Cathy Elder, DNP, MN, RN, PMHNP-BC
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PROFESSIONAL BIOGRAPHY

Psychiatric mental health nurse practitioner and nursing educator with more than 25 years of experience across psychiatric, forensic, perioperative, and acute care settings. Graduated from Pacific Lutheran University in May 2026 with a Doctor of Nursing Practice degree specializing in psychiatric mental health. Experienced in trauma-informed care, psychiatric assessment, substance use disorder treatment, interprofessional collaboration, and clinical nursing education. Committed to reducing mental health stigma, expanding access to care for underserved populations, and supporting evidence-based practice. Doctoral work focused on mindfulness-based stress reduction to decrease burnout among critical care nurses.

EDUCATION

Doctor of Nursing Practice (PMHNP Track), Pacific Lutheran University — May 2026
Master of Nursing, University of Washington — 2015
Bachelor of Science in Nursing, Pacific Lutheran University — 2002
Associate of Arts and Sciences, Pierce College — 1997
Practical Nursing Certificate, Clover Park Technical College — 1999

LICENSURE & CERTIFICATIONS

Registered Nurse (RN), 2002–Present
Licensed Practical Nurse (LPN), 2000–2002
Basic Life Support (BLS), Current
Sexual Assault Nurse Examiner (SANE) Training & Certification — 2022

DNP PROJECT

Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction (MBSR) for Nurses to Decrease Burnout
Implemented at MultiCare Tacoma General Hospital, Tacoma, WA (PCU/ICU units). Evaluated the feasibility, accessibility, and preliminary effectiveness of an eight-week online MBSR intervention to reduce nurse burnout and support
well-being.

CLINICAL EXPERIENCE

Registered Nurse, Madigan Army Medical Center, Lakewood, WA (2016–2024)
Provided perioperative care for high-acuity and trauma patients; coordinated care plans; communicated with PACU
teams.

Sexual Assault Nurse Examiner, Providence Medical Group, Olympia, WA (2021–Present)
Conducted medical-forensic examinations; collaborated with interdisciplinary teams; provided trauma-informed care.

Nursing Professional Development Specialist, MultiCare Good Samaritan Hospital, Puyallup, WA (2023)

Led perioperative education; supported EBP initiatives; collaborated with leadership and nurse residents.

Perioperative Registered Nurse, MultiCare Tacoma General Hospital, Tacoma, WA (08/2002–01/2004)
Provided patient and family education regarding perioperative plans of care and rehabilitation; evaluated patient progress toward outcomes; planned, executed, directed, and evaluated nursing care throughout the surgical continuum, assisted with emergency measures; supported return to normothermia postoperatively.

Licensed Practical Nurse, MultiCare Mary Bridge Children's Hospital, Tacoma, WA (09/2000–08/2002)
Monitored vital parameters; provided wound care and treatments; assisted with procedures; reduced infection risk; supported patients and families.

Licensed Practical Nurse, Western State Psychiatric Hospital, Lakewood, WA (03/2000–08/2000)
Administered medications; ensured patient safety; collaborated with psychiatry on plans of care; delivered therapeutic communication.

ACADEMIC APPOINTMENTS
Clinical Faculty, Pacific Lutheran University (2023–Present)
Adjunct Clinical Faculty, Pierce College (2016–2021)
Adjunct Clinical Faculty, Centralia College (2015–2016)

DNP CLINICAL ROTATIONS

Mindful Therapy Group – Tacoma, WA
Preceptor: Meghan McFarland, PMHNP
Total Hours: 180

- Conducted psychiatric evaluations and follow-up visits in outpatient settings
- Assessed and managed mood disorders, anxiety disorders, PTSD, and ADHD
- Participated in medication management and treatment planning under PMHNP supervision
- Utilized therapeutic communication and trauma-informed approaches
- Collaborated with interdisciplinary team members to support continuity of care

Providence Psychiatry – Olympia, WA
Preceptor: Sheila Steinbrenner, PMHNP
Total Hours: 180

- Performed comprehensive psychiatric assessments across the lifespan
- Assisted with diagnosis and management of depression, anxiety, bipolar disorder, and trauma-related disorders

- Gained experience in psychopharmacology, medication titration, and monitoring for side effects
- Provided patient education on treatment options, medications, and coping strategies
- Strengthened documentation and clinical decision-making skills

Olalla Recovery Center – Olalla, WA
Preceptor: Peper Owens Brown, LMFT, SUD Counselor
Total Hours: 240

- Provided care to individuals with substance use disorders and co-occurring mental health conditions
- Participated in group therapy, psychoeducation, and recovery-focused treatment planning
- Conducted biopsychosocial assessments and contributed to individualized care plans
- Supported patients through early recovery using motivational interviewing and therapeutic communication
- Collaborated with an interprofessional team in a residential treatment setting

SKILLS & COMPETENCIES

Psychiatric & forensic nursing; perioperative care; clinical education; evidence-based practice; interprofessional collaboration; technology integration; leadership.

PROFESSIONAL ASSOCIATIONS

International Association of Forensic Nurses (IAFN)
Association of Perioperative Registered Nurses (AORN)
Association for Nursing Professional Development (ANPD)
Sigma Theta Tau (2025)