

Nurse Practitioner pens book detailing ‘honest insights’ into the life of a nurse

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Rasa Kabaila never imagined that her everyday nursing stories from a decade in the job could one day form an entire book. That was until a friend planted the seed in her mind that her experiences, and those of colleagues, deserved to be told.

“I thought, they’re not necessarily unique stories, but they are significant,” Rasa recalls thinking.

“For me, looking at other books on nursing, they’re often centred around the really whacky and wild things, or controversial things, or the super heartbreaking things, and I was thinking ‘nursing has been all of those things, it’s been everything’. I really wanted to be able to capture nursing in its really honest forms.”

A nurse practitioner, researcher, and now author, Rasa began her journey working as a personal carer in a nursing home at age 16. It led to becoming a registered nurse in 2011, then working in the public sector across a variety of clinical settings including palliative care, medical and surgical nursing, and ICU.

Mental health nursing would become her speciality. It continues to give her the greatest job satisfaction as a Nurse Practitioner (NP) running her own holistic service, Broadleaf, on the NSW Mid-North Coast.

Conducting mental health assessments, treatment and therapy face-to-face and via telehealth, Rasa says she's able to provide person-centred care that makes a difference.

“The reason I got into nursing is because I care about people. I love being able to connect with people. You can certainly make a real impact when you're in a hospital, it's just a bit more routine-based and it's quite rushed. In mental health, the focus is to connect with people and understand their story. This is a better fit for my strengths as a nurse”.

To compile the book, *Put Some Concrete in Your Breakfast: Tales from Contemporary Nursing*, Rasa drew on her experiences, and those of other nurses, in a bid to share insights into the real world of a nurse.

The collection of stories, which reflect on challenging situations that nurses often find confronting, delve into topics including death, crime, spirituality, mental health, puzzling presentations, nurses as patients, and topically, rising burnout amongst the workforce.

“I wanted people to be able to read about nursing in its entirety, because sometimes the public can simplify the perceived role of a nurse, when really, nursing is complex and is formed by a lot of different things,” explains Rasa.



Nurse Practitioner Rasa Kabaila

“The old-school idea of a nurse is that we’re assisting doctors and helping little old ladies to cross the street. While a huge component of nursing is helping people with things like personal care and supporting them in really difficult times, nurses are also the backbone of many other frontline tasks, such as managing an entire ward, leading a resuscitation team and coordinating complex care needs of seriously ill patients.”

More specifically, the book is targeted at empowering young people considering a career in nursing looking for some ‘honest insights’ into the life of a nurse. Rasa hopes the honest depiction sheds light on the crazy, beautiful and important work nurses do.

“The overarching message is that even though nursing is an extremely challenging career, and there’s lots of hardship that you face, it’s an amazing profession. I want to continue to encourage people to become nurses, especially after the COVID-19 pandemic, when we’re more desperate than ever to have people trained up,” says Rasa.

“Just because something is challenging, doesn’t mean that it’s not worthwhile. Every day as a nurse you know that you’re helping someone and making a difference.”

Rasa says she has received overwhelmingly positive feedback from the book, published earlier this year. The stories, which have resonated strongly with fellow nurses, have prompted crying, laughter, and even rolling of the eyes.

“The hardest thing for me was trying to capture things under themes that I felt were important,” she says.

“They were things like looking at the spiritual side of working with people who are at the end of life, and the mental health side of things, such as working with people with suicidal ideation.”

Rasa says writing parts of the book during the height of the COVID-19 pandemic gave her added incentive to share the stories of contemporary nursing.

Importantly, the process also inspired her to take the leap and venture out to start her own practice.

“I had talked about it [for many years]. When I was writing the book, I was in a workplace that wouldn’t reduce my hours, even with a medical certificate, and I was burning out really hard. I thought that if I was writing a book on how paramount it is that nurses look after themselves like they look after their patients, then I needed to make sure that I was practising what I preach. It promoted me to start my own practice. I’m loving the work, but I’m working less, and I’m recharged.”

Purchase a copy of Rasa’s book [here](#)

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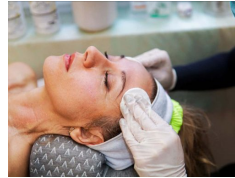
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