

Speaker 1:

Welcome to Our Practice, a podcast created to talk candidly about the evolving pharmacy profession and the challenges and rewards of providing innovative patient care. This podcast is provided by members of the UBC Pharmacists Clinic. We acknowledge that UBC and the Pharmacists Clinic is situated on the traditional ancestral and unceded territory of the Musqueam people. Thank you for joining us. And now here's your host, Barbara Gobis.

BARBARA GOBIS, BSC(PHARM), ACPR, MSCPHM:

Hello, and welcome back to the Our Practice podcast. As pharmacists working in a non-traditional pharmacy practice site, students and other pharmacists often ask us what past experiences or qualifications did we have that allowed us to apply for and secure such an interesting position in a primary care clinic? Well, the simple answer is there's no simple answer. Each pharmacist on the clinic team has unique and diverse backgrounds. However, they all have one common characteristic and it's not necessarily something listed on their resume, courage. The courage to leave behind the familiar and the comfortable, be vulnerable and try new things.

Today we are talking about the courageous pharmacist. And I am joined by our clinic's newest team member, Tianna Tilley, who courageously departed Toronto, the city she studied in, worked in and even bought her first home in, to pursue an opportunity across the country with us here in Vancouver. However, switching jobs or moving cities does not define necessarily the courageous pharmacist. There are ways to show up with courage each and every day for our patients, for our teams and for ourselves. To start, we need to recognize and embrace our responsibility as pharmacists to be courageous, to speak up in situations even when we feel uncomfortable, to try new things even when there is potential for failure, and to lead with integrity, even in the face of uncertainty, and have the courage to be vulnerable.

Dr. Tianna Tilley brings her expertise in patient care, education and health promotion to the clinic team. Tianna has a history of being courageous, taking on unique career challenges and ultimately filling her personal toolbox with new skills along the way. Tianna graduated from the University of Toronto with a Doctor of Pharmacy degree, completed a hospital residency at St Mike's Hospital in Toronto. And prior to joining the clinic team, Tianna worked in building innovative patient care programs for community pharmacists, and also as a Sessional Clinical Lecturer at the Leslie Dan Faculty of Pharmaceutical Sciences at the University of Toronto. Welcome, Tianna.

Tianna Tilley:

Thank you, Barbara. It's a pleasure to be here.

BARBARA GOBIS, BSC(PHARM), ACPR, MSCPHM:

Oh, and it's a pleasure to be here with you, our newest team member. I'm so looking forward to learning more about you today, Tianna. Tell us about your pharmacy journey and why you decided to pursue a career at the pharmacist clinic.

Tianna Tilley:

Well, as you mentioned, I worked in a variety of practice settings, including hospital, community, industry research and academia. And when I pursued a career in pharmacy initially, it was because pharmacists had so many possibilities in terms of where they could practice and that's what really excited me. So I moved around to gain exposure to many of these areas. And I pursued a career at the

pharmacist clinic because it seemed like the perfect blend of many of these areas with a focus on primary care.

BARBARA GOBIS, BSC(PHARM), ACPR, MSCPHM:

So Tianna, just to give the listeners some perspective, how many years have you been in practice?

Tianna Tilley:

So I've been in practice about four years, I think.

BARBARA GOBIS, BSC(PHARM), ACPR, MSCPHM:

Okay. Four years. I want the listeners to be aware of that as we go forward and you talk about what you've been up to for the last four years.

Tianna Tilley:

Yeah, probably more than just four jobs.

BARBARA GOBIS, BSC(PHARM), ACPR, MSCPHM:

Yeah. So why did you decide to come out to Vancouver?

Tianna Tilley:

Well, like I said, it was just that perfect blend. I loved that the Pharmacists Clinic has an innovative practice. There's a focus on research, on programs, on teaching, and then really that primary care, so the interaction with patients. And I like to point out to learners who ask about my career, that it really has been fluid. It's not a set path. And also that I haven't left jobs because I didn't like them anymore. It was just that there were new opportunities that came up and I really wanted to explore them.

BARBARA GOBIS, BSC(PHARM), ACPR, MSCPHM:

Okay. So if that isn't courage, I don't know what is. Tianna, what advice do you have for listeners who may be considering career paths outside of the traditional community or hospital pharmacy settings?

Tianna Tilley:

I think it's important to be courageous, as you've mentioned, but it's also important to be self-driven and a continuous learner that's always trying to improve themselves. It can be tempting to pursue continuing education in areas that you're already strong in, but it's really reflecting on areas that you need to improve to become really well rounded. And I think that's what prepares you for a variety of work environments. And it's really well integrated into our onboarding and our practice at the Pharmacists Clinic.

BARBARA GOBIS, BSC(PHARM), ACPR, MSCPHM:

I like the way you said that Tianna. So we often, pharmacists are very keen to get involved in one therapeutic area or to specialize in one particular kind of patient population. And we are already specialists, we're pharmacotherapy specialists. And we look after, in general, a broad spectrum of therapy needs depending on what our patients needs. So we are specialists in pharmacotherapy, we are

generalists in terms of our therapeutic knowledge. And then over and above that, we might have a special interest or a way to apply our knowledge. Is that a nice and clear and confusing way to say it?

Tianna Tilley:

I couldn't have said it better myself.

