

**The Saline Process Course** (adapted from Christian Nurse International 2015, a publication of NCFI)

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As nurses, we know all about saline. In our hospitals, normal saline is the most common fluid for treatment. It is an isotonic water solution containing 0.9% NaCl. Saline is very useful medically as it can be used to hydrate patients, clean wounds, and has the benefit that it doesn't sting or burn or destroy healthy cells.

*Jesus knew about the value and properties of salt. He even told his followers that they are 'salt of the earth' (Matthew 5:13).*

From a health care perspective, the concept of 'saline' is helpful in giving us an illustration of what it means to 'be salt'. For life & health, the right amount of salt is needed. However, in regard to our Christian witness, sometimes people are so eager to share the message of Christ that they become *hypertonic* and cause people to turn away from Jesus while the opposite is also true: people can be so afraid of being Christ's witnesses that they become *hypotonic* and neglect the opportunities God gives us to be His witness.

*Can a Christian nurse be 'salt' in work places where there are restrictions regarding expression of faith or where the culture regards faith as a private matter?*

If Christian nurses believe that what Jesus said about his followers being salt, then there must be appropriate ways that we can be His witnesses in the workplace. The 'Saline Process' is a course designed to help Christian nurses and other health professionals learn ways to 'be the salt of the earth' in the contexts in which we work. The course gives very practical resources & opportunities in helping Christian nurses to both assess and respond appropriately to their patients – always incorporating the *ethical principles of sensitivity, permission, and respect*. A major focus is learning to assess where a patient is on his/her journey to faith in Christ and then based on the patient's situation, learning ways to appropriately **be** 'salt & light'.

The *Saline Process* course is made up of 5 questions: (1) Why is faith important in health care? (2) What are the opportunities & barriers to fulfilling God's call? (3) What is my role? (4) What tools will help me cultivate & sow? and (5) Where do I go from here?

The *Saline Process* has been developed by a group of inter-professional health care professionals, including nurses. It is coordinated by IHS Global, a global mission organization, dedicated to equipping Christian health care workers. NCFI, together with other Christian health professional organizations<sup>1</sup> have joined the International Saline Partnership. As part of the partnership, NCFI has committed to use the Saline Process to train Christian nurses and midwives. NCFI has also indicated a willingness to live out the vision of Saline (to see every health care worker participate in the 'Great Commission'), to invest in the Saline Process ministry within our own organization, and to cooperate within the International

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<sup>1</sup> Members of the International Saline Partnership include: IHS Global, Nurses Christian Fellowship International, International Christian Medical & Dental Association, Healthcare Christian Fellowship International, Health Outreach to the Middle East, and 5 regional partners based in the UK, Hungary, Ukraine, India, & Australia.

Saline Partnership in the spirit of 'gospel partnership' (Philippians 1:5). To this end NCFI is hoping to see the course made available to all of its member countries and to have more nurses who are trained as trainers who can teach this course to others. As a member of the partnership we try to open our courses to other partner organizations and we often join with them in their trainings – both as participants and as members of training teams. **In Finland, there is a course scheduled to take place May 20-21, 2018 in Helsinki.**

*What do nurses say about the course?*

Nurses who have taken the *Saline Process* have commented that they found it a very helpful course. An important part has been learning how the ethics of respect, sensitivity, and permission apply to being a witness. Some have said that as a result of the course they realized they had been trying to explain the gospel in a way that was 'hypertonic' while others who were 'hypotonic' have grown in confidence in being witnesses because of the things they learned in the course. Many nurses have felt encouraged to keep on being salt & light as they have already been doing. The part of the course that encourages faith that God is already at work in their patients' lives and learning how to appropriately be salt & light has freed many nurses from feeling that they have failed in being witnesses to Christ because of lack of time or cultural/institutional restrictions.

It is our prayer that the Saline Process course will be a blessing to Christian nurses and to the patients that we work with.

More information about the Saline Process can be found at: <http://iicn.ncfi.org/saline-process-course/>

If you are interested in taking the upcoming Saline Process course in Finland, please contact: Marike Römer