



# A Tool for the Modern Day Nurse: *the Intensive Journal*<sup>®</sup> Method

by Kristen Dagradi\*

What could help nurses deal with the challenges they face everyday in the workplace? The *Intensive Journal* method is one such tool and Dialogue House is now approved to offer continuing education credit to nurses.

The *Intensive Journal* program offers nurses a valuable tool to develop professionally. Nurses can use the method to address some of the major issues and challenges in the workplace such as coping with stress, preventing burnout, dealing with diverse personnel, and developing a more meaningful career.

Dialogue House has been approved by the New York State Nurses Association (NYSNA). Because the NYSNA is accredited by the American Nursing Association (ANA), this approval is recognized in 48 states.[1] Also, Dialogue House is an approved provider of continuing education for nurses in California. [2]

## Reduce Stress

The ANA recognizes the great problem of stress that nurses face in the workplace. According to a recent ANA study, it was found that:

*"The stress, danger, exhaustion, and frustration that have become built into the normal daily routine of hospital nurses constitute [the] single biggest factor driving nurses out of the industry (Lafer, [3])"*

Thus, the *Intensive Journal* method can help nurses in developing mechanisms to reduce stress by resolving issues, gaining new perspectives, writing thoughts and describing emotions. Charlotte Conway, RN, BS, IBCLC,

states that "The method empowers me to positively manage the stressful work environment. I see other perspectives more fully which helps me to maintain my objectivity and to move forward."

## Prevent Burnout

*Intensive Journal* workshops can also aid nurses in preventing burnout. The ANA study showed evidence that "[Due to] the nature of their work, health care professionals are at especially high risk for experiencing the emotional exhaustion component of burnout. [3]"

The *Intensive Journal* method can also help nurses to identify and resolve issues that have created inner conflict and turmoil within the workplace. Moreover, it enables nurses to work through issues by helping them to reconnect with their passion for nursing and to bring renewed energy and focus.

## Develop Career Path

The *Intensive Journal* method can help nurses realize the continuity and direction of their career by laying a foundation on their lives and reconnecting with their cumulative work in nursing. Through the use of the method, nurses are better equipped to identify skills and interests to pursue.

A registered nurse from Sibley Memorial Hospital in the District of Columbia, which recently sponsored the *Intensive Journal* program, stated that

*"The workshop helped me to make sense out of my life - the joys and challenges. It helped me to understand and clarify the direction I want to be going in."*

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The technique of dialogue, which is used extensively in the *Intensive Journal* method, has also been recognized in ANA studies to be an important way in facilitating critical thinking and questioning.

*"In dialogue, conversations focus on surfacing assumptions, goals, and values, and summarizing disparate ideas in search of connections. This type of strategic conversation allows for further exploration and clarification of different vantage points, thus allowing for the development of new knowledge...[4]"*

Through this type of dialogue, nurses can gain skills for developing their career path.

### **Enhance Interpersonal Skills**

The ANA has recognized the value of interpersonal skills in the work environment by stating:

*"Both interpersonal and organizational skills are needed for successful collaboration. Important interpersonal attributes include ...cooperation and flexibility; self-confidence and assertiveness; patience to listen to one another's rationale...; and the ability to ...be self-reflective, and convey a value that places the patient and/or community needs above the needs of individual health care team members.[4]"*

Increased collaboration can produce many benefits including

*"improved patient outcomes, reduced length of stay, cost savings, increased nursing job satisfaction and retention, and improved teamwork.[4]"*

The *Intensive Journal* method can help nurses enhance the aforementioned skills in a variety of ways. By working at an inner level as they reflect on and connect with many facets of their lives, participants learn to trust their hunches and intuition. Nurses learn ways to view issues from another person's perspective, thereby enhancing their listening skills.

### **Organize a Workshop**

Dialogue House is seeking to organize workshops for nurses at major health care facilities. The workshop schedule is structured to meet the unique needs of each organization. Further information can be obtained from Jon Progoff at 800-221-5844.

### **Footnotes**

[1] The NYSNA approval covers the standard workshop format which is the 12 hour version of the three core modules: Life Context, Depth Contact and Life Integration.

[2] State of California Board of Registered Nursing (CEP-15073). All programs are covered regardless of length and module.

[3] Erickson, R., Grove, W., (October 29, 2007). "Why Emotions Matter: Age, Agitation, and Burnout Among Registered Nurses," *Online Journal of Issues in Nursing*. Vol. #13, No. #1, quoting, Lafer, G. (2005), "Hospital speedups and the fiction of a nursing shortage," *Labor Studies Journal*, 30(4), 27-46.

[4] Gardner, D. (January 31, 2005). "Ten Lessons in Collaboration," *Online Journal of Issues in Nursing*. Vol. #10 No. 1, Manuscript 1.

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