

BACCN Conference 2024 Grant Report

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The theme of this year's conference was "Building environments to thrive", and I was fortunate to be awarded a grant to put towards attendance costs. There was a huge focus on inclusion this year, and I believe it is only in environments where diversity is celebrated that we can ensure everyone is able to fulfil their potential and truly thrive. It was great to see the commitment to diversity and inclusion from the BACCN.

On Sunday afternoon, I attended the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion workshop. It was great to be able to contribute to the BACCN position statement. The workshop showed me that there is a long way to go to achieve a truly inclusive environment, with some difficult conversations ahead. It was great to start the discussion by asking what was needed to help everyone feel included.

The theme of celebrating diversity continued to the welcome address, with the BACCN chair Ian Naldrett encouraging everyone to "Bring your whole self to work". This was followed by the first keynote speaker, Nursing Now Challenge director Professor Aisha Holloway, who reminded us to use our collective nursing voice in her address entitled "Just what the nurse ordered".

I attended the concurrent sessions in the "Critical care: the ongoing journey" stream, and had the opportunity to present with my colleague during this session. Prior to presenting, I heard about a "Phenomenological study of impact of critical illness on ICU family members" presented by Francesca Trotta from the University of Rome. Her work highlighted the need for family-centred care, which was a perfect session to precede how we implemented a Family Liaison Practitioner role in Critical care at Guy's and St. Thomas' NHS Trust.

My first afternoon highlight on the first day included the presentation of how Joanna Mann from the University Hospitals of Birmingham used her Dragon's Den award from last year to provide her team with team-building days in her talk entitled "Facing the future: rebuilding our intensive care team". This spoke to the importance of helping all staff feel included and valued.

Another Monday highlight that demonstrated commitment to inclusion was "Improving communication with non-English speaking patients using enhanced communication boards" by Annalie Baltar from the Queen Elizabeth Foundation Trust. This was a simple but powerful intervention used to support patients, and was presented creatively with the use of practical demonstration.

The afternoon keynote presentation was a panel discussion with Sarah Di Grigorio about her book "Taking care: The story of nursing and its power to change the world". Nearly 2 weeks later, I am still thinking about this session, and the empathy, love and respect with which Sarah spoke about nurses and nursing. I still can't believe she is not a nurse, and can't wait to read the book. As with the morning keynote address, we were reminded of the power we as nurses have as a collective. This further made me think of the importance of inclusion, so

that we can come together and continue to influence how we care for our patients and each other.

The second day was great, and I was fortunate to be able to present with a different colleague on a workshop designed to support nurses to critique research. I attended the BACCN AGM, which gave me an insight into the workings of the BACCN, in particular how funding is obtained and spent. The keynote presentations, about caring for children in adult Critical Care units, and on Martha's rule, were another stark reminder of the importance of inclusivity and ensuring everyone is able to have their voice heard.

Other highlights included presentations on Health care professionals' perspectives on sedation practices; Extracorporeal CO2 removal using CRRT; and Retaining nurses through a band 6 development programme. As a PNA, I particularly enjoyed the session on "PNA: from vision to reality" by Kathy Yorke and colleagues from Sheffield Teaching Hospitals. It is incredible to see how the PNA role has become an integral part of Critical Care, particularly as the role has at its heart a focus on ensuring nurses are able to have their voices heard.

In summary, I enjoyed my first full BACCN conference! I wish I could have attended all the concurrent sessions, and hope I chose wisely. The opportunity to share ideas and network with others across the country (and indeed around the world) was a gift. The standout themes for me were those of diversity and inclusion, and of nurses making our voices heard.