No More Empty Desks - A School Nurse’s Story of Advocacy
Robin Cogan MEd RN NCSN
PLANNER, PRESENTER, AUTHOR
DISCLOSURES

I, ROBIN COGAN, DISCLOSE THE ABSENCE OF PERSONAL FINANCIAL RELATIONSHIPS WITH COMMERCIAL INTERESTS RELEVANT TO THIS EDUCATIONAL ACTIVITY WITHIN THE PAST 12 MONTHS
As a result of participating in this educational activity, learners will be able to:

- Introduce media competencies.
- Understand the mechanics of writing an effective blog post.
- Make messages relevant, valuable, and rewarding to the desired audience (including how and where to place/post the messages/blogs.)
This is no time to engage in the luxury of cooling off or to take the tranquilizing drug of gradualism.

Martin Luther King, Jr.

(202) 224-3121

#BeRelentless
“As nurses and academics, we have a duty to engage with the public through [twitter] & embrace this technology as a means to improve our work and enhance our impact"
MORE OF THE SAME OVER TIME: REPLICATION OF ORIGINAL WOODHULL STUDY 1998 VS. 2017

NURSES AS SOURCES IN HEALTH NEWS*

1997: 4%  
2017: 2%

* Difference between 1997 and 2017 is not statistically significant.

NURSES RARELY MENTIONED IN HEALTHCARE NEWS STORIES

13% nurses mentioned in articles
Woodhull Revisited: Conclusion

- Nurses remain invisible in health news stories, with no progress being made during the past 20 years.
- Improving health reporting is dependent upon addressing the barriers to using nurses as sources.
- Doing so requires actions by newsrooms, journalists, communications/PR staff in healthcare organizations and universities, and nursing organizations.
- And doing so requires actions by YOU!
Are nurses unheard, or are we not putting our voices out there?

- Barbara Glickstein
School nurses do more than bandage boo-boos - May 25, 2018

School nurses provide more than band-aids - May 23, 2018

School Nurses: More Than Just Band-Aids - May 20, 2018

School nurses give out much more than just Band-Aids - May 15, 2018

More than Band-Aids - Wasilla Middle School Nurse awarded for her ‘Brain Train’ program - April 3, 2018

School nurses on front lines of mental health, societal problems: It's not just Tums and Band-Aids in the school nurses office anymore, local professionals say. - December 10, 2017
SHOULD YOU USE TWITTER?

START HERE

You live in the 21st century

Yes → You have access to the internet

Yes → You like to learn & share

NO → No, don't use Twitter

Yes, you should use Twitter!

You have a growth mindset

NO → NO → NO

YES → You like to make international connections

You live in a communist state

YES → Use Twitter with caution
Unlocking the potential of Social Media in nursing

- A global platform
- Easy to use
- Accessible
- Raises the profile of nurses, nursing & organisations
- Low cost

Social Media to share nursing practice
Social Media as part of nursing practice
Social Media to inform nursing practice
Social Media to celebrate nursing practice

By Teresa Chinn MBE (@AgencyNurse)

- Expertise at our fingertips
- Ask questions
- Ask the crowd
- Network
- Enable them to connect with each other
- Coproduction opportunities
- Celebrate the small stuff
- Celebrate the big stuff

- Reflection
- Learning
- Sharing
- CPD
- Revalidation
- The resource of People!

- Research opportunities
- Increase the public's understanding of nursing
- Increase nursing morale
INFORM - EDUCATE - ADVOCATE

Advocacy is Influencing

Why Advocate?

“Unless someone like you cares a whole awful lot, Nothing is going to get better. It’s not.”
- Dr. Seuss, The Lorax

Advocacy is not Confrontational

Advocacy is informative
“Envision how things would be if the voice & visibility of the nursing profession were commensurate with the size & importance of the nursing profession.”

-Buresh & Gordon *From Silence to Voice*
“I use something called a community café to meet with parents in small groups and really understand some of the challenges they’re facing. I knew, as a school nurse in Camden, that if I sent a student home, instead of seeing a pediatrician their parents most often would go right to the emergency room. So there wasn’t continuity of care happening. We needed to find out what the barriers were, and i... See More
Collaboration with community school health partners is a valuable tool assisting school nurses with a strategy referred to as developing a “circle of care.” The strategy involves surrounding children with nurturing adults in their lives, individuals in schools and communities who regularly support children with comfort and care. One example of a school health partner contributing to providing a “circle of care” is the program titled “Sesame Street in Communities.” The program has three main priorities—military and veteran families, supporting children with autism, and supporting resilience in Community Cafés and included a video clip about our project.

Within a few minutes, Jeanette had responded again! It turned out that she was stuck on a train and had been able to view the video clip in my follow-up message during her train delay. Her enthusiastic response was authentic, and she generously offered to schedule a phone call to discuss how Sesame Street in Communities could support the work we were doing in Camden. She also wanted to learn more about school nurses and how we affect our communities.

