

Reducing Compassion Fatigue and Burnout Among Nurses

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Introduction

Compassion fatigue and burnout have become predominant issues within the healthcare system. In 2022, over one-third of nurses stated a strong desire to leave the profession, with 44% stating the cause was due to high-stress environments and feelings of burnout (Landi, 2022). In collaboration with Spencer Hospital, the aim of this literature review is to determine if the utilization of hospital-funded mental health counseling services by nursing staff proves useful in the reduction of burnout and compassion fatigue, along with exploring the most effective methods of combating burnout and compassion fatigue.

Results

- Numerous factors contributed to feelings of burnout and compassion fatigue, such as:
 - Workload
 - Work and family conflicts
 - Unavailability of social supports
 - Reduced control over work environment
 - Staff shortages
 - Conflict between coworkers
 - Lack of adequate resources
 - Perceived stress, mental health, and wellbeing (Agustina et al., 2022; Esposito et al., 2021)
- A large variety of interventions were found to be helpful in minimizing compassion fatigue and burnout, such as:
 - On-site professional resources (Aycock & Boyle, 2009)
 - Health responsibility education:
 - Interpersonal relations, nutrition, physical activity, spiritual growth, and stress management (Rigdon, K. L., & Winters, K., 2022, p 87, 89)
 - Cognitive behavioral therapy (Bagheri, 2019)

Methodology

A comprehensive literature review was conducted, of which ten peer reviewed journals were utilized from the DeWitt Library, CINAHL, EBSCO, and Science Direct databases. The Johns Hopkins appraisal system was used to evaluate the level and quality of evidence of the literature review (Appendix E and F). The key search terms included burnout, compassion fatigue, compassion satisfaction, self-care interventions, and mindfulness programs.

Conclusion

Nurses work long hours, carry heavy patient loads, deal with copious amounts of stress and experience traumatic events in their day-to-day work environment. The evidence from this literature review supports the expansion of available counseling and supportive services provided by hospitals to inform nurses that their mental, emotional, and physical health are important. Secondly, managerial support and encouragement in utilizing such services may help decrease the instances and duration of burnout and compassion fatigue experienced by nursing personnel. By providing and encouraging counseling or simple self-care practices that nurses can perform during their shift along with education on sustainable at home self-care techniques, nurses will be better equipped to holistically care for their patients.

Recommendations

Based on our literature review, we recommend that Spencer Hospital:

- Implement hospital-sponsored counseling services
- Offer both online and in-person sessions
- Offer individual and group sessions
- Incorporate cognitive-behavioral therapy, acceptance and commitment therapy, and self-care exercises
- Include program in employee-benefits package free of charge
- Advertise counseling services via print and electronic resources



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