

Graduates Share Their Experiences

By Wound Care Canada Staff

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In 2018, Wounds Canada launched the Wounds Canada Institute (WCI), which builds on decades of excellence in educational programs for health-care professionals in the areas of skin health and wound management. Through the WCI, health-care professionals at all levels and in all disciplines can access flexible, interprofessional education that supports their learning needs and professional career growth. The Institute offers many course and skill labs that are custom created to meet the needs of all wound care professionals. Wound Care Canada (WCC) interviewed two recent graduates about their experiences with the Institute courses.



Joanna Xavier RN BScN, Manager of Clinical Strategy and Planning | IST | EPI- Peel at SHIP
Best Practice Approach to Skin Health and Wound Management: Knowledge (A100MNN) graduate and organizer of a skills lab for her team

WCC: Tell us a bit about SHIP and how the organization focuses on wound care.

Joanna: Services and Housing In the Province (SHIP) is a nonprofit charitable, accredited (Exemplary Standing) housing and health service provider. We are one of the largest supportive housing providers in the provinces. For over 30 years, we have been delivering services to Peel Region, the County of Dufferin, West Toronto and, most recently, the Region of Waterloo. We promote the well-being of vulnerable and at-risk populations, and we work closely with individuals in our community, enabling them to embrace their full potential. Our approach encourages participation in planning and directing personalized support to ensure clients receive the best possible care.

SHIP aims to support individuals to improve their quality of life and to reach their full potential by providing safe health-care services in a

compassionate, respectful and empowering way.

SHIP operates several residential and group homes throughout Peel and the County of Dufferin. These residences successfully house SHIP clients, with satellite office spaces and community space for activity groups and training meetings.

Ongoing professional development is a vital part of ensuring quality in care. We care for individuals presenting more complex issues affecting their mental and physical health. I want to ensure there's ongoing education for nurses to refine and refresh their skillsets, so that they are confident and prepared to address client needs in the community.

WCC: You have done the Best Practice Approach to Skin Health and Wound Management: Knowledge (A100MNN) course from the Wounds Canada Institute. How did that aid you in your work?

Joanna: This course helped me with obtaining knowledge and updating my awareness of best practice guidelines using evidence-based research and practice. These are things I can use in my nursing practice.

WCC: What aspects of the course did you find most helpful in your line of work?

Joanna: At present, I am not actively working in wound care, however I have obtained knowledge in assessments and am able to decipher between major wounds and types.

WCC: How did you improve after finishing the course? Did you have a new awareness, new skills?

Joanna: Absolutely. For example, the ability to measure wounds the right way and use the right dressing kits for the particular wound.

WCC: You also organized a skills lab for your team. What did you hope to teach your employees?

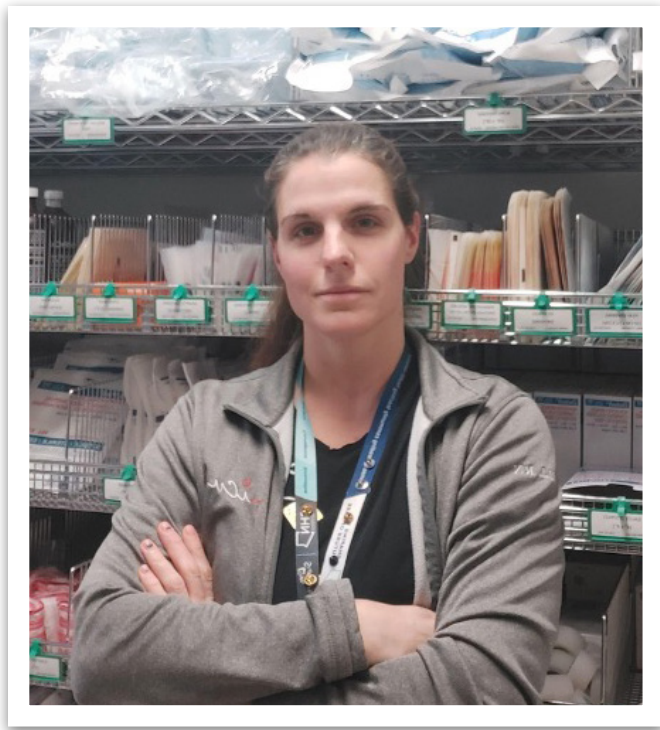
Joanna: That nursing care is invaluable. I hope my team members remember to stay curious, as it's a necessity to learn and be innovative in their trade. Where wound care is concerned, I want to ensure that SHIP nurses are equipped to treat urgent situations when wound care is needed. I want to promote critical thinking skills and equip nurses with the latest medical supplies to provide optimal care. Bringing the nurses together from across the organization for knowledge exchange provides the opportunity to recognize those who demonstrate strong skill sets, or identify where wound care is prominent, so that they feel comfortable tapping into each other's strengths. Many nurses work independently in their program, but they should not feel alone.

