

synova *Spotlight*

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1. Why do/did you choose to attend the NLF? And, what makes it different from other conferences?

I love the NLF conference because there are NICU nurse leaders who are doing the same NICU work – and we all see that we have the same problems and concerns. Networking and learning with this group is easy because you don't feel like you have to explain yourself - they already understand. This is so refreshing! Sometimes this role can make us feel alone in our job but the support and encouragement makes a difference.

2. What do you gain out of attending ?

I get inspired by listening to other NICU leaders speak about their experience - things they are doing well in their unit or maybe not-so-well. I love raising issues unique to me and I seek advice about how others have handled the same scenarios. The Synova team provides a networking Attendee Directory with the contact information of all the NICU leaders who attend – it's amazing! I have used this information throughout the year to stay in touch with people - and to reach out for help. The NLF is a great time to just relax, get away from all the stress at work, learn, and enjoy each other's company. It's a great way to re-energize.

3. How does what you learn impact your work?

The cutting-edge topics at this conference make me a better leader. I can get out ahead of new information and practices and I always leave knowing more than what I did when I came in! Each speaker has helped provide tools and ideas to support me in my journey. The Planning Committee does a great job – and I always bring back new ideas to share with the team to implement.

4. Since we are very close to 2019, what is your key goal as a leader professionally AND personally for 2019? Or, do you have a couple of tips that you'd share with a new nurse leader?

One of my key personal goals for 2019 is to build confidence in my abilities to positively impact my staff and patients. Learning the ropes as a new leader is a challenge. For instance, I am addressing effective leadership over my peers, leading meetings and projects, learning how to have difficult conversations, giving evaluations, and providing resources for the team to ensure they have what they need to do their job. There is no playbook – this conference is the closest I've come to one!

A couple of tips I would share with new nurse leaders are:

- Always give yourself grace! Building a great team takes time. You are not going to know everything and you are going to make mistakes. But, learn from them and be patient with yourself.
- Everyone needs help sometimes! You will forget things, you will run out of time to complete things, you won't have the answers, and you will feel like you can't help anyone. This is normal. Put your prides aside and just ask for help, and as Nemo says, "...just keep swimming!"
- You are good enough! It is so easy to get discouraged when things don't go your way. We grow and get better with each lesson. Your leader and peers have identified talent in you and have trusted you in this role as a leader. Make them proud!
- Learn to let go! Do you want to do everything perfectly? I do! But I have learned that I can't be everything to everyone. You are human and have to let some things go. Prioritize. If you know at the end of the day, you have done everything you could do, you were fair and compassionate in your decisions, and kept the patient at the center of your decisions, then you are doing the right thing.



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- Celebrate, reflect and enjoy the journey! I have pushed myself out of my comfort zone consistently over the last two years, and those experiences have truly made me a better person and leader. What an honor it is to be a role model, to provide for your team, to help others be their best selves, and to help provide care and improve outcomes for your patients! Celebrate the successes no matter how small and enjoy the ride.

5. When you have a stressful day, what do you do to relax and rejuvenate?

I absolutely love to travel and have new experiences. I enjoy the outdoors and just take in the moments God has given me. I love spending time with my family and being present in every moment I have with them. I love listening to music or taking bubble baths. Working out helps me destress - especially YOGA!



A composite image for a NANN membership advertisement. The top half shows four healthcare professionals (three women and one younger woman) in blue scrubs, smiling. The bottom half shows a baby in a bassinet. A teal banner across the middle contains the text 'NANN Membership Makes a Difference in the NICU.' The NANN logo (a footprint) and the text 'National Association of Neonatal Nurses' are on the right. A dark blue banner at the bottom contains the text 'Help your nurses LEVEL UP with NANN membership! nann.org/NICU'.

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