BARBARA GOBIS, BSC(PHARM), ACPR, MSCPHM:

Okay. So I interrupted you there. What other advice do you have for listeners?

Tianna Tilley:

I think my advice for learners would just be that there isn't a set career path or learning strategy to get a position in a nontraditional area of pharmacy. So again, it's just being open to learning and open to opportunities.

BARBARA GOBIS, BSC(PHARM), ACPR, MSCPHM:

Right. Okay. Well, that's very good advice. Courage, openness, that's what I'm hearing so far. Okay. So what do you see as important transferable skills that pharmacists should continually focus on and develop to support patient care and collaboration across different settings so that they're well positioned for these innovative opportunities?

Tianna Tilley:

Well, there's so many, which can be exciting and also daunting. I think it's important to stay up to date clinically, obviously. But on top of that, some of the key areas that I found that have helped me foster relationships with patients include skills in terms of communication, empathy, and listening skills. And I found professionally the skills that have helped me included things like project management, research and teamwork. So supporting your colleagues and their success. And last but not least, I would say student mentorship and teaching. And it's a great way for us to give back to students, but really I think we grow and get a lot out of that in turn.

BARBARA GOBIS, BSC(PHARM), ACPR, MSCPHM:

Yeah. And, you know, Tianna, I have to air a little beef that I have here. People often refer to the kinds of skills that you're talking about as the soft skills. And I don't really know what that means. Because they are, in my opinion, the only skills or the most important skills that matter when you're interacting with another human being. So I don't know where the softness in there, what that means, because I view them as the critical skills.

Tianna Tilley:

Yeah. I couldn't agree more. Without them, your therapeutic relationship with a patient and their openness to trying interventions is really difficult. And they're so important too in dealing with colleagues and students.

BARBARA GOBIS, BSC(PHARM), ACPR, MSCPHM:

Yeah. People don't care what you know, until they know that you care. And they don't care what's in your head if you can't get it out in a way that is useful for them. So hear hear for the critical skills that we all need. Okay, back to business. What kind of non-traditional practice research have you been

involved in? And how can other pharmacists get involved in research when they're not affiliated with an institution or a research lab?

Tianna Tilley:

I've been involved in practice based research, which sometimes gets overlooked as potential research areas. Most people might think of things like basic science or clinical trials, but I think that this area has such a large potential impact on patient care in really highlighting the value that the profession brings. For me, this has looked like doing research on the role of pharmacists. So researching the role of pharmacist as opioid stewards in a primary care setting, as well as things like researching the appointment based model for community pharmacy practice. And I think that pharmacies and pharmacists in any practice setting can participate in this type of research. If there's something innovative that you're doing, or a current unmet need, there's nothing stopping you from pursuing a research project. And there's grants available to help support these. There's also the benefit of having student learners, who on their placements can learn, but also provide you with support in this kinds of research. So I think that's a great place to start.

BARBARA GOBIS, BSC(PHARM), ACPR, MSCPHM:

Yeah. Research doesn't have to be hugely complicated, bubbling, Erlenmeyer flasks, and things going on in mysterious corners. It's very much having a question and exploring the options to answer it.

Tianna Tilley:

Yeah. And I think there's so much value in quality improvement initiatives and research, which can sometimes, again, get overlooked because people are thinking like randomized controlled trial, double blinded, placebo. But there's so much value even in quality improvement. And that's what can help you provide better care to your patients.

BARBARA GOBIS, BSC(PHARM), ACPR, MSCPHM:

Right. Well, those are great words of advice. So how has your view of healthcare changed as you transitioned through these different roles in different pharmacy settings, countries, et cetera, in your four long years as a pharmacist?

Tianna Tilley:

Well, in some respects, my views have stayed the same. I think there's a crucial role for pharmacists in a variety of healthcare systems and in increasing the healthcare system capacity in patient care. In some respects, my views have changed. So I've been exposed to different patient populations who have different needs, not just clinically, but also from a social determinants of health perspective. And I've gained understanding of how the healthcare systems interact and how we can all work together in different practice settings. And I think regardless of your setting, patients will respond openly to pharmacists who are willing to take the time to listen, be empathetic and provide education without preaching. And working at the clinic has really, again, exemplified this, as well as the opportunity to have a career where you have a balance in terms of making change on a patient pharmacist level. So one person at a time, as well as on a systematic level. So doing research, impacting policies and sharing best practices.

BARBARA GOBIS, BSC(PHARM), ACPR, MSCPHM:

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Wow. That's a great way to summarize it up. I love the way you think, Tianna, and I look forward to hearing you back on future podcast episodes. Thank you so much for joining us today and sharing your stories with us. Although we've only scratched the surface of courage and what courage looks like in pharmacy, storytelling in and of itself is courageous because it can expose a more vulnerable side to our professional identities. We all have a unique story to share and can continuously learn from one another's successes and challenges in the pharmacy profession. So to our listeners out there, find your passion, forge your path and share your stories. That's it for today. We have a little surprise coming up on the next podcast episode, which will also be the last episode of our second series. So tune in for a special host to take over. From our practice to yours, thank you for listening.

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For more information on the Pharmacists Clinic, please check out our website where you can access more practical information, including our newsletter, archive webinars, and practice resources.