A head start on mental health

I was pleased by prime minister Theresa May’s remarks about addressing the huge problems in mental health (news online, 9 January). Tackling stigma, as well as other issues, is more likely to succeed if begun at an early age.

Unfortunately, because of existing pressures, many schools cannot carry out this important work effectively. For too long, education and practice in health care have concentrated mainly on physical health. There is still a thinking that the mind and body are separate.

For this reason I helped to set up a ‘healthy minds’ group for primary school pupils more than ten years ago. Since retiring as a community nurse, I have continued to run it as a volunteer, with the help of a teaching assistant.

It is remarkable how much the pupils learn and contribute. Feedback is generally very positive and has shown in enlightened attitudes and better behaviour towards others.

I have now helped another school to set up a similar model, and welcome professionals’ help with training and support.

Michael Owen

SENs by another name

Are nursing associates a return to state enrolled nurses? (see rcni.com/associate-analysis)

Is this doing away with assistant practitioners? The training appears to be the same.

Why remove the enrolled nurse only to bring it back again under a new name?

Gill Hughes

I encourage my team to take their breaks by allocating them at the beginning of the shift

@Pollie1902

Unique problem in ICU is covering breaks for nurses who cannot leave level 3 patients unattended & esp hard in isolation rooms

@shinybluedress

Lots of places don’t have suitable rest rooms, insist on canteen. Turns 15-minute break into half hour off ward. Staff don’t go

@TildaMc

No breaks is turning into the norm and is no longer the sign of a really bad day

@drew_london

TWEETS OF THE WEEK

Join the @NurseStandard Twitterchat every Thursday from 1pm to 2pm using #NScomment

Last week we asked: Are you encouraged to take breaks?