

PLUNKETT CENTRE FOR ETHICS

Webinar

Fulfilment in Healthcare: A Call to Meaning

This event is co-hosted by the Plunkett Centre for Ethics, the Faculty of Health Sciences at ACU and the St Vincents Health Australia Network.

Date

Thursday 27 February 2025

Time

12 – 1.15pm

Contact

For more information or to register your attendance, please email plunkett@acu.edu.au

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Join Professor Mark Lazenby for this insightful webinar also featuring a panel discussion with Nicole de Tullio, Director of Nursing, St Vincent's Hospital Sydney.

In a time when burnout dominates conversations in nursing, Professor Mark Lazenby invites us to explore a powerful alternative – fulfilment. Drawing on deep philosophical insights, he uncovers how nurses navigate challenges to find meaning and purpose in their work. Fulfillment isn't about eliminating difficulties but embracing them with intention, transforming everyday care into something profound. This talk is a must for anyone seeking to reconnect with the heart of nursing, rediscover the wonder in their practice, and reaffirm the profession's transformative power – for patients, for nurses and for the future of healthcare.



PRESENTER

Mark Lazenby, Professor of Nursing and Philosophy, is the Dean of the University of California (UCI), Irvine. An international expert in psychosocial cancer care, his research focuses on spiritual support for cancer patients from religious minorities. Having conducted studies in Botswana, Jordan and the United States, his work offers a broad societal and religious perspective on the human side of cancer. His books with Oxford University Press have engaged a global audience in reflecting on nursing's role in a good society. Before UCI, he held academic leadership roles at the University of Connecticut and Yale University.

In recognition of his international expertise on psychosocial-spiritual cancer care, Mark was awarded the honorary title of Adjunct Professor until October 2027.

Fulfilment in Healthcare: A Call to Meaning

Modern discussions in health care often focus on the problem of health professional burnout. However, in this talk, I will highlight how fulfillment, an essential yet often overlooked dimension in health care, is a counterpoint to burnout. Drawing on philosophical insights on the moral conditions of work, and as an exemplar, I will explore how nurses navigate systemic constraints to find meaning and purpose in work. Fulfillment, subtle and immeasurable, thrives in moments where action meets reflection and care is imbued with intentionality. This dual nature places nursing firmly within the realm of meaning-making. I will draw upon the thoughts of historical figures, like the nineteenth-century poet Walt Whitman, who exemplifying nursing's moral and spiritual depth. Fulfillment emerges not from erasing challenges but by engaging with them meaningfully, creating a narrative of care that transcends the constraints we focus on when we discuss burnout. By rediscovering what is beyond these constraints—such as the wonder and sacredness found in the everyday nursing acts—we affirm the profession's transformative power, not just for those for whom we care but for ourselves as nurses and for the systems that constrain us.
