

In this Spotlight series, Tourettes Action speaks with professionals across the health and education sector about their role in supporting someone with TS

SPOTLIGHT

on... specialist nurse



Q & A with Joe Kilgariff, Advanced Nurse, Developmental neuropsychiatry department – Queens medical centre, Nottingham.

Tourettes Action interviewed Joe Kilgariff to find out how a specialist nurse could be of support to someone with Tourette Syndrome.

As a nurse what is your specialism and can you explain your role in supporting people living with Tourette Syndrome?

I am an advanced mental health nurse which means I have specialist training and experience in one particular area. I work with Neurodevelopmental conditions such as ADHD and Tic disorders. I feel I have quite a unique position in treating these conditions as and I have become trained in delivering both the behavioural aspects of treatment, as well as the medications. (I am also trained as a Non-medical prescriber - a person who can prescribe medications that is not a doctor). This allows me the chance to support my patients with the best of both worlds, and cuts down on waiting times that might happen if multiple professionals are delivering different interventions.

What additional training do you need to become a specialist nurse in your field?

There is no specific nursing qualification for being a specialist nurse in the field of Tic disorders and Tourette Syndrome. However, trainings such as the behavioural therapy training delivered by Tourettes Action, provides focused learning on how to apply specific behavioural therapies to help with tic management.

Can TS specialist nurses deliver behavioural therapy?

Yes very much so – a lot of mental health nurses qualify in areas such as Cognitive behavioural therapy, and tic behavioural therapy lends itself very easily to the holistic way in which nurses interact with patients. Specialist nurses not only have clinical skills to support people with TS, our other important roles include liaising with the school and providing psycho-education to teaching staff to help them better

understand and support a pupil with TS

Do specialist nurses work across hospitals, community clinics and in the community?

Yes, specialist nurses can work across a range of settings, such as clinics, home visits, schools or local health centres.

Do specialist nurses work with and take direction mainly from a consultant? What other professionals might you work alongside?

Specialist nurses operate under the supervision of consultants and often as part of a multidisciplinary team

Are there many specialist nurses in your field – would everyone expect to see a specialist nurse as part of their care plan/treatment if they have TS?

There are very few specialist nurses who work with children who have tic disorders. I am not aware of any other nurses that deliver both medication and therapeutic treatment. Typically a psychiatrist or neurologist will provide medication, whilst behavioural therapies will be delivered by psychologists. Nursing is not a very well represented profession in treating Tic Disorders - especially in children.

How does someone access a specialist nurse?

We tend to be part of Tertiary services – specialised consultative health care where patients are referred by a primary (GP) or secondary (Paediatrician/ Psychiatrist/Neurologist) health professional. In this respect it is the clinic that is accessed as opposed to someone being referred to a specialist nurse directly.

About Joe Kilgariff

Joe is an Advanced nurse at the Department of Developmental Neuropsychiatry – part of tertiary Nottingham CAMHS services. He has over 18 years of experience in treating children with mental health challenges, and has specialised in treating Tic disorders for the last 8 years.

Tourettes Action would like to thank Joe Kilgariff for his very helpful explanations to our questions

Please contact Tourettes Action to receive a copy of the Behavioural Therapist list

Helpdesk phone: 0300 777 8427

Helpdesk email: help@tourettes-action.org.uk