



German Roots of Parish Nursing

Parish Nursing has a history of about 170 years in Germany

Author: Angela Glaser

In 1833, deaconesses trained by Reverend Fliedner in Kaiserswerth began their work in parishes. The movement grew quickly for almost a century every parish had either a catholic nun or a protestant deaconess working as a parish nurse. Since the 1950s however, their number has been steadily decreasing.

The new form of Parish Nursing, where spiritual care is provided by a nurse through the local church started as a pilot project in 2010. Angela Glaser, now coordinator for the new Parish Nurse Ministry in Germany explains that this new form for Germany combined the design of Parish Nursing in the United Kingdom within a program designed in the German context. Angela Glaser, parish nurse in Germany explained that the church in Germany is a national church and depending upon the region, it may be Lutheran or an “ecumenical protestant”.

The situation regarding “parish nursing” was the same throughout Germany—declining. This concern turned into her Bachelor’s Thesis (2011) and the launching of *Vis-à-Vis*, a new parish nurse design for Germany. The following English translation of her dissertation abstract is offered for sharing with visitors to the LKPNI website. Angela is willing to share her theses with those who are literate in the German language. Contact angela@glaser5.de

Implementation of Parish Nursing into a Regional Evangelical Church in Germany Initial situation and problems at issue

The steady decrease in the number of deaconesses working in Germany as district nurses and various changes in the German Healthcare System have led to a decline in spiritual welfare work for the sick. The concept of „parish nurse”, as practiced in England, combines the well-proven function of the district nurse with new possibilities for making use of it for church needs. The parish appoints a trained nurse to act as a contact person for sick persons in the parish. Parish Nursing is usually carried out on a voluntary basis, in which the nurses are trained for their new role and work under the support of a mentor in their own parish.

England and Germany differ greatly as regards to parish structures and their respective healthcare systems. Unlike England, the state church services in Germany offer an extensive range of healthcare facilities. The problem underlying such a project involves the question as to how the English Parish Nursing system can be incorporated within the bounds of a regional Evangelical Church in Germany.

Bachelor’s Thesis

The thesis describes the implementation of Parish Nursing according to Bruno Jenny’s Management System. The project’s initiation phase concentrates on the analysis of risks and potential stakeholders. In the conception phase, a foundation is laid for the progress of the project with reference to a milestone schedule and a project design plan, specific ideas being conceived with regard to marketing and public relations, training, and evaluation techniques.

The implementation phase relates to practical issues, more particularly to the execution of the training stage to methods of reaction to possible problems. Since the concept of Parish Nursing is presently unknown in Germany, in this form, and since no data based on experience, comprehensive evaluation is urgently required. This forms the conclusion of the present thesis.

Practical Impact

With the assistance of church network partners, the German Parish Nursing Steering group was devised, and applied, a training course. Finding trained nurses willing to do this work has proved to be difficult, but intensive PR work has made it possible to register ten participants from six parishes.

The trainees will be inducted during a worship service in their own parishes as from July 2011, and will then commence the work of giving sick persons moral support, advice, and general assistance. Further training courses will take place as from January 2012.