

Practice Nurse Networks

Benefits and best practice.

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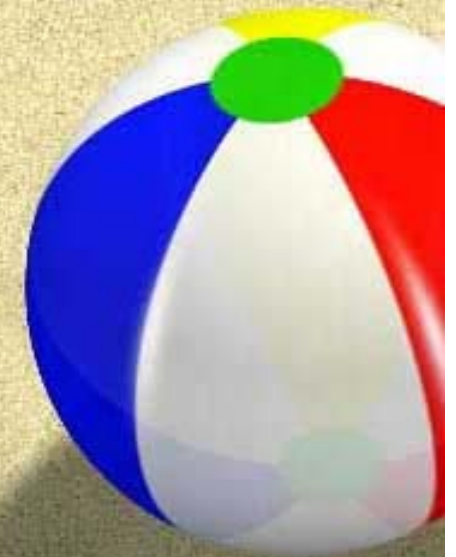
Program Consultants

GPDV



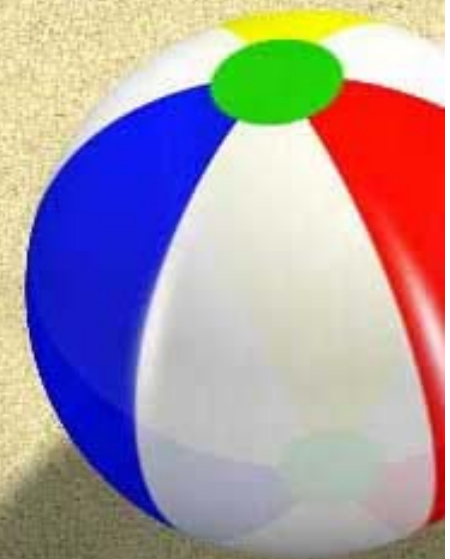
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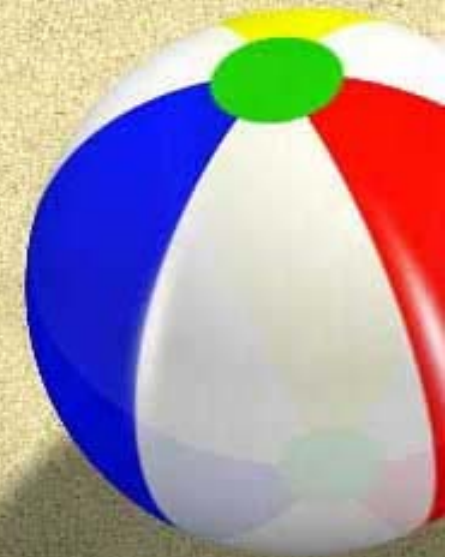
What is a “practice nurse network”?

- A grouping of practice nurses, usually geographically aligned, who meet regularly to
- (a) share experiences and knowledge
 - (b) collectively enhance their professionalism through education and training
 - (c) Develop and/or research and trial ways of performing better nursing practice



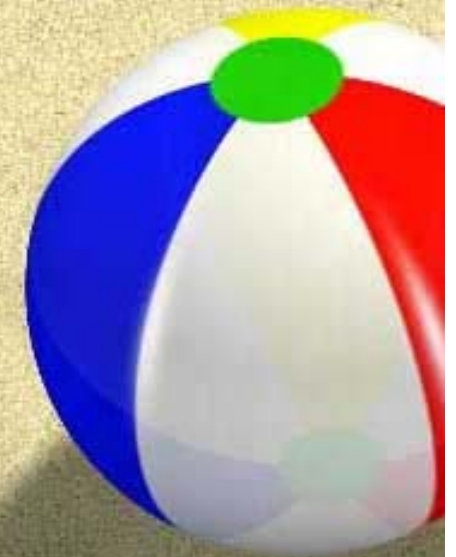
In the dark ages...