Question: Jeanette, can you
This is my grandpa. When he was 12 years old, he hid in a closet while his family was murdered during the first mass shooting in America. Almost 70 years later, I also hid in a closet from a murderer. These events shouldn’t be repetitive. Something has to change. #douglasstrong
Guest Editorial

Why I Became a School Nurse Activist

Robin Cogan, MEd, RN, NCSN

On September 6, 1949, a terrified 12-year-old boy hid in a closet as his entire family – mother, father, and grandmother – were murdered, along with 10 other people, by a deranged neighbor with a semi-automatic weapon. He survived what was then deemed to be the first mass murder in history – where 13 people were killed in a shooting spree in Camden, NJ – by hiding in a closet. That boy was my father, and while he physically survived the killings, his mind and spirit were haunted all of his remaining days. Ironically, my father was buried on September 6, 2009, the 60th anniversary of the murders.

Fast forward to February 14, 2018. This time it is my niece who survives a mass murder, by another killer with a similar semi-automatic gun, by hiding in a closet. She, along with her 17 classmates and brave teacher, huddled in a closet inside their classroom until they were freed by the authorities. Seventeen students and staff were killed, 15 were injured, and a few were traumatized.

A Public Health Crisis

In those 2 hours of hiding, Carly became an activist and an advocate for gun control. She and her peers at Stoneman Douglas are leading the way. The media has taken note of this articulate, activist group of teens. Instead of getting ready for prom and graduation, they plan and participate in a march in Washington, DC, on March 24, in a MarchForOurLives event. They have appeared on MSNBC, and countless other outlets. Some have met with President, rallied at their state Capitol in Tallahassee, participated in 2-hour town hall meetings, wrote a song in memory of their fallen peers and teachers, funerals and vigils, written blog posts, created videos that have gone viral, and published reports in school newspaper.

I am a school nurse, a relentless one. Stop the Bleed, Mental Health First Aid crisis counseling, but that day I felt bugged, drugged, and exhausted from the cycle. Nothing has changed between September 6, 1949, and February 14, 2018.
Parkland, Florida school shooting survivor Carly Novell and her aunt, Robin Cogan talk about the generational impact of gun violence. Credit: Matt Skoufalos.
REP. DONALD NORCROSS
(D) New Jersey
Donald Norcross @DonaldNorcross · 21m
Thank you @RobinCogan & @Car_Nove for entrusting me to tell your story in Congress. When I vote for #gunsafety legislation this week, I will be thinking of your family.

#EndGunViolence bit.ly/2BU7X30

Robin Cogan @RobinCogan
Thank you @DonaldNorcross for presenting our family's story in support of #HR8! You honored my father, may he rest in peace & my family by speaking for those whose lives have been impacted by gun violence. So proud...
I SAVED A SEAT FOR YOU
Robin Cogan @RobinCogan  ·  Jan 8
@TAPintoCamden I am a @CamdenSchools Nurse working with an art teacher & several students @BrimmMAHS on a project called #NoMoreEmptyDesks. An art project that brings attention to the impact of gun violence in school. Here is our story:

**The Relentless School Nurse: Meet the Student & t...**

Several months ago, Kendrea Todt, a nurse educator from Tennessee, responded to a post that I wrote on Twitter. It was about an article documenting the 26,000 ... relentlessschoolnurse.com
Robin Cogan @RobinCogan · 53s
Sharing the stages of #NoMoreEmptyDesks @kltodt you will be proud! If you want to learn more about our initiative, please DM me. @CamdenSchools @BrimmMAHS leading the way.
This is the amazing team leading the way for #NoMoreEmptyDesks to become a movement that allows students to use art as a form of activism in response to #GunViolence. These students from @BrimmMAHS @CamdenSchools make us all proud. Thank you Lisa Wallenberg, their gifted teacher.
Art for Life

Camden school nurse whose relatives have escaped mass shootings leads effort to paint desks to inspire end to violence.

By Melanie Burney

When gun violence struck her family for a second time, two mass shootings a half-century apart, Robin Cogan felt compelled to do something to send a message to stop the carnage.

A Camden school nurse, Cogan had an idea to create a grassroots arts campaign — "No More Empty Desks" — at Charles Brimm Medical Arts High School that she hopes will catch on around the country to drive home the message. The desks and the messages painted by students symbolize the countless young lives lost and the hopes of an outspoken generation trying to change the grim statistics.

So far, two desks have been completed — one painted by Christian Morvan, a senior, with a simple but haunting message, "I saved a seat for you," and another...
Congratulations to @MLBURNNEY, one of the runners-up for the inaugural @GwPolicy GWU Nursing Journalism Award! Click to read "Art project targets deadly gun violence awareness in Camden schools: ‘I saved a seat for you’" from @PhillyInquirer go.gwu.edu/savedaseat #healthpolicy

Art project targets deadly gun violence awareness in Camden …
Art students at Camden’s Charles Brimm Medical Arts High school are painting empty desks as a memorial for students lost to gun inquirer.com

4 3:55 PM - Sep 16, 2019
Artivism...

