

People Are People



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My Dear Readers,

Happy April to you all. I hope my words find you well. It's time for thoughts from the island.

The title of this article is chosen by the great pop group Depeche Mode. As a kid of the 1970s, the 1980s, and 90s were my years of discovering music. Depeche Mode belongs to my youth, which I don't want to miss.

I was in my kitchen last week, and the song ' People Are People' started to play on the radio. It struck me immediately because I had my topic for my article. BINGO.

People are people is aimed at an experience I had two weeks ago. I was invited to a group of German academics to speak about nursing in the U.K. This group is trying to change and influence the progress of the German nursing profession. You might remember that I am German and worked in Germany for nearly ten years before I moved to the U.K. 21 years ago. Through my network of English nurses, I am often invited to speak about the Anglo nursing culture, which I know very well.

However, these great colleagues were interested in speaking about intercultural nursing, diversity in nursing, inter-religious nursing, and inclusion in nursing—and, in general, how we, as staff nurses, work on the wards.

All these important subjects are well implemented in the Anglo-Nursing Profession. The Nursing and Midwifery Council and the Royal College of
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Nursing set standards for these themes, which we, as Registered Nurses (RNs), must implement and practice in our nursing tasks. In addition, the NHS hospitals and the private healthcare sector in Britain are highly aware of and publicise their standards and opinions to the public.

I started my presentation with tons of good energy and was well-prepared. I felt good and proud when I spoke about the NHS, which one must understand when one wants to know how nursing works in the U.K. Throughout my presentation, the German colleagues were invited to ask questions, which they did. I was delighted that all the academics seemed so interested until I got the comment: Ms. Torgler, you present the NHS in such a bright light that one would think you are an NHS lobbyist. He laughed because it was meant to be a joke. Before I could answer, I had to think! Hmmm, what shall I say? These words were running through my mind! A train of thought ran through my brain because more than 15 Professors wanted to hear my answer.

The colleague wanted to hear about our challenges in the NHS! Yes, we have troubles. Yes, there is a waiting list, which seems endless at the moment. Yes, there is a shortage of nurses, doctors, and all healthcare professionals. Yes, there have been financial cuts in the past, which should never have happened in the NHS. Yes, yes, yes!

But to all of these challenges, the NHS = us are doing a pretty damn good job. It is incredible what the Anglo nursing profession can offer in terms of competencies – the sky is not our limit. And I am so proud of my colleagues and me to be able to work on a very, very high level to ensure the patient's safety. Not only are the competencies on an enormously high level, but these subjects, which I was invited to speak about, are a key part of our daily work.

And can I not be proud of this?! In that case, yes, I am an NHS lobbyist, and guess what? It feels awesome. This was my answer!

Can negativity overwrite positivity? In my books, NO! is the answer. If we always see negativity in our profession, our challenges, and our health systems, this is wasted energy. We can and must learn from the challenges, be aware of them, and tackle them in solidarity. But don't put your finger on sore spots and not do anything. This is not helpful, actually. By all means, it is counterproductive.

Back to my talk—to be professional, I answered all the questions about Brexit, the waiting list, and so on. But I also stood my ground and gave a picture of my nursing profession, which the German colleagues found pretty impressive.

People are people, that's for sure. I am very happy that we can discuss different views professionally, which makes us people. It allows room for different opinions and shows awareness and respect for each other.

Thanks, Depeche Mode, for this great song, which made me think in this direction! Again, a big thank you to the German colleagues at Zukunft der Pflege, who are relentlessly engaged with and for the German nursing profession.

Best wishes and thank you for your time.

Sabine Torgler

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