- ☾ Many more “solo” PNs
- ☾ Some nurses questioned the professionalism and “right to practice” of nurses in clinics



Benefits of PN Networks

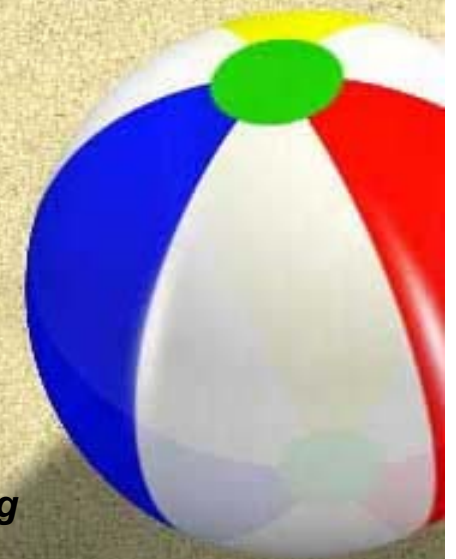
#1 Reduced Isolation



Isolation of Practice Nurses

- ☾ Nurse isolation has diminished in last 4 years, but nurses still feel isolated¹
- ☾ Isolation is not only disheartening, but potentially harmful to patients

1. Heartfield M, Gibson T, Chesterman C & Tagg L (2003) *Hanging From A String in the Wind: Mentoring for Nurses in General Practice*, Final Report to the Commonwealth Department of Health and Ageing, Canberra. University of SA

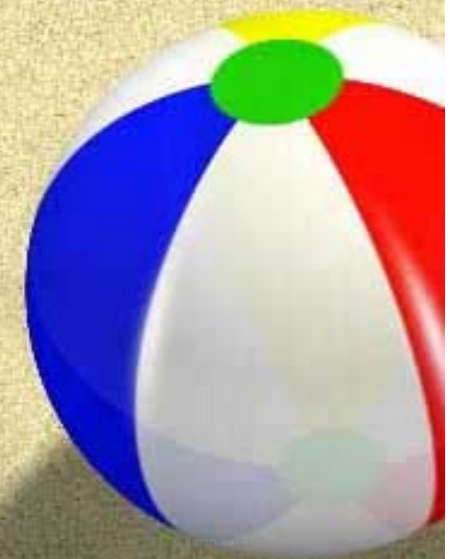


Networking reduces isolation

☾ Formal (mentoring, supervision)
versus informal

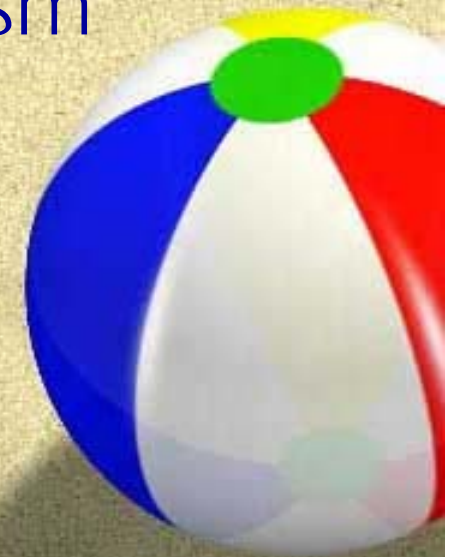
☾ Practice nurse networks – an informal
method that reduces isolation and
improves nursing care^{1,2,3}

1. Heartfield et al. 2005. *Ibid* (“*Hanging from a String in the Wind..*”)
2. Griffiths, J. 1999. “Group clinical supervision in district nursing community”. *British Journal of Nursing*; 4: 2, 90-93.
3. Ward, Nicki. 2002. “Specialist nurse network improves MS practice”. *Nursing Times*. 98(30): 123-9.



Benefits of PN Networks

#2 Enhanced Professionalism



Nursing Professionalism

☾ "4 Pillars of nursing professionalism"¹

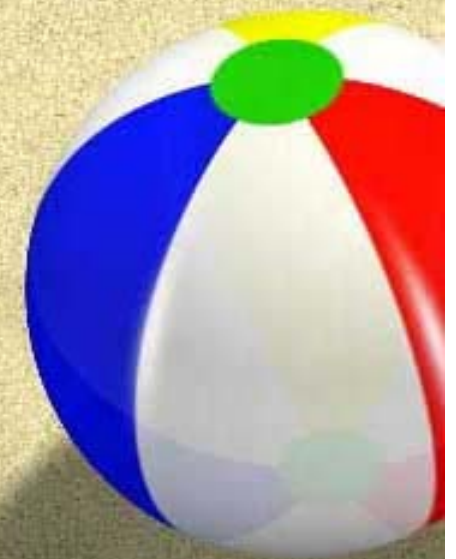
Accountability - the state of being answerable for one's decisions and actions

Autonomy through self-regulation of practice

Development of a career structure

Marketing of professional nursing

1. Gray & Pratt. 1989. "Introduction". *Issues in Australian Nursing* 2. South Melbourne: Churchill Livingstone.



The public's nurse stereotypes!



