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Australian-first Nursewell app developed to support self-care and promote wellbeing of nurses

“Self-care is not selfish, you cannot serve from an empty vessel” Eleanor Brown.

Nursing is a rewarding profession which puts the patient first, however self-care and wellbeing can often be overlooked.

Recognising the need for a practical, modern and efficient resource to support self-care and promote the wellbeing of nurses, a dedicated team of nursing leaders at South Eastern Sydney Local Health District (SESLHD) have developed the Australian-first Nursewell app.

Launched on International Nurses’ Day (12 May) 2017, the free Nursewell app, available via Apple App Store and Google Play Store, contains useful information and activities targeted at addressing key health concerns and wellbeing of nurses such as: better sleeping, improved back health, mindfulness and wellbeing, better thinking and mindful eating.

The Nursewell app also contains a number of short meditation, reframing thinking and Pilates exercises which nurses can practice daily before, during, or after work, either by themselves or with their teams.

Another key benefit of the Nursewell app is that it provides an opportunity at the end of each section to reflect on learning and collect this information as part of the Australian Health Practitioners Regulation Agency annual requirements for Continuing Professional Development for nurses nationally.

Ms Kim Olesen, Director of Nursing and Midwifery, SESLHD, said nurses and midwives provide around the clock care and support to their patients and providing a resource that helped them look after themselves was a way of giving back.

“Although our nurses are visible and accessible role models of good health practices for their patients, families and the community, a clear pattern is emerging of nurses delivering care and achieving a high level of job satisfaction, however, with substantial symptom burden and health risks such as poor diet, smoking, obesity and hypertension.

“The Nursewell app, which is free, private, highly-informative, relevant and available at any time will go a long way in helping nurses to address areas of concern with their health and wellbeing,” Ms Olesen said.

The health issues for nurses which have guided the content and topics presented in the Nursewell app, stem from the research study by Professor Lin Perry et al *‘Fit for the Future’ survey of nurses’ health in the state of NSW, Australia.*’

The Nursewell app was made possible with financial assistance from the SESLHD Nursing and Midwifery Unit, Ministry of Health and the Prince of Wales Hospital Foundation’s Louisa Hope Fund for Nurses.

A survivor of the Sydney Lindt Café siege in 2014, Ms Louisa Hope knows first-hand the important role nurses play in the ongoing delivery of care and treatment of patients and communities.

“Current research tells us there is an important link between staff self-care and wellbeing with the quality and safety of care delivered to patients. In short, how we care and show compassion for ourselves influences how we care and show compassion for others.

“We sincerely hope nurses across NSW, Australia and even internationally, are able to use the Nursewell app to support their wellbeing and vitality for now and well into the future of their nursing career,” Ms Hope said.