

Neurodiverse RCN – expert panel biographies

Meet our panel at the digital event on 12th October 2020, 6pm.

Chaired by Wendy Irwin, RCN Diversity & Equalities Co-ordinator

Visit www.rcn.org.uk/neurodiversity to book

Dr Rachael Major twitter: @RachaelMajor1

Rachael is a Senior Lecturer in Nursing and a member of the RCN Education Forum Steering Committee. She has been in nurse education for the past 19 years and has a passion for supporting students, especially neurodiverse students. Both her children are neurodiverse and this interest and passion led her to complete a Doctorate in Education entitled “Nurses’ personal and professional experiences of dyslexia in lifelong learning: a narrative approach” in 2017. Her current research builds on this, extending the work to include registered nurses, student nurses, nursing associates and trainee nursing associates with ADHD, Autism Spectrum Condition, dyslexia, dyspraxia (DCD) and dyscalculia. The preliminary results of this research will be presented at the beginning of the panel discussion on 12th October

Mark Thurston

I’m Mark, I’m a mature student in my final year studying Learning Disabilities Nursing at the University of the West of England, Bristol. I received diagnoses of my neurodiversity in my 30s and in some ways it has been the making of me, although there have been moments of reflection and adjustment. I previously worked as a Dental Nurse and in Computing. I am keen to add an undergraduate voice to the panel, as it is in university that opinions and working relationships are formed.

Emma Cope

I have been a nurse for 19 years and when undertaking my nursing training I was diagnosed with being dyslexic. I have worked in a variety of nursing environments such as serving as a military nurse for seven years. I have nursing experience of working on medical, surgical and a rehabilitation ward for brain injuries and for the past 13 years I have worked in primary care.

I have faced many challenges in practice in getting reasonable adjustments in place and have encountered discrimination and a lack of understanding by my peers of the difficulties I can experience. I joined this steering group to give others out there a voice so they feel supported know how to access support and break down barriers individuals face in practice.

Jaye Ryan twitter: @JayeRyan01

Jaye has worked at Birmingham City University since 2003. Before arriving at BCU she worked at Birmingham Women’s and Children’s NHS Foundation Trust, within the Paediatric Intensive Care Unit (PICU) as a Junior Sister. She has fond and lasting memories of caring with critically ill children and their families, whilst teaching and supporting student nurses. Jaye enjoys all aspects of teaching and learning, but in particular has an interest in bringing technology into the classroom. Jaye is currently studying a part-time Doctorate in Education at BCU and is in her 5th year. She was assessed for and diagnosed with Dyslexia not long before this. Her thesis is looking into the lived experiences of nursing students who have undergone an assessment for Dyslexia, which has proved to be negative.

Dr Moyra Journeaux twitter: @JourneauxMoyra

Moyra qualified as a nurse in 1989 from the Mater Hospital at the Belfast Northern College of Nursing. Moyra worked in a number of perioperative positions in Belfast, London and Guernsey

before setting in Jersey in 1995. Here Moyra worked initially in the Main Theatre Department where she was Orthopaedic Sister. Following a post as Senior Sister for Practice Development in the Perioperative areas she joined the Higher Education Department as a lecturer in 2008 and a Senior Lecturer in 2014. Moyra completed an MSc in Advanced Surgical Practice followed by a Professional Doctorate in Education at Cardiff University. Moyra is Jersey programme lead for the MSc Professional Studies and the MSc Advanced Practice. She is a Fellow of the Higher Education Academy. Her interests are: research, ethics, social history, social policy, the history of nurse education, student identity, lecturer identity, disciplinary power, patient safety, infection prevention and control, and pain management. Prior to taking up a position on the the RCN Education Forum Steering Committee Moyra was Chair of the RCN Perioperative Forum Steering Committee. Moyra has an interest in neurodiversity, having undertaken some training in the area. She has experience supporting both family members and students with specific learning needs.

Amelia Hoggard-Leathers twitter: @TheADHDNurse

Amelia qualified as a mental health nurse in 2019 and works in a category B male prison. Aged 27, during her last year of university she was diagnosed with ADHD and dyspraxia via her University disability service. These diagnoses allowed Amelia to receive the appropriate treatment and support at University, work and in her personal life. As a newly qualified nurse with a new diagnosis, Amelia has been through the process of seeking and obtaining additional work support. A process which has been both challenging and rewarding.

Amelia has a passion for neurodiversity and the strengths and limitations it poses for patients and professionals. She is an aspiring ADHD specialist nurse, taking a lead on this in her current workplace. She is particularly passionate about exploring the atypical signs and symptoms of neurodevelopmental disorders and breaking down generalised perceptions and stigma.

Amelia has a keen interest to pursue further study and research, specifically in relation to those diagnosed with ADHD as adults in the prison population.