PN Networks helping to enhance professionalism

Professional Issues

[Codes of Ethical and Professional Conduct](#)

Scholarships and Professional Development Funding opportunities listed below:

julie

[ANF \(Victorian Branch\) Financial Assistance for Conferences 2002/2003](#)

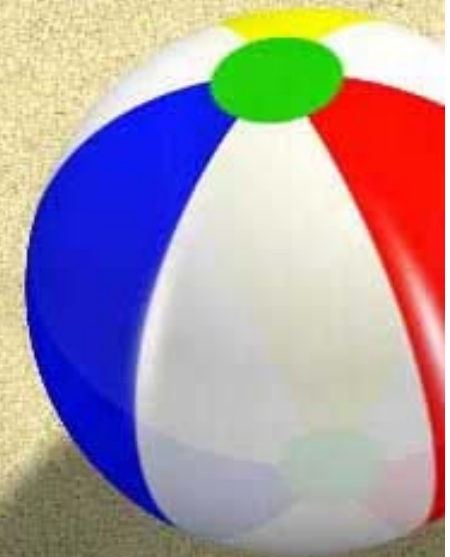
[Australian Government Remote and Rural Nursing Scholarship Programmes](#)

[Professional Improvement Assistance Fund - Scholarships](#)

[Practice Nurse Pap Test Training Scholarships – 2003](#)

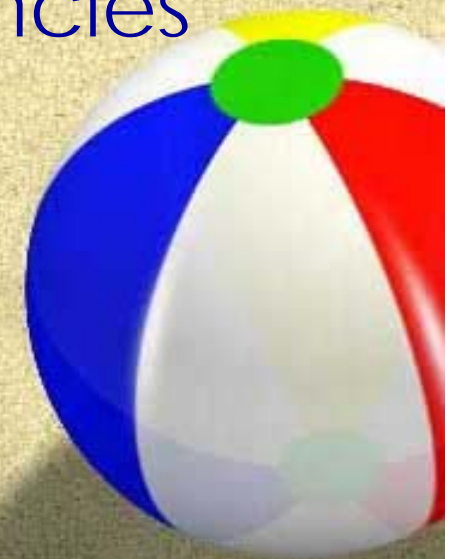
[Remote Area Health Initiative](#)

[The Nurses Memorial Centre Grants - 2003](#)



Benefits of PN Networks

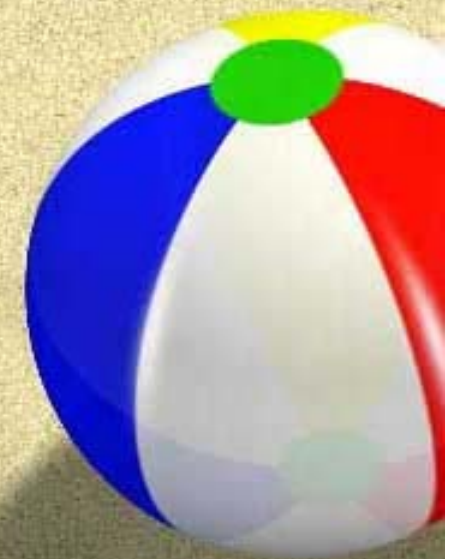
#3 Education and Competencies



Education & Competencies

- ☾★ Maintenance of competencies
- ☾★ Access to *relevant* continuing nursing education for PNs is often problematic¹
- ☾★ Sometimes, PNs don't know what education and training is available

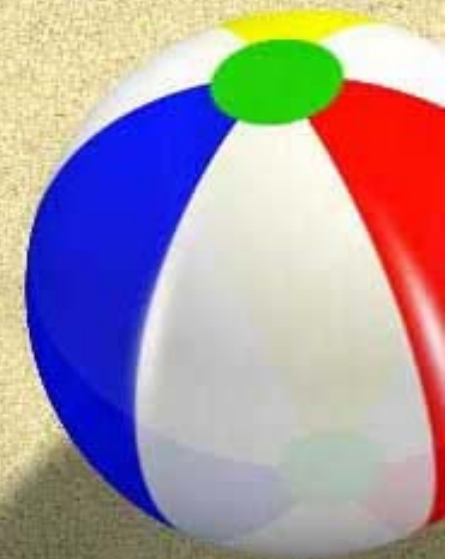
1. ADGP. 2004. *Demonstration Divisions National Resource Kit*. Canberra.