WCC: In what aspects of your teams' performance did you notice the biggest improvement after the train?

Joanna: I have learned the acquired skills and training necessary to help out and perform wound care when required and to include it in a holistic care approach with clients.

WCC: How do you feel that the Wounds Canada Institute contributed to your mission?

Joanna: I updated my skill set and gained physiological knowledge, as well as a better understanding of best practice guidelines.



**Vanessa Hill RN, Clinical Scholar-General ICU,
Scarborough Health Network**

*2024 graduate from the Wound Care Champion
program*

WCC: Tell us a bit about yourself and why you felt you needed to improve your wound care skills.

Vanessa: I have been a registered nurse for 18 years. I have clinical experience in orthopedics, medicine, forensics, cardiology, same day surgery /post-anesthesia care unit and critical care.

My clinical roles over the years started with bedside nursing and in the last two years I expanded my scope to Clinical Practice Leader with the critical care population. During this role, I was actively involved in the development and implementation of a wound care program in the Intensive Care Unit. This program involved the implementation of Wound Care Champions on the unit to perform bedside audits for pressure injury prevention bundle compliance; assisting with complex dressings and providing real-time education when gaps were identified. The data

collected was incorporated into a prospective longitudinal Quality Improvement study that identified the risk factors for hospital acquired pressure injuries and interventions to reduce them in the clinical setting. This study was presented at the CACCN (Canadian Association of Critical Care Nurses) conference in September 2024. As part of the education, various stages of pressure injuries were reviewed for prevention, identification and treatment.

In order to provide education and implement best practice guidelines, I advocated for enrollment in the Wound Care Champion program (WCCP). Our focus in the unit wound care program is primarily pressure injuries; however our patients have multiple co-morbidities leading to risk of peripheral artery disease, peripheral vascular disease, and diabetic ulcers. Obtaining further education on these wound types makes me a more valuable asset to the patient population. Through the WCCP, I also learned about additional assessment tools that could be implemented in the patient population and possibly incorporated into our documentation.

WCC: What first attracted you to the WCCP?

Vanessa: The WCCP first attracted me because of its collaboration between RNAO and the Wounds Canada Institute, as they are key in the development of the best practice guidelines for pressure injury prevention. My workplace is part of a Best Practice Spotlight Organization, and I felt that acquiring further knowledge through the WCCP would be beneficial for the critical care population.

WCC: How was your learning experience with the Institute?

Vanessa: My experience with the Institute was very positive. The resources provided with each module have been incorporated into my education for the unit wound care program and I have made invaluable contacts with previous students for future collaborations. The case scenarios and application of assessment tools helped me build my confidence in implementing my education at the bedside. The practical exam helped me bring everything together and the feedback from the facilitators have peaked my interest in community nursing.

WCC: What would you say were the most important skills you acquired from the program?

Vanessa: I'd say the most important skills acquired were the clinical application of the knowledge in the case scenarios, skills lab and practical exam. I have been able to identify pressure injury stages and implement interventions as part of our bedside rounds and education development. In 2025, I wish to review the current wound care products available and look at potential modification of the bedside rounds to identify the specific risks for the critical care population.

WCC: How do you feel your new skills have improved your performance at work?

Vanessa: I am able to implement the pressure injury prevention best practice guidelines within the critical care population, as part of my involvement and development of the unit wound care program. Hospital acquired pressure injuries are a significant risk factor for the critical care population, in light of our interventions that reduce mobility, medications that decrease perfusion and multiple co-morbidities that

impede healing. Implementing the best practice guidelines reduces the complications and prolonged stays for our critical care population. As part of the 'circle of care', I feel more confident collaborating with the inter-disciplinary team to advocate for wound care interventions and consulting with our wound care specialists. I am using the resources provided through the WCCP to develop onboarding education for new staff and reviewing the current role of the wound care champion on the unit.

WCC: Would you recommend this program to other students and what tips would you give them?

Vanessa: I would highly recommend the WCCP to other students. My tips for future students would include: reading the resources provided for each module prior to the live sessions in order to fully benefit from the case studies and clinical examples; and participating as fully as possible during the skills day. The WCCP will open doors for further wound care education opportunities and expansion of your professional scope.

Interviews were conducted by Loukia Papadopoulou MSc, Assistant Editor, *Wound Care Canada*.