

## **The Resilient Nurse: Episode 2 Transcript**

### **Nancy Reller**

Hello, everyone, and welcome to the Resilient Nurse Podcast. This podcast is a special series within the Johns Hopkins School of Nursing On the Pulse podcast. Here we discuss the tools and practices nursing faculty, students and new nurses are using to renew and amplify their resilience. Each episode, we will cover the complexities, misconceptions and new pathways toward keeping our nursing workforce resilient throughout Maryland and beyond.

I'm your host, Nancy Reller. My guest today is Stephanie Kratzen, who is not only an R3 champion, which Dr. Rushton spoke about in our first podcast. She's also the coauthor of one of the Resilient Modules. Stephanie is a current associate professor at the Community College of Baltimore County. Welcome, Stephanie. We're so glad you're here.

### **Stephanie Kratzen**

Oh, I'm so glad to be here today and talking about our resilience module that we worked on together and just resilience in general, how we can help our nurses.

### **Nancy Reller**

Wonderful. Well, I know that you're super excited about the module that you co-created with the R3 team. And I am really excited to talk to you about it. It's called What's on Your Plate, which is a wonderful, commonly used term. But you really looked at this in a different way. Can you give us kind of the big picture? Tell us about the purpose of this and maybe a little bit about how you came to seeing this as an important element.

### **Stephanie Kratzen**

What's on Your Plate is something that I actually participated in myself first, and I was able to see it used in a much smaller scale just to kind of explore what is taking up our time. And really, a lot of times students aren't aware of all of the time challenges that they have. So I thought about some ways that we could help students and nurses explore what is, quote, on their plate and how they could really critically think about what is using their time.

And really, at the end of the day, the exercise allows them to self-reflect and think about the things that are challenging their time and is it helping them reach their goals. So it allows for really a lot of self reflection because everyone's situation is unique. And I think this is the best part of what's on your plate is that it allows for individual factors, not only for them as a student, but it also talks about their lives outside of school, which is really important because these are the challenges that students have on their time and these are the things that gets in the way of them being successful, whether it be in nursing school, in a new nursing role or any life change they may have.

### **Nancy Reller**

It's so great. What it reminds me of is that you're really making the unconscious, the things that we do, but we don't notice we're doing them and make those things conscious and really take a look at them. Tell us about the module.

**Stephanie Kratzen**

So the module that we worked on for this really encompassed a lot of challenges for nursing students and nurses going into practice. On what are some things that challenged their time. So I actually interviewed some students to talk about what are some things that challenged their time. And every time I do this activity with my first semester nursing students, I allow time for them to tell me what are some individual challenges that you feel comfortable sharing that maybe I have not considered?

And it's interesting that when students would volunteer that information, a couple other students feel like, Yeah, I have that time challenge as well. So when we looked at the list, we wanted to make it pretty all encompassing, but at the same time allow students flexibility to add their own personal time challenges or activities that would take up their time.

I wrote those things down, and when I did the activity with the students, I did it on paper plates and stickers, which they loved arts and crafts time And the R3 module we have is electronic, which also is a good way because you don't have to have the supplies. But the bigger thing that I saw with the students is they weren't even aware of things that actually took time away from them.

And how much of it.

**Nancy Reller**

Yeah, like what?

**Stephanie Kratzen**

So it's funny because most students, they can quantify work hours. They know how long they're working right. But they didn't think about the amount of time it may take to travel to campus every day. They didn't think about maybe they had to take a child to school and they sat in a drop off line for 30 minutes or there was grocery store shopping that needed to be done, laundry, paying bills, you know, doing some household management tasks.

And some of these things really add up into time. And it also gives them some perspective on maybe their time is also interrupted. They don't have longer chunks of time. So in a lot of ways, it helps students increase their own self awareness of how they're using their time.

**Nancy Reller**

What about getting lost in the Internet? Was that one of the things that was found?

**Stephanie Kratzen**

Yes, I will say I've had students come in and talk to me and they say, I just don't understand why I can't get things done. And it's really funny because on our devices, a lot of times it does actually track how long we use particular apps. And this student was on Tik Tok for 8 hours a day.

