

Heikki Ellilä

Title of keynote: Mental Health Nursing Education – What´s Next?

Summary of keynote: In spite of all the raised level of nursing studies, it is possible - with a good reason - to ask: have mental health nurses lost their “good old identity” of a special nurse with special skills, nurses who are proud about to be a mental health / psychiatric nurse. Does a general nurse mean that you know something of everything but the body of knowledge is very thin, and is it the employer who must carry the main responsibility to teach the specific knowledge and skills needed in mental health nursing.

As an answer for these questions, nurses have been offered many types of professional development programs, psychotherapy training and master programs. Nurses has been trained as prescribers and many have nurses have studied, while working, master level clinical nursing and graduated as Advanced Nurse Practitioners (APN).

In this presentation, future of mental health nursing education shall be discussed with some reflections from past 40 years, during which the key-speaker has followed the development of mental health nursing and nurse education in Finland and Europe.

Presentation of speaker: Heikki Ellilä is registered nurse (RN), special nurse in mental health/ psychiatric nursing (RMPN). He is a nurse teacher (NT), Master in Nursing Science (MN Sc.) Turku University Dep. of Nursing Science, and has done his PhD in Department of Child Psychiatry/Department of Nursing Science. Ellilä has worked as a staff nurse all together 10 years and as nurse educator for 17 years. Today he works as principal lecturer in the department of Health Care and Well-Being in Turku University of Applied Sciences in post-graduated, master programs. His main teaching areas are mental health and substance abuse nursing, research methodology and theses supervision. He is one of the developers and teachers of first Master level program studies (APN) on Mental Health Nursing in Finland.

Ellilä is also a clinical teacher in Turku University Hospital Psychiatric Clinic. Dr Ellilä is the founder member of Horatio- European Association for Psychiatric Nurses and a board member for seven years 2005-2012. He is has been also the board member of the PSSN – Co-operation of psychiatric nurses in Nordic Countries, 2005-2013 and at this moment he is the chairing The Association: Development and Research of Mental Health Work in Finland.

Ellilä has published or been a co-publisher for 23 scientific articles and book chapters in international scientific and professional journals and books, and several articles in Finnish in professional journals and books. He has had over 40 presentations in peer national scientific and professional conferences in the field of nursing and psychiatry. He has also been a board member of scientific and organization committees of several mental health-nursing conferences. He has been involved in several national and international research / developmental projects in the field of mental health and substance abuse nursing and social work.

During last 40 years mental health / psychiatric nurse education and training has gone thru several changes. In most of European countries, nurse education was moved from collage diploma level to university BA and MA degrees in 1990-2000. Simultaneously there has been an increasing trend from specialised nursing studies to more generally focused nursing programs, aiming to produce "Multi tasking" nurses. The length of nursing studies has become longer, degree programs are more demanding and following the rise of demands the quality of studies has quite obviously improved. Nurses should provide care, which is scientifically evidence - and ethically based.