates,

and job placement rates. The Michigan Board of Nursing representative focused on looking at end-of-program student learning outcomes—are they leveled as the student progresses through the program? Look at a faculty table to see if faculty members are qualified to teach in the areas. ACEN board members look at the five standards every five years to determine if any modifications are needed. Both guests shared that they look at how standard examinations are used and if they are based on best practices. MBON is looking at the NCLEX pass rate, curriculum, learning outcomes, faculty member's qualifications, attrition data, and any significant program changes that impact the following: clinical settings, and simulation. It was amazing talking with these two leaders, both sharing with the listening audience the importance of finding joy as a road to self-care. I really appreciated that both leaders understood how complex the world of nursing was and encouraged the listening audience to look for a position that brought them happiness. "If you are not happy with your job, it is okay to look for other opportunities, we need nurses who are dedicated to the profession and want to be at their jobs".

I am so excited about our latest episode with Dr. Ernest Grant-ANA-Immediate past president. Listen today! ■