Grace Peterson Nursing Research Colloquium

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Effective Coping Strategies to Reduce Nursing Burnout: An Integrative Literature Review

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Effective Coping Strategies to Reduce Nursing Burnout
An Integrative Review of Literature

Background:
Nursing burnout is a global concern however, it remains unclear which coping strategies are effective at preventing this phenomenon. Nurses play a critical role in the health care system, due to the fact that they act as mediators of patient-physician communication and strive to provide safe patient-centered care. Nonetheless, nurses’ job duties are stressful as they care for patients, families, communities, and individuals at risk for health conditions (Mohamed, 2016). Nursing burnout has been attributed to the demanding physical labor, human suffering, work hours, staffing debacles, and interpersonal relationships that are central to a nurse’s workday (Jennings, 2008).

Burnout is defined as emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and reduced professional efficacy that may occur in nurses related to their involvement in health care (Mohamed, 2016; Shin et al., 2014). Burnout is of significant concern in the health care field due to its negative impact on job performance, work commitment, job satisfaction, employee turnover, and health and well-being in individuals, among other (Shin et al., 2014). Coping refers to the ability to successfully manage demands when a person’s resources are taxed or exceeded (Singh, Sharma & Sharma, 2011).

Problem Statement:
Nursing is an integral component to the delivery of quality patient health care. The role of nursing to deliver such care has a great amount of associated stress. The purpose of this literature review was to identify strategies that have been implemented previously, or suggested as coping measures for nurses. This review explored factors that put nurses at risk of burnout and discusses the importance of burnout prevention.

Research Questions:
What are effective coping strategies that can help reduce nursing burnout?

Conceptual Framework

DEFINITIONS:
Newman’s System Model focuses on the reactions that a person or community presents when undergoing a variety of stressors in their environment (McEwen & Willis, 2014).

Defense lines: basic survival factors that protect the central core against stressors. Defense lines involve physiological, psychological, sociocultural, and spiritual dimensions that respond to the stressor. If burnout occurs, the lines of defense are damaged, and the system becomes disrupted (Günnüşen & Üstün, 2010).

Methods:
A computerized search of the literature was conducted using PubMed and the Cumulative Index to Nursing and Allied Health Literature (CINAHL) Complete. To conduct a search of the literature, multiple text combinations were used that included the following subject headings: burnout, coping, coping strategies, and burnout in nursing.

Inclusion criteria: Peer-reviewed articles from 2008 to 2018, available in English, and of the nursing or medicine discipline that focused on effective strategies to reduce nursing burnout.

Exclusion criteria: Articles that did not have title pertaining to the topic of interest, duplicates, and articles that did not have a full-text version.

Results:
Six studies examined the relationship between effective coping mechanisms and nursing burnout. These studies suggested various strategies to cope with job related stress.

Seeking help: by taking support of coworkers, other staff, family members, among others, helps to better cope with job stressors (Akbar, Elahi, Mohammadi & Khoshknab, 2015).

Spiritual coping: prayers and seeking help from a superior force has been an effective coping strategy, and has shown to relieve tension in nurses (Salaree, Zareiyan, Ebadi & Salaree, 2014).

Spiritualizing: nurses used this strategy to emotionally and cognitively focus on self-control rather than stressful external conditions and increase their adaptation to the situation that disrupts the balance of these aspects.

Positive thinking, silence, tolerance and forced acceptance, crying, self-learning, the use of recreation and sports are self-control strategies used (Akbar, Elahi, Mohammadi & Khoshknab, 2015).

Mindfulness: incorporating mindfulness-based stress reduction strategies such as meditation, breathing, healthy eating, awareness, acceptance, focus to the present moment, and recognizing unpleasant sensations, thoughts and feelings have significantly reduced burn out rates, has increased mood, and has promoted positive attitude changes (Asuero, Queraltó, Pujol-Ribera, Berenguera, Rodriguez-Blanco, & Epstein, 2014).

Nursing Practice Implications:
Nursing practice should focus on preventing professional burnout to improve quality of working life. Addressing nursing burnout by establishing effective coping strategies can help reduce the effects of work related stressors (Lee, Kuo, Chien & Wang, 2016)

Nurses should mitigate nursing burnout by seeking resources that are effective in stress reduction such as a support groups, mindfulness training, self-control classes, and spiritual groups.