

Males may feel discouraged from going into Nursing

Men are becoming seemingly skeptical about a career in nursing based on stereotypes that the position is more aimed towards women, and movies and television aren't making it any easier

By Jennifer Michels

Nursing is no different than any other profession when it comes to gender stereotyping, a Dalhousie University student says.

Fourth year nursing student Shaw Kay said the media plays a huge role in reinforcing stereotypes and that can keep men from becoming nurses.

Numerous television shows revolve around health care, Kay said. If the show does have nurses in supporting roles, they are often women or a homosexual man, he said.

Kay's point is not without foundation. To turn on a TV or a movie involving health-care there is often a male nurse, specifically written in to be scrutinized, so it would seem. One notable film is the hit comedy *Knocked Up*. Upon entering the hospital, the parents-to-be encounter their nurse, who happens to be male. His professionalism was not an immediate part of the act. Instead, the male nurse was met with snickering from the male antagonist.

It seems men have to deal with stigma and discrimination while defending their sexuality when they choose to be a nurse, Kay said.

"The battle then is given to the actual men who go into nursing to make a difference in people's lives."

Practical Nursing instructors Andrea Slysz and Christie Lougheed-Bambrick at Holland College said they have not witnessed any discrimination in their classrooms.

Men are appreciated in the class, Slysz said. There hasn't been any experiences with stigma in the classroom.

Men taking the practical nursing program at Holland College said it was a positive experience, Lougheed-Bambrick said. There is less stigma than in the past.

Slysz said she enjoyed working with male students. It wasn't looked at as any different. Men going into the nursing field are confident with who they are and aren't bothered by stereotypes.

"The name nursing leads to the feminine side because women nurse babies."

Peers could be discriminating towards males in the nursing profession but within the profession it's not a problem, Lougheed-Bambrick said. It's an advantage to have both men and women in the profession.

"Very few patients have a problem with a male caregiver."

The idea that nursing is a female role is older than many of the hospitals nurses are currently employed in.

During the women's temperance movement of the late 1800s many women found themselves in numerous po-

sitions such as nursing.

The dominating idea of the time was that such jobs are ideal for women since, at the time, it was viewed that women had a natural niche for positions such as nurs-

ing and teaching, as they required certain attention that was roughly similar to that of mothering.

Something the men of the time felt women were a natural talent for.

As history progresses, however, it becomes more apparent that these ideas found lingering in hospital halls are potentially detrimental.

Michels is a journalism student at Holland College

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