

Report on attending the BACCN conference 2024 - Aberdeen.

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I was fortunate to receive a grant to support the attendance of the 39th BACCN conference in Aberdeen which the topic was 'Building environments to Thrive, celebrating personal and professional diversity in critical care nursing.'

Within my 14 years of working within Critical Care, this was my first experience of a BACCN conference, and I was delighted at the opportunity. I am currently on secondment within Lancashire and South Cumbria Critical Care Network as lead Educator. I felt that attending this conference was important to gain insight and to support development within my role.

I attended the conference with a group of Critical Care and Outreach nurses within our Network. This gave me good opportunity to Network and learn more about these people as individuals personally and professionally.

The conference did not disappoint. The itinerary was packed with plenty of informative sessions, and I found myself in limbo of which sessions to choose from. The opening session by Professor Aisha Holloway, who gave a fantastic opening presentation and set the bar high. She was a fantastic presenter and discussed the 'nursing now challenge' which she is heavily involved in. I found this interesting and have explored this further since attending the conference. Something I took from this session was, how as nurses we need to speak up, make our voices heard and without doing so we can't make changes. Another discussion I found relevant was around opening up opportunities for our junior and less experienced workforce, to gain experience and opportunities; otherwise they will never be ready and exposed when they need to be. I feel this is extremely important and I feel this is a lesson learned especially on the back of the covid pandemic.

I feel the conference has been an influential and a positive learning experience. All the speakers were excellent and delivered their sessions remarkably. As a practice educator, watching others present it has allowed me to learn on reflect on my own presenting skills for future presentations.

I really enjoyed the discussions around delivering healthcare in conflict and disaster zones from Medline. Hearing how the implementation of a trauma nurse training programme in Ukraine was excellent and beneficial to upskill the nurses redeployed to nursing on the frontline in Ukraine. Understanding what happens in the background to face these challenges is inspiring, as we are only exposed to what is reported on the news reports.

I have taken a lot of information away around some of the quality improvement projects that are taking place across our teams and presenting them at BACCN is an excellent way to showcase them. I had particular interest in the role of the PNA as I am currently leading a forum group for PNAs within our Network, and I have found it helpful to learn how other teams have established this role into their workplace and the ideas that was shared within this role. The workforce and redeployment session sparked great debate and discussion of our workforce, including the role of the NAR. I found these sessions extremely useful to spark some ideas for quality improvement ideas.

I had the opportunity to present a piece of work our Network and the practice educators have undertaken over the last few years on the training and competencies of our HCSWs. This was an excellent opportunity for myself and the Network to showcase this, and since the conference, people have been in contact with myself to discuss the increase of knowledge and skills with their HCSW workforce, which has been rewarding.

My favourite quote which the senior charge nurses from Addenbrookes hospital mentioned in their presentation was “you can’t have well looked after patients, without well looked after staff” this is a quote I will be borrowing as I agree and couldn’t be more important.

I finally want to discuss the hospitality of the event. We had the opportunity to attend the evening reception which was really nice to see everyone enjoying themselves. My highlight of the evening was the Scottish Ceilidh, it was wonderful seeing so many people letting their hair down and getting involved.

I just want to finish by saying thank you to BACCN for this fabulous opportunity. Not only have I come away with more knowledge and awareness but a full head which is spinning with new ideas. I am looking forward to the next BACCN event I attend.