**Nancy Reller**

A day?

**Stephanie Kratzen**

A day and she had no idea that she was spending as much time as she was. And there's also a really nice feature that I tell the students that you can actually lock your apps out and it'll visually tell you, "you have reached your time limit, for today." So sometimes we do get into these situations where we are overwhelmed, we're not sure what to do, and maybe we start scrolling or get distracted by something else.

And I did ask that student. I said, Do you mind if I share your experience with other students? Because I think that this could be valuable information. And she was like, Please, because honestly, I had no idea what I was doing.

### **Nancy Reller**

Right. I think so many of us experienced down into the web and an hour was gone and felt like a waste of time. And I think the other thing that you said that's really interesting is their time is chopped up and they don't have a span of time to really focus and concentrate. And that kind of thinking as a student is super important.

So just seeing all the things that they're doing all day, every day is such a valuable exercise. So what else has been part of how students have reacted to the tool?

### **Stephanie Kratzen**

I think they often first act very skeptical of me doing this activity. However, one of their biggest stressors when I ask them, "What are you most fearful of the first day of nursing school?", 75% of them say "failure." And probably my next biggest chunk is time management. So I'm trying to address it from the beginning. We can talk about failure with mindset, but really time management is one of those things that really can help them be more successful and not in that category.

The second thing that really stands out to them is once they finish their activity with their plate, they see all the stars on there. They're like, Now what? What do I do? Right? So I stressed the importance to them that maybe they need to pick two or three activities, that maybe they can ask for help or delegate. And I say really to think about critically what can I ask for the help for and communicate with my support system?

Because everyone's support system is going to be different. And I said the open communication with your support system is going to help you, number one, feel better. And number two, your family understand the experience you are going through because no one else is going to understand that experience but you. And I think a lot of the stressors with support systems is lack of communication.

So I really tell them on day one to go communicate with your support system, tell them what it's going to look like, ask them for the help. I said, They're not mind readers, They don't know what you need. And you have to be able to communicate these things to be successful. The other last thing I'll speak to about it is the importance of saying no.

And that's really hard because a lot of the students, they don't want to say no to social events or things that come up. But I ask them to phrase this as they're thinking about time challenges. Is this going to help me achieve my goal of becoming a registered nurse? And if the answer is no, you really need to decide.

Do I have the time to devote to this right now?

**Nancy Reller**

Wow. So this is more than just identification and looking at a plate or stickies or however anybody wants to use the module. It's really, OK, how can we address these things? I'm wondering if along the way in your coursework, if you continue to have them revisit how it's going with on your plate.

**Stephanie Kratzen**

Part of my role here at Community College of Baltimore County, is I am a first year coordinator for our student success program. We call it What Matters because what matters to the student is what's important. So in my What Matters role, I get to meet with the students seven times a semester or more, but I'm meeting with them every other week.

And after I do the first time management kind of exercise with What's on My Plate, when they come back to me in two weeks, it's time management revisited. I ask them, How are things going? Were you able to make some changes? Was it more difficult than you thought? Was it easier than you thought? What are you going to continue to do going forward as more things come to challenge your time?

And then we really start to think about do they know how to master their time management with schedules and planning? And that's really a higher level kind of thinking to be able to really think about what is my best plan for my use of time. So then I'll work with them to develop a schedule of their time. And oddly enough, a lot of times students still are not knowing where their time is going.

So then I ask them to keep track of their time for a week. I call it a calendar audit. I ask them to keep track of their time for one week on an hour to hour basis of what they're doing, because if they don't know where their time is going, this is the best way to see where it's going.

**Nancy Reller**

Wow, this is so important just for life, let alone as a student. Right. I mean, with all the pressures coming in, I love that it's so comprehensive in terms of the follow up. Tell us about when you're in these other seven sessions and follow up with them. What is it that they find they're surprised about in addition to they still don't know how to keep track of their time?

