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Chief Investigator: Associate Professor Beverley Ewens
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Phase 1 - Participant Information Letter and Consent Form (Survey)

Project title: The effectiveness of organisational support and workplace practices after clinical incidents: A mixed methods study of the experiences of nurses and midwives
Approval Number: 2025-06143-EWENS
Principal Investigator: Associate Professor Beverley Ewens
Student Investigator: Ms Melanie Buhlmann

An invitation to participate in research

You are invited to participate in a project titled the effectiveness or organisational support and workplace practices after clinical incidents, which seeks to explore the experiences or nurses and midwives who have accessed support during this time. You are being asked to take part in this project as you have identified as having been involved in a clinical incident, adverse event or critical incident, and sought organisational support.

My name is Melanie Buhlmann and I am undertaking this study as part of my PhD at Edith Cowan University in Perth, Western Australia. This study will explore the availability and effectiveness of organisational support designed to meet the needs of nurses and midwives following involvement in clinical incidents across various settings in Australia.

Please read this information carefully. Ask questions about anything that you do not understand or want to know more about. Before deciding whether or not to take part, you might want to talk about it with a relative or friend.

If you decide you want to take part in the research project, you will be asked to sign the consent section. By signing it you are telling us that you:

- Understand what you have read;
- Consent to take part in the research project;
- Consent to be involved in the research described;
- Consent to the use of your personal information as described.

What is this project about?

This project aims to identify effective organisational support to meet the needs of nurses and midwives following a clinical incident, which has enabled them to thrive in their professions. It is anticipated that the findings of this study will provide a valuable source of guidance for healthcare leaders, managers and other clinicians about effective support following clinical incidents, which may counteract the potentially unsettling experience and retain nurses and midwives in our health workforce.

What does my participation involve?

To participate in this study, you need to be willing to share your experiences of organisational support after a clinical incident in your capacity of a registered or enrolled nurse or a registered midwife within any clinical setting across Australia.

For the scope of this study, a clinical incident is defined as an event or circumstance resulting from healthcare provision (or lack thereof) which could have (near miss) or did lead to unintended or unnecessary physical or psychological harm to a patient. The study will capture your experiences with organisational support and also workplace practices following exposure to a clinical incident, but it does not intend to explore the incident in any way. Details about the event or the facility are not the focus of this study.

This study involves the collection of data through surveys and interviews. The surveys will be online and anticipated to take 15-20 minutes to complete. Upon completion of the survey, you will be invited to contact me to express your interest to participate in a follow-up interview, where the survey results will be further explored.

Do I have to take part in this research project?

Your participation in this research project is voluntary. If you do not wish to take part, you do not have to. If you decide to take part and later change your mind, you are free to withdraw from the project at any time. However, as all data will be de-identified, we will not be able to withdraw your survey or interview data, make changes or add additional information following analysis.

If you do decide to take part, you will be provided a link to this Participant Information Letter to download and keep. You will need to read the consent statements and tick the box to agree to participate in this study. Your decision not to take part, or to take part and later withdraw, will not affect your relationship with the research team and Edith Cowan University. Please do not participate in this study if the incident is undergoing legal proceedings or is under review by a healthcare organisation or disciplinary board.

Your privacy

By agreeing to participate in this study, you consent to the research team collecting and using personal information about you for the research project. Any information obtained in connection with this research project that can identify you will remain confidential and will not be made available to anyone who is not part of this study. All notes and documents will be stored securely, and any electronic information will be stored in a cloud-based repository which is password protected. Your information will only be used for the purpose of this research project and it will only be disclosed with your permission, except as required by law.

It is anticipated that the results of this research project will be published and/or presented in a variety of forums. In any publication and/or presentation, information will be provided in such a way that you cannot be identified, except where requested for specific reasons, and then you will be asked to provide written consent.

In accordance with relevant Australian and/or Western Australian privacy and other relevant laws, you have the right to request access to the information about you that is collected and stored by the research team. You also have the right to request that any information with which you disagree be corrected. Please inform the research team member named at the end of this letter if you would like to access your information.

All data collected will be kept in accordance with ECU's Data Management Policy. Electronic data will be stored on a secure Microsoft SharePoint site provisioned by ECU's IT Services and physical records will be stored as required in ECU's Records Management Policy. The data will be retained for seven years and destroyed, if appropriate at the end of the retention period. Data will be de-identified when stored and at the end of the retention period, the data will be destroyed, if appropriate under the State Records Act.

