

Immediate release

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Sheffield Hallam hosts national nursing debate

With 2020 marking the Year of the Nurse and Midwife, in honour of the 200th birth anniversary of Florence Nightingale, Sheffield Hallam University has held a national roundtable debate to discuss the role of family-focussed nursing in the UK.

Family nursing focuses on promoting health and wellbeing by supporting families to develop their own resources to become resilient, adaptable and cope with their life challenges. This can range from midwives helping new expectant couples to make the transition to parenthood, through to nurses supporting families that are caring for a loved one with dementia.

The debate was led by the UK and Ireland Chapter of the International Family Nurses Association, and brought together nursing leaders from across the country, including Professor Mark Radford, Chief Nurse at Health Education England; Alison Morton, Director of Policy and Quality, Institute of Health Visiting; Dr Crystal Oldman, Chief Executive of The Queen's Nursing Institute; Yvonne Coghill, Deputy President at the Royal College of Nursing; and Jacqueline Dunkley-Bent, Chief Midwifery Officer at NHS England and NHS Improvement and Rachel Powers, CEO of the Patients Association. The keynote presentation, which detailed how family-led nursing has evolved as a practice across the world, was delivered by Professor Marcia van Riper from the School of Nursing at the University of North Carolina in the USA.

Professor Alison Metcalfe, Pro Vice-Chancellor for Teaching and Learning at Sheffield Hallam University, said: "In the UK, there is no formal recognition of the importance of families in health, and the care they experience when supporting a loved one through illness is highly variable. Nurses and midwives vary widely in their views about the importance of families in health provision, and this is despite the evidence which shows that actively intervening to support families results in better outcomes for patients and family members.

"It is important that we explore the more active role that nurses and midwives can take in considering and caring for families to improve health outcomes and this roundtable increases the wider national debate around nursing provision."

Professor Marcia van Riper added: “We have spent today discussing why it is so important to ‘think family’ – and to have this many people in the room that feel as passionately as they do about this issue, trying to figure out how we can do it better, is very exciting and it’s a pleasure to have been a part of it.”

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Notes to Editor

About Sheffield Hallam University

Sheffield Hallam University's vision is to become the world's leading applied university, transforming lives and creating opportunities for people from all backgrounds.

Named University of the Year for Teaching Quality in the Times and Sunday Times Good University Guide 2020, Sheffield Hallam is one of the UK's largest higher education providers, with over 30,500 students.

The University is committed to the Sheffield City Region, providing leadership to drive improvements in social mobility, health and the economy.

Sheffield Hallam offers a comprehensive range of courses and is one of the country's largest providers of health and teacher training. Its industrial partnerships ensure that the knowledge students develop is relevant, addresses the skills gap and helps business grow.

The University's research is characterised by a focus on real world impact - addressing the cultural, economic and social challenges facing society today.

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