DEC 2024 ISSUE 8

# WISPAN WELLNESS

*Wisconsin Peer Alliance for Nurses Quarterly Newsletter*

## PROVIDING SUPPORT, ADVOCACY AND EDUCATION FOR NURSES

## PRESIDENT'S CORNER

***Reflecting On Our First Year Expanding Peer Support To Address Nurse Mental Wellness: Some Valuable Insights Gained***

*By Kristin Waite-Labott, BSN RN (President and Founder)*

Welcome to the latest edition of WisPAN Wellness Newsletter!

1. Nurses need a strong support network to thrive.
2. Confidential peer support groups are a great way to accomplish this.
3. This isn't the type of support all nurses need.

While we are proud to have served 254 nurses through our weekly virtual peer support meetings, we recognize that this is just a fraction of the total nursing population in Wisconsin. Together, we have made significant strides in supporting nurse mental wellness and we are dedicated to exploring new ways to reach a wider audience and provide support to every nurse in Wisconsin.

This next year we will be working to discover what those other nurses need. Curious about how we can better support you? Take our short survey and let us know what you need! Your input will shape the future of our peer support programs: https://forms.gle/PSaemQ5xtfUtV4bZA.

Every nurse is unique, and their needs are diverse. Peer support is a powerful tool, but it is just one piece of the puzzle. We are committed to finding the best ways to support all nurses. Together we can build a stronger, more supportive community for nurses. We will share the results of our survey in a future newsletter.

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## MENTAL WELLNESS PEER SUPPORT CONNECTIONS: NURSE TO NURSE

*Every Wednesday, 7-8pm CST*
*Virtual • Free • Confidential*

*Open to any nurse or student nurse who would like to connect with other nurses for support in their nursing career. Come to Listen, Share, Learn and Explore.*

*Contact WisPAN for the meeting link at: wispan2021@gmail.com*
*Or call: 414.376.7002*

SCAN ME!

## PEER SUPPORT FOR SUBSTANCE USE STILL GOING STRONG!

WisPAN's foundation lies in supporting nurses facing substance use challenges and navigating monitoring programs. We've been here since September 2021, offering a safe and confidential space for recovery and growth.

WisPAN Substance Use Peer Support Meetings are held every 1st & 3rd Monday at 12pm cst, and every Tuesday and Thursday at 7pm cst. Just email us for the link! wispan2021@gmail.com

## WisPAN is Growing!

Let's work together to create a stronger support system for nurses. Please take a moment to share your thoughts on what support you would find meaningful through this survey. We want to hear from you as an individual and as a nurse!

## WisPAN EDUCATIONAL PRESENTATIONS AVAILABLE

**WisPAN's educational presentations offer 1 hour of continuing education credit for attendees, both virtual and in-person.**

WisPAN is dedicated to creating a safer health-care environment by addressing substance use disorder (SUD) and promoting nurse well-being. Our educational presentations offer valuable insights into SUD prevention, early intervention, and mental health strategies. By recognizing and addressing the root causes of SUD, such as anxiety and depression, we can empower nurses to build resilience and prioritize their mental health.

While nursing is inherently stressful, we can take proactive steps to manage stress and prevent burnout. By raising awareness about mental health and substance use disorder, and providing access to support resources, we empower nurses to prioritize their well-being.

### WHAT WILL YOU LEARN?

- Recognizing the signs and symptoms of SUD and diversion in nursing
- Realize the resources available for nurses.
- How to support colleagues on their path to recovery and mental wellness.

### TOGETHER, WE CAN CREATE A SAFER AND MORE SUPPORTIVE HEALTHCARE ENVIRONMENT.

Visit our website at:
https://wipeeralliance.org/contact/
Or email us at:
wispan2021@gmail.com to learn more.

# FEATURED ARTICLE OF THE MONTH

## What is Peer Support?

*By Jennifer Klug, MN, RN*

Peer support is the philosophy of giving and receiving help based on respect, shared responsibility, and mutual agreement of what is helpful. Peer support is about understanding another's situation empathically through shared experiences. When people find affiliation with others whom they feel are "like" them, they feel a connection. This connection, or affiliation, is a deep, holistic understanding based on mutual experience where people are able to "be" with each other without the constraints of traditional (expert/patient) relationships (Mead, 2003).

