Participant information letter

Moving on after critical incidents in health care. A qualitative study of the experiences of nurses and midwives

About the researcher

My name is Melanie Buhlmann and I am undertaking this study as part of my Master of Nursing by Research at Edith Cowan University in Perth, Western Australia. The study will explore how nurses and midwives “move on” after living through the impact of critical incidents in health care. My inspiration to conduct research in this area originates from my own experience as a registered nurse since 1993 and is invigorated by my admiration of the indomitable spirit displayed by nursing and midwifery professionals in their everyday work.

Introduction

If you have been involved in a critical incident, adverse event or clinical incident, and think you were able to move past it, then I would like to invite you to participate in this study. For the scope of this study, a critical incident is defined as “a sudden unexpected event that has an emotional impact sufficient to overwhelm the usually effective coping skills of an individual and cause significant psychological stress”. The study aims to capture your experience with “moving on” following the exposure to a critical event and does not intend to explore the incident. The focus of the study is on your perception of “moving on” and you will be asked not to disclose any details surrounding the incident or reveal any identifying information about your employer, your colleagues, a patient or any other person. Should you inadvertently disclose any details surrounding the incident, the interview will cease immediately and not recommence.

Benefits of the study

The aim of this study is to gain understanding of the impact a critical incident had on you as a nurse or midwife. I am keen to learn about the strategies that have helped you move past the event and would like to investigate if you have been able to remain in your area of professional practice following the incident. With your help, the findings of this study will provide a valuable source of reassurance and guidance for fellow clinicians who have been involved in critical incidents. It is expected that the findings will inform health care institutions, training organisations and nursing and midwifery education programs of the impact of critical incidents on nurses and midwives and promote adaptive strategies to move past the often unsettling experience.

Participants

To participate in this study, you need to be willing to share your experiences of moving on after your involvement in a critical incident. You need to have been involved in the incident or event at work in the capacity of a registered or enrolled nurse or a registered midwife in a clinical area outside of intensive care, high dependency, coronary care or emergency units. If you were involved in an incident that is currently going through legal proceedings or is under review by an institution or a disciplinary board, you will not be eligible to participate in this study.

What will you be required to do?

This study involves the collection of information through interviews. Each interview will occur at a mutually convenient time and place and will take approximately 30 to 60 minutes. During the interview, you will be asked about your experience of moving on following the incident, but the details of the incident will be explored. The interview will be audio-taped and transcribed for analysis by the researcher. Following analysis of your transcript, you will receive a written narrative of the researcher’s interpretation of
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your experience for verification and an opportunity to comment during a second brief meeting. The results of the research project will be reported in a thesis and published as journal articles. Publications will not include any information that may identify you and you will be able to obtain a copy of the journal article.

Risks of taking part in this study
Participation is voluntary and you may leave the study at any time. The information you have provided will be destroyed and will not be included in the findings of the study. You may elect not to answer specific questions that may provoke feelings of discomfort and may request to conclude the interview at any time. Strategies will be in place to manage emotional discomfort during and following the interview and you will be provided a list of counselling services.

Confidentiality
All personal information will be treated strictly confidential and will not be made available to anyone who is not part of this study. Although the findings of this research may be published, your personal information will be completely de-identified and pseudo names will be used. All notes and documents will be stored securely as per the data management policy at Edith Cowan University. Any electronic information will be password protected. This study has been approved by the Human Research Ethics Committee of Edith Cowan University, consistent with the National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research (National Health and Medical Research Council, 2015) and the Privacy Act (1988).

What to do next
Are you interested to participate in this study? Please contact me for details about the next step. You will be under no obligation to take part in this study. Deciding not to participate in this research project will not affect your relationship with Edith Cowan University or with the researcher.

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If you have any concerns or complaints about the research project and wish to talk to an independent person, you may contact:

Research Ethics Officer
Edith Cowan University
270 Joondalup Drive
Joondalup WA 6027
Phone: (08) 6304 2170
E-mail: research.ethics@ecu.edu.au

Thank you for reading this information sheet and for considering to participate in my research project.

Kind regards, Melanie Buhlmann
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Counselling Details

Talking about your experiences of critical incidents at work may provoke feelings of discomfort. It is important that you recognise any emotional discomfort and contact a counselling service near you.

You may get in touch with your Employee Assistance Program (EAP) at work or make an appointment to see your doctor. Below is a list of alternative contact details for regional and metropolitan areas of Western Australia (WA) and specifically for your area of residence.

**Relationships Australia** 1300 364 277
Counselling services in Albany, Bunbury, Ellenbrook, Fremantle, Gosnells, Joondalup, Kwinana, Mandurah, Midland, Northam, South Hedland and West Leederville

**Headspace** (08) 9027 0100
Counselling services in Albany, Bunbury, Rockingham, Armadale, Fremantle, Osborne Park, Midland, Kalgoorlie, Geraldton and Broome

**Life Line** 13 11 14
24-hour crisis support – all areas

**Mental Health Emergency Response Line** (08) 9224 888 / 1300 555 788
Metropolitan Area

**Rurallink** 1800 552 002
After hours mental health service for rural and regional communities of WA

Other counselling service available in the participant’s area: _______________ (specify)

Thank you and kind regards, Melanie Buhlmann
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