

Linda Brown Nurse Practitioner.

I didn't always want to be a nurse, but I graduated high school (in NB) not really knowing what I wanted to do. And so I worked various different jobs over a few years and decided that it was time to go back to school and figure some stuff out. I thought university for business or maybe college for nursing... with no background in chemistry in high school I asked a recruiter at a mall about it - turns out, there were two years left in Ontario when you could get your RN at college, and not have to have your high school chemistry. SOLD! And so in 1999 I started my nursing journey.

I graduated in 2001 from Conestoga College in Kitchener and by the time I had graduated I had already had some amazing experiences with the Registered Nurses Association of Ontario, doing a pre-graduate placement in Kenora and some training in Critical Care. I started my career in the ICU at St. Josephs in Toronto and never regretted a moment of becoming a nurse.

My career as an RN took me to Nunavut where I realized the incredible power that nursing can have in a community. Then to Ottawa in a level 1 Trauma ER and teaching hospital where I learned the power of working with other disciplines to do the best things for patients - I learned about paramedics and their role, about working with all levels of learning physicians and nurses.

As an RN I taught students - nursing, medicine and paramedicine alike. I was able to go to the Olympics and lend my skill as a critical care RN. I was able to help set up and deliver simulation based training to help learning physicians go through crisis in a safe environment and when I felt like I needed a new challenge.... I returned to school.

To be perfectly honest, I went back to school with the intent of becoming a physician and by virtue of getting my undergraduate degree in nursing, I was reminded of all of the wonderful ways nursing, and that lens, affects patients and can make a huge difference. So I continued at University of Ottawa and got my masters of nursing and certification as a primary health care nurse practitioner.

And when I thought of my career and where I felt I made the most difference overall, I was reminded of Nunavut and working a rural areas like Kenora. And the rest of my family was still home in the Maritimes... so I decided to move closer to home and Montague seemed like a perfect fit.

Montague, at the time, had a clinic with 4 physicians looking to add to their group. The RNs here did COPD and INR clinics as well as spirometry and I would be working with LPNs on a daily basis. Any patient of the clinic overall would be able to see me and if I needed to ask any questions or wanted a second pair of eyes I had physician colleagues just down the hall willing to help. There had never been an NP here so it would be new but I do love a challenge.

It's been 4 years. Our RNs now do mental health collaborative care and counselling. I now have 6 physicians in my group. I teach, not just clinically but also was a sessional professor this year at UPEI for their NP program. Every day I see people across the spectrum of their lives and answer their questions about.... anything. While a lot of my practice focuses on women's health, and mental health there is no limit to what I do in a day. And if I have a question, there are still physician colleagues just down the hall willing to help out. And, just as often, I am there to help them too.
