

Ilene P. George, RN, LPC



Why did you choose psychiatric/mental health nursing?

After 5 years of working as a Medical/Surgical Nurse, I realized patients needed mental health care in order to help facilitate the healing process. As a result, I obtained my Master Degree in Pastoral Counseling in 2001 and began to provide holistic care, both mentally and medically, to our unique patient population.

Please provide a brief description of what you do.

I am the Clinical Manager for the Mental Health and Occupational Services Units at Oakwood Hospital-Taylor. I oversee the daily operations on a 32 inpatient bed unit. Our team consists of psychiatrists, nurses, nurse externs, mental health workers, desk secretaries, recreational and occupational therapists.

Please describe your role in the health care team in the region/organization/community where you practice nursing.

As a RN and LPC (Licensed Professional Counselor), I have had the opportunity to travel throughout the U.S. to speak to corporate organizations, faith-based communities, and homeless shelters to educate those about mental health.

What do you consider to be the most challenging and most rewarding parts of psychiatric/mental health nursing?

The most challenging parts of psychiatric/mental health nursing are breaking the stigma of MH, lack of education to the public, and fed-

eral funding cuts.

The most rewarding parts of psychiatric/mental health nursing is knowing I have impacted the lives of MH patients and their families by providing care which assists them to reintegration into our society.

What advice do you have for nursing graduates who are considering psychiatric/mental health nursing as a career?

New graduates who are considering MH nursing as a career should obtain at least one year of Medical/Surgical training. This would better equip the new grad with addressing medical issues for the mental health patients. I would also encourage a new grad to understand that mental illness can affect any person. The more the grad is educated on MH, the more valuable they will be to the MH profession.

Any other comments?

I am a member of the National Board of Certified Counselors and Detroit Black Nurses Association.

We are all touched by Mental Health.