

The Effect of Nurses Mental Health on Quality Patient Outcomes: A Quality Improvement Project



Abstract

There are many contributing factors that add to stress in the nursing profession. A thorough literature review was conducted that included 40 studies, 10 of which were quantitative and 30 that were qualitative. Factors identified include long hours, high expectations, high patient/staff ratios, burnout, low morale, and workplace violence. These factors affect nurses' mental health which impact work performance and patient outcomes. It is well recognized that there is a high amount of stress in nursing, but there is a lack of evidence-based interventions to overcome this problem.

Purpose

To develop strategies to support staff well-being and work life satisfaction, so that quality patient outcomes are improved.

Benefits

- Better work environment would contribute to lowering burnout among nurses and potentially make the profession of nursing more desirable
- Supportive relationships will bring positive emotions in the workplace
- Promotes well-being and strengthens resilience

Barriers

- There is a correlation between decreased happiness and job satisfaction with the responsibilities and expectations of being a nurse
- Having compassion fatigue can impact the health, morale, and retention of a nurse, which in turn can affect patient safety and satisfaction
- Inconsistencies, constant changes, and difficult emotions contribute to poor mental health

Guidelines for Improving Nurses Mental Health

Methods of implementing an improvement in the mental health of nursing staff include:

- Encourage administration to hold workshops covering topics such as exercise, good sleep habits, enhancing nutrition, relaxation techniques, self-care
- Provide opportunities for discussion groups or "Huddle" with staff nurses, charge nurses, unit manager, and director at least 3 times per year to facilitate open conversations about problems that are found in the work environment to find possible solutions.
- Provide opportunities for teamwork building and communication.
 - Circle of appreciation
 - Blindfolded guidance activity
- Provide anonymous surveys to assess the mental health of the staff on the unit at least every 6 months.

Survey topics:

 - Current mental health status
 - Work life balance
 - Perceived workload stress
 - Workplace satisfaction
- Display recognition board titled "Praise a Peer" when you see someone exceeding workplace expectations or showing support to others.
- By implementing these strategies, a healthier work environment exists to prevent any further staffing issues. An environment that is encouraging, motivating, and filled with healthy relationships amongst employees has a direct relationship with mental health.

Nursing Implications

- Most common mental illnesses nurses suffer from include anxiety; depression; chronic fatigue, stress, and worry; and post-traumatic stress disorder (Nelson & Lee-Winn, 2020). Due to long work hours, stress, and high expectations
 - This directly affects work performance, patient care and outcomes, and life outside of work
- The higher the change fatigue, the lower resilience and job satisfaction nurses had (Brown, Wey, Foland, 2018).
- In female nurses, there are 11.97 per 100,000 suicides compared to 7.58 per 100,000 in the female population (Davidson et al., 2019).
- In male nurses, there are 39.8 per 100,000 suicides compared to 28.2 per 100,000 in the male general population (Davidson et al., 2019).

References Available Upon Request