**Stephanie Kratzen**

I think, you know, the time management piece comes in, but they also underestimate the amount of time that it takes to be a successful student. I think that they underestimate study time. They're underestimating things that may come up. But honestly, a lot of the problems that students run into are often unanticipated. Those are the things that are really hard to plan for.

So helping them with challenges, stressors, things that come up in the moment with these skills to be more resilient is going to help them be more successful with achieving that goal of becoming a registered nurse. Like anything in life, sometimes things just come up and it's it's always kind of stressful. And if COVID has not taught us anything, you know, it's all about being flexible and unfortunately anticipating like what the next thing is when we don't always know.

**Nancy Reller**

Right, I would imagine what comes up for students and all of us is boundary setting. As you know, there's a module on the R3 website, that's part of this grant, that is all about speaking up with integrity. And sometimes those are morally charged issues. Sometimes they're just, how do I set a boundary? How do I go to my family, as you were talking about earlier, and say, hey, I got to put some fences up around or, hey, I need your help?

Have you found that to be the case? That boundary setting is tough.

**Stephanie Kratzen**

Boundary setting is tough for a lot of people, whether you are a young adult or whether you've been an adult for a long time. I think particularly it can be a challenge, especially for people who are coming to nursing, because a lot of time they're the helpers, you know, they want to help people. And what I really thought about with this exercise is the impact of this.

So my hope is that I'm opening the dialog for the students, whoever is using what's on my plate to help them evaluate what is important to them, because students and other adults struggle with communicating those things to other people, especially if it's something they feel is going to be perceived as a disappointment or inconveniencing someone. So I think opening up this dialog is going to be important for people to advocate for themselves.

And advocacy is a huge role as the nurse, and this is a great foundation for them to understand as students. Yes, as a nurse, I will advocate for myself and my patients and I can do that. So I first really focus on this self-care piece. Yes, we need to take care of ourselves. We need to do what's good for us to reach our goals.

But how can we do this in a way that we don't completely ignore everyone and cut off everything and live in a bubble for two years? It's not realistic. And when we look at those activities of time and what is taking our time, we really have to focus on what I can control and what I cannot.

**Nancy Reller**

Big important realization around that. What do I need to let go of that no longer serves my goals and others? The other point you make is such a good one about the nurturing nature of nurses and how it's so much easier for nurses to take care of others. But the ANA Code of Ethics says very clearly that you're to take care of yourself.

So this is a wonderful tool for people to become aware of what is going on. It's kind of the first step of realizing what I'm up against in a way.

**Stephanie Kratzen**

Yeah, I completely agree with the idea of self-care, not always being that focus, but even when I have students looking at their plates and they see hobbies that are on there: going to the gym, working out, being outside. I said, those are some of the first things that students get rid of or people get rid of. they're stressed.

They're like, Oh, I just I don't have time to go to the gym or I don't have time to do what makes me happy. But the problem with that is once you eliminate those things, you're eliminating the things that make you happy and bring you joy and keep us above the line, which is a great video that is in our R3 site that you can look at when you're above the line.

You're really creative, you're flourishing, you're able to problem solve and think effectively. But when we're stressed, we can't do those things. And as soon as we get rid of those types of activities that bring us life, we're down there and stressed and burnout and that's where we end up. And then we can't think effectively. So trying to really focus on those things that make us happy, don't get rid of them all.

### **Nancy Reller**

Right. And encouraging colleagues and fellow students and faculty and new nurses and experienced nurses to create a culture where that's okay and that's supported and that's understood as something that keeps them flourishing and keeps the why they want to be a nurse, why you want to be a nurse alive. So that's such a good point that those activities that we do that we love should not be the first to go by any means.

The other thing I wanted to talk about was I know you developed this for students. Have you used this in other settings or can you imagine where else this might be used?

### **Stephanie Kratzen**

The majority of the usage I have had is with students. I have also had the ability to use it as a tool for mentoring. So I had a faculty who was very overwhelmed with stress and a lot of things on their plate, so to speak. So I had them do it to look at it, because really it's not just something that students struggle with.

