



Dr. Pennie Sessler Branden, PhD, CNM, CNE, RN, believes that nursing clinical excellence, leadership, research, and education are key components to the improvement of global healthcare and its access. Nursing is at a crossroads with many opportunities to improve care on local, regional, and international levels. To this end, Dr. Sessler Branden has always connected her passion for women's health and advocacy for better, more equitable healthcare and education.

As a certified nurse-midwife (CNM), Dr. Sessler Branden has cared for diverse groups of women and their families as a practitioner in areas of need, caring for inner-city working-class women and unregistered immigrants, as well as being a CNM for migrant field workers in Florida. In each venue she worked with and taught CNM students. Through this rewarding work, she not only educated female patients about their healthcare options but also about their potential choices to improve their lives and those of their families. Internationally, she has been a CNM, interpreter, and educator on mission trips to Guatemala and the Dominican Republic through a faith-based organization. There she gave care to women and their families while instructing, precepting, and training FNP and undergraduate nursing students. Regarding other international involvement, Dr. Sessler Branden has worked with nurses and nurse-midwives in Israel, Ghana, the Philippines, Turkey, Australia, and Nigeria. This work includes mentorship, research, collaboration, and advisement on numerous levels. She understands that such relationships support the endeavors of the individual academic, student, and clinician, thus strengthening nursing on the international stage.

Dr. Sessler Branden earned her PhD from Villanova University, College of Nursing with a research interest in advocacy. Her Grounded Theory research led to the Sessler Branden Advocacy Theory (SBAT) which contributes a substantive, pragmatic model that can be used by any nurse for any type of advocacy in any venue. She has worked with and has been mentored by Dr. Juliet Corbin in Grounded Theory research. Dr. Sessler Branden received her Master of Science in nursing with a certification in midwifery from Columbia University, New York, New York. Her BSN was earned at George Mason University, Fairfax, Virginia; and her diploma in nursing was earned at the Albany Medical Center, School of Nursing, Albany, New York. She holds certifications in nurse-midwifery and nursing education. Throughout her career she has been passionate about women's health and global issues and integrates these topics into everything she does professionally.

Dr. Sessler Branden's main research interests lie in the nurse as advocate for the patient and the profession. Other research interests include interprofessional collaboration (IPC) and

education (IPE); and choices of specialties by graduate nursing students. She intersects each of these subjects with women's health care, global health improvements, and access to care. Dr. Sessler Branden has publications and multiple national and international presentations about these topics.

Over the years Dr. Sessler Branden has been engaged in various leadership capacities to promote and strengthen midwifery and nursing. She believes this is key to building relationships and empowering others. For this work she has been active in local, national, and international organizations. Locally, she participated in a number of committees for the American College of Nurse Midwives (ACNM) for publicity, public relations, lobbying and legislative work, and fundraising. She was the President of the CT Region of Hadassah (HWZOA) for three years where leadership building and succession were her key priorities. Later, she served on the HWZOA's National Board. Currently, she is part of the Nurses on Boards effort by the ANA; the CT Nurses Association; and Hadassah doing public relations on boards, and with legislators and their staff. She is the president of the Mu Delta Chapter of Sigma, through which she encourages mentoring and increased member engagement. Nationally, she has been a long-time member of the National Women's Health Network based in Washington, D.C., an advocacy group that aims to improve the health of women by critically analyzing health policy issues and research. All of these leadership experiences give her a broad view of the ways nurses can be involved and how they can effect change.

As an educator, Dr. Sessler Branden has had other opportunities to impact women's health through education of students and the general public. Educating first professional degree and nursing graduate students affords her the opportunity to inspire and challenge students to achieve their full potential and to understand the importance of their roles in nursing. She knows that education never ends for a nurse, and her roles as the Co-Chair of the Hadassah (HWZOA) Nurses' Councils and a scholar in the Experienced Nurse Faculty Leadership Academy (ENFLA) afforded her chances to strengthen her leadership skills, role model leadership, and teach it didactically. The Experienced Nurse Faculty Leadership Academy through Sigma has afforded Dr. Sessler Branden opportunities for educational excellence in national and international leadership in education and healthcare. Each of these roles has involved advocacy, lobbying, and education of diverse groups of people.

In addition to her professional and volunteer interests, Dr. Sessler Branden is a sustainable gardener and enjoys snorkeling, hiking, and cooking. She is active in her community and synagogue. Pennie and her husband Peter have a son and a daughter, all of whom are always supportive of her interests and endeavors. As a Sigma United Nations Liaison, Dr. Sessler Branden will continue to avail herself of a wide range of opportunities and connect them to her passion for the advancement of midwifery and maternal-child health.