



## **Inspiring Trust for Better Healing**

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*By Amanda Sounart, associate editor*

For patients, the health care setting can be terrifying. They don't understand the terminology, they are surrounded by unfamiliar instruments and, most of all, they are ill. In many instances, the person they turn to for comfort, reassurance and guidance is their nurse.



Georgianna Donadio, D.C., Ph.D., teaches nurses how to inspire trust from their patients.

Offering a more personal relationship than a physician while still possessing clinical knowledge, nurses can offer real, personalized answers to patients. By building a bond with their patients, nurses can leverage that level of trust to serve as an advocate and help a patient heal themselves.

"I've been working in health care for over four decades and what I've seen is that patients need to understand what is wrong with them. If we can't answer their questions, how can we give them the tools and the knowledge to take care of themselves," said Georgianna Donadio, D.C., Ph.D., a nurse educator, creator of NurseRadio and founder of the National Institute for Whole Health. "People today don't trust medicine. They don't trust the things that we in health care think they should trust. We have to give people some real organic information that invites them into the process of self care or they will mystify their illness and be more afraid."

Donadio found that throughout her career, her patients have always trusted nurses more easily than other health care professionals. In an effort to further understand and develop

a holistic approach to patient care and advocacy through trust, Donadio began to research Florence Nightingale and the history of nursing.

"I did research using Nightingale's handwritten letters and documents and used it to create a model for patient care," noted Donadio. "I wanted to show that Nightingale's work was relevant to the practice of medicine today."

Throughout her career as a nurse, Nightingale wrote over 14,000 letters that outlined her philosophies on health care. While the scientific aspect of care has continued to grow in the profession, Nightingale's views on holistic medicine and caring for the mind and body have often been overlooked.

"Nurses are there to nourish and care, and yet, by and large it's become more clinical and less about caring," said Donadio. "Health care should be about inviting people into that process of nurturing their entire being. All the work I'm involved in doing is about educating and reminding nurses about the wholeness of the person. I like to call it the whole health revolution."

Donadio isn't alone in the whole health revolution. Government institutions such as Medicaid and Medicare and health care quality organizations including The Joint Commission have all identified putting the patient at the center of the care.

"I think in the most immediate terms, it's important for nurses to understand that they are the most trusted individuals in the world," added Donadio. "When a nurse is interacting with a patient, he or she can teach that individual to take part in their own healing. That goes a long way in encouraging someone to become their own advocate. If we have millions of nurse out there sharing with patients on how to take control of their health, it would revolutionize health care."

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