

Nurses Burn Out

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What do you get when you combine care giver, codependency, weak personal boundaries, unhealthy organizations, and ever-increasing demands? The answer is burn out people who became nurses, expecting to gain a sense of meaning from their profession. Nurses are idealists, are highly motivated, and relate to their work as a calling. When nurses feel that their work is insignificant or that they make no difference in their clinical settings, they burn out.

Burn out is a state of physical, emotional, and mental exhaustion caused by long-term involvement in situations that are emotionally demanding.

Risk Factors for Nurse burn out

- * Higher work load
- * Poor social or institutional support
- * Perception of high stress
- * Role conflict, and
- * Helplessness

Nurses have always worked hard. It is not the workload itself that makes nurses lose their spirit for nursing. It is a loss of hope that they can make a difference to clients.

How do you know if some one is burned out?

The symptoms of burn out are:

- * Decreased efficiency and productivity.
- * Work pressure (there is never enough time).
- * Dissatisfaction
- * Increased illness and absenteeism.
- * Reduced sense of personal accomplishment.

Development of burn out

Zerwekh and Claborn (2003) describe the development of burn out:

- a. Enthusiasm for the job
- b. Loss of enthusiasm
- c. Continuous deterioration
- d. Crisis and finally devastation and inability to work effectively

The thought of nurses burning out is pretty depressing. "Is there any hope for nursing, or should I change my career goal and go into another field?" you may ask. Of course, the answers are – "yes, there is hope" and "No, don't change your career goal".

How to Prevent burn out

Develop self understanding

Self understanding (known as insight) is the best first step on the path to healthy nursing. Acknowledging your own feelings is important. When feelings are not expressed or even acknowledged, they tend to build up. Built-up feelings can result in outbursts, or "emotional bingeing".

Use Team Work

Acknowledge the hard work of your coworkers. A word of encouragement from you can go a long way to lift the spirits of your peers. The emotional tone in a work environment is an important part of every one's job satisfaction. Help others with their work when you can, and equally important, **ask for help when you need it.**

Use healthy professional communication

- * When confronted with interpersonal problems at work, take a problem-solving approach to solutions. State the problem in a non-threatening way. Make it clear that the problem is the behaviour not the person.
- * Don't gossip: People talk about each other's personal problems, which is unprofessional and unproductive.
- * Use the chain of command appropriately: Talk directly to the

person involved in a problem and do not go to a higher level until you have tried a solution at the lower level first without success.

- * Look for a workplace that support your values.

Think positively

Take care of your self.

There is a modern myth that it is possible to do it all:

- * Work as a nurse or go to a nursing school, do home work or read Nursing Journals to keep up with changes.
- * Maintain a relationship; raise healthy children; support the children, activities (help with home work); prepare delicious and nutritious family meals daily; attend religious services; prepare holiday celebrations; keep in good physical shape, be physically healthy.
- * Exercise regularly.
- * Listen to your body, eat when you are hungry.
- * Drink when you are thirsty.
- * Rest when you are tired.

The concept of nurses taking care of themselves is relatively new, but nurses are good researchers and problem solvers, so good ideas abound. As a new nurse, you can begin your career with healthy habits, which is easier than breaking, old self-defeating habits.

References:

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