



The FoNS Weekly News



Love in Nursing – The Heart of Person- centred Care

**Sheila McGovern:
Guest Editor**



Delighted to share this topical reflection from Sheila, one of the FoNS Person-centred Practice Facilitators

The word love often feels out of place in healthcare. It might be viewed by some as too emotional, too personal, something that belongs in poetry rather than professional practice. Yet, we might also see love being at the very essence of nursing care. Not the grand, romantic kind of love, but the quiet, unfaltering love that shows up in moments of presence, in a touch of reassurance and in the deep commitment to ease suffering.

I was recently discussing this with fellow students on an introduction to dramatherapy course and it appears that this is not just a concern for nurses but also social workers and other allied health professional colleagues. There is a reticence to using the L word when it comes to the people we care for.

For many nurses, expressing love through care is instinctive. It is what draws us to the healing profession and what keeps us returning to bedsides, even on the hardest days. Yet as I have experienced in my own nursing practice, many of my colleagues hesitate to name it as love. When we have had a chance to explore this reticence, for some there was a fear of emotional overinvestment, a breakdown of professional boundaries, or the perception that love might cloud clinical judgment.

However, far from being a weakness, love could be seen as a powerful, guiding force that enhances person-centred care and when practised wisely, does not mean losing objectivity but instead means being fully present with the people we care for. We could also suggest that love in nursing is not about sacrificing oneself through emotional overinvestment but about holding space for others while also understanding the importance of caring for oneself.

In his article entitled [*Is There a Place for Love in Medicine*](#) Leif Haas talks about how he initially distanced himself emotionally from patients, fearing that vulnerability would lead to burnout. Over time, he discovered that opening his heart made him a better doctor. Rather than seeing patients as clinical cases, he saw them as people with stories, struggles and hopes. In my experience, nurses understand this deeply. They know that healing is not just about medications and procedures but also human connection.

Of course, we have to acknowledge that modern healthcare does not always make it easy to have space for these connections. Efficiency, documentation and the huge challenges of high patient loads can often push emotional connection to the background. Yet, we know that when nurses are empowered to engage meaningfully with patients, the benefits extend beyond the individual. Patients heal better, nurses find more meaning in their work, and healthcare becomes more humane.

In his inspiring article, [*Love as Medicine*](#), Jan Bonhoeffer speaks of the many flavours of love and claims that love is the foundation of healing and not an optional extra in healthcare.

[Read more](#)

The Richard Tompkins Scholarship: Closes 14 Feb

Time for self care? The Richard Tompkins Nurse Development Scholarship is an opportunity to develop your knowledge, skills and confidence as a leader and facilitator of culture change in the workplace.

The deadline is Friday 14 February, so you will need to work quickly to get sign off from your line manager and exec to say they will support you through this scholarship. But believe me! It's well worth it.

It's an 'epic' opportunity.

There's a short video on [our website](#) where recent scholars, Natasha Gordon, Marianne Hamlyn and Julia Andrew talk about the experience and impact of the residential programme and the follow on mentorship.

An opportunity not to be missed!

[Video and application information](#)

The Art of Nursing: Creative Health in the Curriculum

13 March 1-2pm online

The fourth Art of Nursing Webinar led by Dr Marion Lynch looks at how arts can enhance nursing education.

[Book your free ticket](#)

Last few places: The FoNS Residential

28 April - 2 May 2025

There are still a few places left on this year's FoNS Residential Programme. The Residential is an opportunity to reflect away from practice, with learning and development to take back into practice. With inspiring facilitators, you'll meet others who are also committed to developing person-centred cultures of care on an enriching and enlightening learning journey.

[Read about the FoNS Residential programme](#)

More RBCS for Social Care dates

We're starting another five groups in March 2025, so if you are a registered nurse or nurse associate in social care in England, or know one, please take a look. This is a fully funded programme so is an opportunity not to be missed.

[View the dates and book a place](#)

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