I think any adult with life responsibilities are going to have different challenges to their time. I think it would be great for nurses who are transitioning into their new registered nurse role as a change, so something that they could look at in a nurse residency, for example. And I also think it could be any use for anyone who is going through any life changes.

So maybe going back to school or things along that nature where you're going to have additional time or a new job and things like that, because your values may need to shift and align during certain periods of time in transition. And I think it does give a fresh look thinking, okay, am I doing enough things to reach my goals as a professional, as a person, to help me feel nourished and full of joy, and am I keeping with my obligations that I need to in life?

So it's not always just professionally in that role we want to look at because we're so much more than just a student or a faculty person. It's more of a holistic approach.

### **Nancy Reller**

Yeah, that's great. I'm wondering, thinking about the reaction of your students who you've conducted this with, like where did they find joy in this? Was there something fun about it to them?

### **Stephanie Kratzen**

So I think when I did it with the paper plates and stickers, they got excited about some arts and crafts because honestly, it used a different part of their brain. But I do think they enjoyed the visual aspect of it, especially if you are on the computer and completing the module that way, because it gives them a visual aid and they can see. Sometimes students feel like, Oh, maybe I'm not doing enough or not doing this or I'm not doing that.

I look at it and say, Celebrate the things that you are doing. These are the things you're doing very well right now. And I think they switched to that negative mindset trying to switch it in a positive way, like I'm doing these things as opposed to look at all these things and I don't have any time. I don't have all the things.

So I do think it does give them a sense of accomplishment. However, they can get a little scared once they do it, because they realize, Oh no, I have a lot of things going on and how am I going to do all this? But I try and frame it in a way that, hey, today's the first day of class.

We can think about these things and make positive changes now instead of after you weren't doing well after your first exam. So the hope is to catch them early.

### **Nancy Reller**

So why should they use it, in your opinion?

### **Stephanie Kratzen**

I think that the module should be used in a way to look at effectiveness of time management. I think sometimes when we're doing a lot of things, we're not intentional with our time. If we had the better look to see how we're using our time so we can plan to do things a little bit more intentionally and effectively, we'd probably have that time to do the things we love.

And I think that's where the bigger value is in this, that it does not have to be work all the time. There still needs to be times for hobbies, family, things that bring you joy. And I really stressed that to the students. This is not all like the world is over. I started nursing school. I'm going to see no one for two years.

This is a perspective that, yes, you can be a student or a professional that's starting out in nursing and still have meaning outside of this.

### **Nancy Reller**

Boy, your students are super lucky to have you, have this program and we'll thank you. Yeah, the way you've put it together. I also just want to make a point about the language that you're using or the narrative, as we say sometimes that switching this from a negative outcome of, Oh my gosh, I've got all this on my plate to, Hey, you're doing a lot.

And here are some ways to keep you creative. Here are some ways to keep you vital as a student, as a faculty member, as a new nurse. So that language that you're wrapping around it and the mindset is terrific and I think will begin to shift others mindset and therefore the culture. Congrats on that too. That's a big, big deal.

### **Stephanie Kratzen**

And I will say the faculty that I work with here and our leadership is very supportive of resilience activities and many of our faculty have adopted resilience activities in their courses throughout the curriculum. And it's funny to see how a few seeds planted have really flourished into a lot of things. We have coloring things on the walls. I mean, it is completely uplifting to see all the things that we are doing for our students and even the faculty are really participating in it as well.

And that's how we get the students to participate, is we're role modeling for them.

**Nancy Reller**

It really does sound like a model of a positive learning environment. So thank you for sharing and being a coauthor of What's on Your plate. We know that listeners can go to the website and check it out and take it. It doesn't take long and it's a wonderful tool. So, Stephanie, thank you again for being with us.

**Stephanie Kratzen**

Thank you for having me.

**Nancy Reller**

The R3 website hosts over 30 resilience tools and practices for faculty, students and new nurses throughout Maryland. Also found on the website are beautifully designed and easy to use, free, social media graphics that are available for personal and professional distribution throughout Maryland. Find us on the web at [nursing.jhu.edu/R3](http://nursing.jhu.edu/R3).

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