to treatment and went into cardiac arrest.

The experience was upsetting for me and my colleagues, and we reflected on it afterwards, particularly the speed of deterioration that can occur when a patient has acute pulmonary oedema.

The article provided a clear explanation and improved my knowledge of what was happening to the patient physically. It has also reassured me that the team provided the recommended care for the patient.

How is this relevant to the Code?
Select one or more themes: Prioritise people, Practise effectively, Preserve safety, Promote professionalism and trust

It is common for patients with acute pulmonary oedema to be acutely distressed. It is a frightening experience, which some patients have described as ‘drowning in my own body’.

An important goal when caring for patients with pulmonary oedema is to relieve the already stressed workload of the heart, by ensuring the patient remains as calm as possible. The article emphasised that providing reassurance, support and compassionate care is one of the most important roles of the nurse in this context, in line with The Code theme of prioritising people.

Sue Wrigglesworth is a staff nurse at University Hospitals Birmingham NHS Foundation Trust

PATIENT VIEW

‘Nurse believed in me and helped me piece my life back together’

Simon Peacock, who was seriously injured while serving in Afghanistan, talks about his ‘miracle’ nurse Diane Palmer, who was among those honoured in the RCNi Nurse Awards 2017

While serving in the Royal Anglian Regiment in Afghanistan in 2007, I was seriously injured by friendly fire. I was left with significant physical and psychological injuries from the blast.

Before I met Veterans First clinical manager Diane Palmer I felt that no one cared about me or what I had suffered. I was pushed from pillar to post, and referred to various professionals.

My paperwork was lost several times, professionals didn’t follow up referrals as they promised, and I was labelled as having nothing more than ‘an adjustment disorder’. This ignored the fact that I had insomnia, and that when I did sleep I was acting out scenes from Afghanistan, to the point where I tried committing suicide in my sleep.

Then my miracle happened; I was put in touch with Diane. Without her, I simply wouldn’t have coped and no doubt would have killed myself.

Sense of worth

She has made me feel like I am worth something. Before I met her I was nothing more than a robot – someone who responded to orders. Crying is a sign of weakness, so I was told, so all I could ever do was scream, but the screaming stayed in my head. Needless to say, I developed significant ongoing psychological injuries as well as my physical injuries.

Diane has made me realise I can cry, and that expressing my emotions is a sign of strength, not weakness. She has made me believe in myself.

How did she do this? She kept her word. She believed in me. She followed up referrals. She listened. More importantly, she made me feel human.

Recently Diane supported me with my tribunal, and kept telling me to stay strong.

She has given me strength and courage when I had nothing more than suicidal thoughts, and slowly but surely she has helped me to piece together my life.

I can now proudly say I have a job as a Braille teacher and have achieved my ultimate dream – a stable relationship with my beautiful wife.

Through Diane’s constant support and belief in me, I have become ‘me’. I wouldn’t be where I am today if it wasn’t for her and her team, I owe my life to this woman.

Diane Palmer, of North Essex Partnership NHS Trust, won the Innovations in your Specialty category of the RCNi Nurse Awards 2017

Sue Wrigglesworth is a staff nurse at University Hospitals Birmingham NHS Foundation Trust

Diane Palmer, centre, collecting her award, Caroline Shuldham, left, and Kate Garraway