Possible Benefits

We cannot guarantee or promise that you will receive any benefits from this research, however future benefits may include improved processes and experiences for clinicians who are exposed to future clinical incidents.

Possible Risks and Risk Management Plan

You may feel some discomfort when reflecting on your experiences. If you do not wish to answer a survey question, you may skip it and go to the next question, or you may stop immediately. If you experience any discomfort as a result of your participation in the research project please contact your Employee Assistance Program (EAP) at work or seek advice from your doctor or relevant health professional. There is also a list of services included at the end of this form.

What happens when this research study stops?

We intend to publish our results in research journals and present them at research conferences locally, nationally and internationally. Your name or any other identifying information will not be included in any of the publications or presentations.

Has this research been approved?

This research project has received the approval of Edith Cowan University's Human Research Ethics Committee, in accordance with the National Health and Medical Research Council's *National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research (2023)*. The approval number is 2025-06143-EWENS.

Contacts

If you would like to discuss any aspect of this project, please contact the following people.

Chief Investigator
A/Prof Beverley Ewens
Associate Professor
Edith Cowan University
P: 6304 3542
E: b.ewens@ecu.edu.au

Student Investigator
Melanie Buhlmann
Nursing Lecturer
Edith Cowan University
P: 9780 7861
E: mbuhlma0@our.ecu.edu.au

If you have any concerns or complaints about the research project and wish to talk to an independent person, you may contact:

Independent Person
Research Ethics Advisor
Edith Cowan University
P: 6304 2423
E: research.ethics@ecu.edu.au

If you wish to participate in this research, please sign the Consent Form and return it to mbuhlma0@our.ecu.edu.au

Sincerely, Melanie Buhlmann

Participant Consent Form (Survey)

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I, _____ have read the Participant Information Letter. By signing this consent form, I acknowledge that I:

- have been provided with a copy of the Participant Information Letter, explaining the research study
- have read and understood the information provided
- have been given the opportunity to ask questions and have had questions answered to my satisfaction
- can contact the research team if I have any additional questions
- understand that participation in the research project will involve sharing my experiences of organisational support after a clinical incident by completing an online survey
- understand that the information provided will be kept confidential, and that my identity will not be disclosed without consent
- understand that I am free to withdraw from further participation at any time, without explanation or penalty
- understand that my data cannot be withdrawn following analysis
- freely agree to participate in the project
- understand that de-identified results of the survey will be further explored in optional follow-up interviews in the next phase of this study
- The data collected will be used only for the purposes of this research project.

I agree to participate in this study

Yes ☐ No ☐

Approval to conduct this research has been provided by the Edith Cowan University's Human Research Ethics Committee, approval number 2025-06143-EWENS, in accordance with its ethics review and approval procedures.

Counselling contact details

Thinking and/or talking about your experiences of organisational support after clinical incidents at work may have provoked feelings of discomfort. It is important that you recognise any delayed emotional reactions and contact a counselling service near you.

If you feel emotional discomfort, get in touch with your Employee Assistance Program (EAP) at work or make an appointment to see your doctor. Below is a list of alternative contact details of Australia-wide services.

Nurse & Midwife Support **1800 667 877**

24-hour national support hotline for nurses, midwives, nursing and midwifery students, employers, educators and concerned family and friends, access to free and confidential advice and referral.

13YARN **13YARN (13 92 76)**

24-hour free and confidential support line for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people

Bush Support Line **1800 805 391**

24-hour support line for the rural and remote health workforce, including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people

Nurse Midwife Health Program Australia **1800 0001 060**

National, free and confidential peer support service for nurses, midwives and nursing and midwifery students. Monday to Friday 9am-5pm.

Life Line **13 11 14 / or chat online**

24-hour crisis support

Headspace **1800 650 890 / or chat online**

National online and phone support service (12-25 years)

Emergency Mental Health Contact details

24-hour crisis helplines across all states and territories (Australian Commission on Safety and Quality in Healthcare)

NSW	Mental Health Line	1800 011 511
VIC	Suicide Help Line	1300 651 251
QLD	13 HEALTH	13 43 25 84
SA	Mental Health Crisis Interventions Service	14 14 65
TAS	Mental Health Services Helpline	1800 332 388
NT	Mental Health Line	1800 682 288
ACT	Mental Health Triage Service	1800 629 354
WA	Mental Health Emergency Response Line	1300 555 788 (Metro)
WA	Mental Health Emergency Response Line	1800 676 822 (Peel)
WA	Rurallink for rural and regional communities	1800 552 002