Provision of CNE

- ☾★ Divisions are the largest provider of informal nursing education for PNs, through the PN networks¹
- ☾★ How do networks decide what events to run?
 - ☾★ Nurse surveys
 - ☾★ Commonwealth priorities
 - ☾★ Competency based (??)

1. Watts, et al. *General Practice Nursing in Australia*. RACGP/RCNA Joint Report. Canberra.

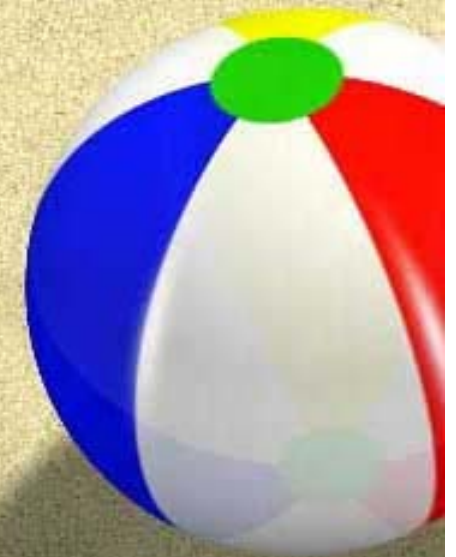


"Best Practice" PN Networks

☾★ "Best practice" has not been defined anywhere in research.

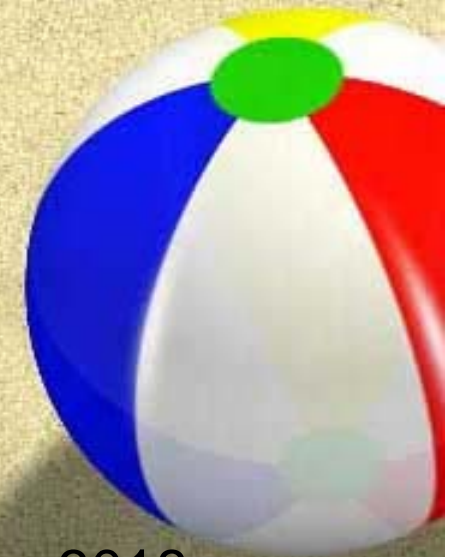
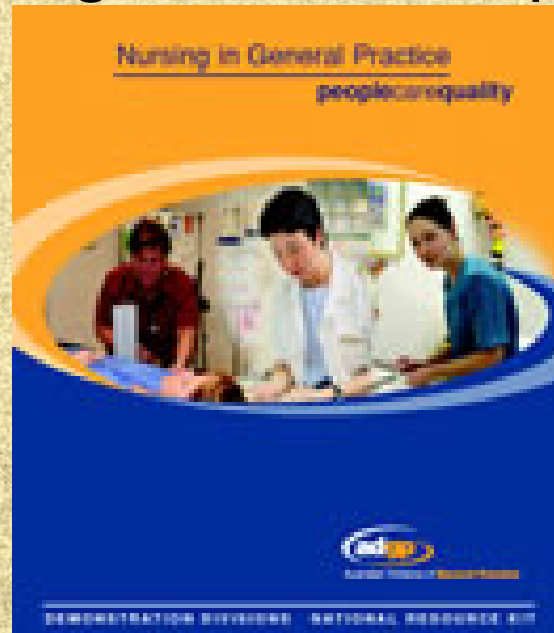
☾★ What is feasible depends on many factors

- ☾★ Resources
- ☾★ Distances
- ☾★ Time available
- ☾★ Willingness



Demonstration Divisions Kit

- ☾ There are examples of excellent division-based PN support programs to that can guide what is possible



Nurse CPD: Victorian Examples