Peer support groups, such as WisPAN, provide nurses with the opportunity to share their experiences in a safe, non-punitive, empathetic platform. Allowing nurses to work together to heal themselves so that they can better help to heal others (American Nurse Journal. 2023; 18(9). Doi: 10.51256/ANJ092328).

### Key benefits of peer support for nurses include:

- **Accountability:** Being part of a peer support group encourages commitment to recovery goals.
- **Shared Resources:** Peers provide valuable resources, coping strategies, and practical advice, making recovery more manageable.
- **Increased Motivation:** Witnessing others' successes inspires hope and drives personal progress.
- **Improved Mental Health:** Supportive relationships reduce feelings of isolation and anxiety.
- **Enhanced Professional Skills:** Building resilience through peer support improves overall effectiveness in patient care.
- **Long-term Recovery:** Ongoing peer connections increase the likelihood of sustained recovery.

Nurses can share their struggles and victories within a supportive community of peers who truly understand their experiences. This peer support fosters meaningful connections, empowering individuals to uplift one another in their healing journeys. This, in turn, benefits the healthcare community by enabling nurses to perform better in their roles, ultimately enhancing patient care and overall outcomes.

# YEAR SO FAR REALIZING OUR IMPACT

## Accomplishments this Year

### Support Meetings

**Substance Use Disorder:**

- 1st & 3rd Monday at 12pm CST
- Tuesday & Thursday at 7pm CST

**Mental Wellness:**

- Every Wednesday at 7pm CST

We celebrated 3 years of providing peer support for Wisconsin nurses in September 2024!

- With the support of you, our donors, we held 128 virtual peer support meetings for those with substance use issues and had 962 Nurses attend!
- We held 50 virtual peer support meetings for nurse mental wellness and had 254 Nurses attend!

- We held 27 education presentations on SUD in nursing!
- We reached 2,635 people with that education!

Thanks to you, our social media impact is growing!

In the last month, we have had:

- 174 post engagements
- 2 new followers
- 125 reactions
- Our page visits are up 150%!

# Connections Made

## Because of the generosity of our WisPAN supporters and donors, we were able to participate in all of these opportunities in 2024!

- **Each Month:** Kristin Waite-Labott participates in the WNA Nurses Caring for Nurses Taskforce.
- **Each Month:** Kristin Waite-Labott participates in the WNA's Workforce Advocacy Council.
- **October:** Kristin Waite-Labott and Jenny Klug of WisPAN met with Tiffany Henry, Sen Tammy Baldwin's Milwaukee Office Director.
- **November:** Kristin Waite-Labott joined the Editorial Board for the WNA.

WisPAN had had a presence and informational table at many events this fall: Walk for Recovery, International Healthcare Facility Diversion Association, Wisconsin Organization of Nurse Leaders, Wisconsin League for Nursing, and the Wisconsin Counseling Association.

Do you know of any opportunities to share WisPAN and peer support for nurses? How can we grow? Would your workplace, nursing school, or community group benefit from learning about SUD? Contact us at wispan2021@gmail.com for more information!

MKE Alano Club
mkealanoclub.org

IHFDA Conference
ihfda.org

Touring Red Rock during the IHFDA Conference in Denver

Nurse Blake comedy show in Rockford, IL

WONL Conference
wonl.nursingnetwork.com

Phoenix Walk at Holy Hill, WI

# Help Us Grow and Support Every Nurse in Need!

Your ideas matter. WisPAN is committed to continuous growth and reaching every nurse who needs support.
If you have ideas on how we can expand our services or resources, please reach out to us at wispan2021@gmail.com.

## Spread the word!

Do you know a healthcare organization or academic institution that would benefit from WisPAN's education on substance use disorder in nursing?
We know they all would! Share our information with them and help us reach more nurses.

## Join the movement!

Are you a nurse or nursing student seeking support? We're here for you.
Simply email us at wispan2021@gmail.com to inquire about attending a peer support meeting.
Together, we are making a difference. With your help, WisPAN can continue to expand its reach and ensure every nurse in Wisconsin has access to the support they deserve.

## Get Social!

The more shares and likes we can get on Facebook & Instagram, the more we will boost WisPAN awareness.
Repost, Comment, and Like posts to gain more involvement and grow our followers!