Robin Cogan @RobinCogan
@JosephSakran @meganranney @TheScottCharles @JudgeWren @ResearchAffirm @ThisIsOurLane @peter_masiakos
#NoMoreEmptyDesks is profiled in @phillydotcom
Art project targets deadly gun violence awareness in Camden schools: 'I saved a...
Joseph Sakran, a Johns Hopkins trauma surgeon, was the first to suggest other doctors change their Twitter profiles pictures to say "This is My Lane." (Joseph Sakran, a Johns Hopkins trauma surgeon, was the first to suggest other doctors change their Twitter profiles pictures to say This is My Lane. Courtesy of Joseph Sakran)
More than 26,000 school desks sit empty from gun violence since 1999.

ROBIN COGAN, RN
SCHOOL NURSE, ACTIVIST, SURVIVOR FAMILY MEMBER

#THISISOURLANE
@ThisIsOurLane • Brady Campaign to Prevent Gun Violence
About AFFIRM

The American Foundation for Firearm Injury Reduction in Medicine (AFFIRM) is a 501(c)(3) non-profit corporation comprised of healthcare professionals and researchers working together to find lasting solutions to curb the epidemic of firearm violence across the United States. Our funding goes directly to research that will inform protocols for everyone working on the frontlines of healthcare, develop innovative solutions that connect our network to other first responders and stakeholders, and create education and information for healthcare professionals and the public.
I was (and remain) a HUUGE advocate of @schoolnurses when I was Commissioner of @StateHealthIN - attendance ↑, performance ↑, health status ↑, vaccinations ↑, when schools have access to a nurse!
Writing Great Blog Posts
Quick Tips

- Tell your story
- Write about things that matter to you and your industry
- Inform, Inspire, Interact
- Experiment with different writing styles
- Understand who is reading your blog
- Create quality content – takes some time
- Edit your posts
- Ask your readers questions
- Write, write some more, and write even more

[Darren Rowse, Blogger, Author, Podcaster, and Online Entrepreneur]
Blogging Gone Bad: 7 Mistakes You Don’t Want to Make

- Your headlines generate more yawns than clicks.
- You’re not using imagery to your advantage.
- Your posts aren’t scannable. Quick to read!
- Your posts put readers to sleep.
- You’re not consistent.
  - Here’s the rule of thumb: Make your content surprising, not your posting schedule and subject matter.
- You don’t know who your audience is.
- It’s easier to file your taxes than share your posts.

The Relentless School Nurse Topics:

- My First Nursing Error
- Climate Justice
- Pockets Filled With Chicken & Other Social Determinants of Health
- The School Nurse Goes to Capitol Hill
- What Happened At School Today: A School Shooting
- Two More Empty Desks
- Finding Flowers and Hidden Biases
- Social Media as a Form of Nursing Activism
- Soap, Toothbrushes & Sleeping on Concrete Floors
- I Can’t Stop Hearing the Children Crying
The Relentless School Nurse: What Happened in School Today – How One School Nurse Bridges the Wage Gap
Apr 13, 2019 6:21 AM   3 Recent Views

The Relentless School Nurse: ACEs Impact Nurses More Than We Realized
Apr 10, 2019 5:54 PM   16 Recent Views

The Relentless School Nurse: What Happened At School Today – A Visit to Sesame Street in Communities
Apr 10, 2019 11:06 AM

The Relentless School Nurse: Athletic Trainers are our Partners
Apr 3, 2019 8:05 PM   16 Recent Views
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Stats for 2019:
- Views: 30,102
- Visitors: 20,062
- Likes: 22
- Comments: 63
The Relentless School Nurse: Generation Lockdown
How One School Nurse Bridges the Wage Gap
The Nurse Who Played Cards
PROTECT OUR SCHOOLS FROM GUN VIOLENCE
NO MORE
NO MORE
NO MORE
I'd be pretty comfortable saying that the average #tweetiatrician isn't very familiar with @schoolnurses scope of practice. I know that I'm not. Two way educational opportunities would definitely be helpful. #schoolhealthchat
#SchoolNurseChat

WED 9/18/19
8:00 PM EST

SPECIAL #POPUP
#SCHOOLNURSECHAT
JOIN RUTGERS CAMDEN SCHOOL NURSING STUDENTS IN THEIR 1ST #SCHOOLNURSECHAT!
Dear Robin Cogan,

Thank you for agreeing to join me for a Gun Violence Prevention Press Conference on Thursday, September 26. Please plan to arrive in Longworth 1118 by 11:30 a.m. and remain in the Capitol building until approximately 3:00 p.m.

As a member of the Gun Violence Prevention Task Force, I am committed to addressing the gun violence epidemic through evidence-based policy and advocacy, and I am delighted you will be able to share your expertise at this press conference with the nursing community. I look forward to seeing you next week.

Sincerely,

Lauren Underwood
References


Time for Questions!

Please follow me on Twitter! @RobinCogan
Email: robin.cogan@rutgers.edu