

Member profile for QNI Community Nursing Research Forum



Name: Helen Marshall

Job title: Lecturer

Employing organisation: University of Liverpool

Country of residence: United Kingdom

How would you describe your current role and research interests?

I currently teach undergraduate student nurses and post graduate nurses. I plan and deliver sessions to meet the requirements of the NMC guidance for pre-registration nursing programmes.

I am the placement lead for practice-based learning and work closely with our practice partners to support student learning and assessment.

My current research is focused on inclusion of those with a learning disability in research and also on the care they receive in health settings. My past research has focused on the Mental Capacity Act and the experience of student District Nurses.

How did you first get involved in doing clinical research / your own research?

My first research project was part of a dissertation on a master's degree programme. As I was a safeguarding adult specialist nurse, I was interested to explore the understanding of the Mental Capacity Act amongst community nurses in the trust where I worked. I sent out an electronic survey and held a focus group. As a result of my data, someone was employed to enhance knowledge and understanding of this legislation and provide support to clinical staff.

What difference has your research training and experience made to your career / clinical practice / academic practice?

As a result of carrying out my first research project, it increased my confidence in my ability to do research and take part in other projects. I have moved from a clinical role into an academic role and I am able to educate the future generation of nurses, by demonstrating how research and data has the ability to make a change in practice. The ability to carry out research supported me in my clinical role and definitely in my academic role. It has allowed me to enrol on a PhD level of study – something I would never have dreamed possible.

What has been your favourite research experience so far?

I have been part of a project to co-produce a video working with people with a learning disability and healthcare researchers. The aim is to promote inclusivity of people with a learning disability in healthcare research, to hear their views and listen to their experiences. We held planning meetings and a focus group to ensure everyone's ideas were heard and the focus of the video was based on their lived experience. For example, challenging labels and preconceptions, promoting their skills and abilities and making reasonable adjustments to support them to be part of a research team.

How did you develop your research career?

I found that I have developed my confidence and ability by having a go and learning by past experience. My first project was part of a dissertation module and I completed this on my own with the support of my supervisor. I have also been part of a wider team and have learned by watching those who are experienced and asking questions along the way. I am now confident to lead projects and support others.

I found that everyone along the way has been friendly and encouraging and if you just start a conversation, people want to give their time to support you. I still don't feel like I know everything, but I am willing to learn and get involved and there is always someone to ask.

I have been able to explore areas which I am interested in and feel are important, to then gain data which can influence and impact change for the future. Research allows me to speak to people who have the lived experience of different topics and it gives them an opportunity to share this, be heard and influence the future.

What are your top tips for anyone wanting to become a clinical academic or more research active?

- Have a go, ask questions, be enthusiastic as people want to help and support you and don't feel like any question is silly and that you need to have all the answers and knowledge. Research is like nursing: we learn every day and develop new skills and confidence.
- Start the ethics application early and have a timeline of your project. Have a clear aim for the study and the answer to these questions. What do you want to research? Why do you want to research this? What is the point of the research? Who will the research impact? Write it in language a lay person will understand as the ethics reviewer may not be in your field of work so it needs to be clear – ask someone who is not involved in healthcare to read your participant information sheet and they should be able to tell you the point of the study. If they can't – it isn't clear.
- Don't feel that research is an elitist area and as a community nurse you can't take part. YOU have the knowledge and skills and are valuable when identifying research which should be carried out in order to benefit patients.

Where can we access your recent work?

1. <https://www.magonlinelibrary.com/doi/full/10.12968/bjcn.2023.28.2.88>

2. <https://www.dovepress.com/the-mental-capacity-act-10-years-on-ndash-the-key-learning-areas-for-h-peer-reviewed-fulltext-article-NRR>
3. <https://hpe.researchcommons.org/journal/vol9/iss2/5/>
4. <https://www.liverpool.ac.uk/population-health/staff/helen-marshall/>

Find out more about the QNI's Community Nursing Research Forum.