

A Toolkit for Helping Nurse Leaders Foster Resilience Amongst Frontline Nurses

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I began my journey as a graduate student in the Master of Nursing Program at the University of Washington during the height of the COVID-19 pandemic. Both studying and working full-time as a nurse manager I witnessed the stresses of the pandemic and their impact on our frontline nursing teams. When beginning my capstone work with the Washington Center for Nursing, their recent research echoed the sentiments of my staff, colleagues, and peers from across the state of Washington. A clear need was identified for accessible resources to begin the crucial work of building resilience in nurses. From that need grew this resilience toolkit aimed at providing nurse leaders with a variety of interventions to begin this work.

The COVID-19 pandemic imposed unprecedented stresses on the healthcare system, particularly on nursing. According to a 2020 survey conducted by the Washington Center for Nursing (WCN), 42% of nurses in the state of Washington considered or planned to leave nursing because of the pandemic (Washington Center for Nursing, 2021). Nurses have also reported mental health concerns such as distress, anxiety, depression, and insomnia in relation to the COVID-19 pandemic. Resilience has been identified as a foundational component needed for good mental health (Lai, C. C. et al., 2020), therefore the argument can be made that fostering resilience in the nursing workforce may contribute to improved mental health outcomes. Nurse leaders have been identified as playing an influential role in the support of frontline nurses and should offer solutions to support the mental health of their teams (Mo et al., 2020).

The American Psychological Association (2020) defines resilience “as the process of adapting well in the face of trauma, tragedy, threat, or significant sources of stress”. Resilience has been found to be a protective factor in the prevention of burnout among nurses, as well as has been shown to help positively deal with challenges and manage stress (Jose et al., 2020). Resilience has also been found to help mediate the effects of stress, burnout, fatigue, depression and anxiety, and other effects of professional demands (Yu et al., 2019). Furthermore, nurses who demonstrate higher levels of resilience were found to have greater job satisfaction (Yu et al., 2019), and therefore may be less inclined to leave their position. In order to support the nursing workforce, it will be essential for nurse leaders to employ strategies to help foster the resilience of their teams.

The WCN is committed to the health and success of Washington’s nursing professionals. As a part of this commitment, the WCN is interested in exploring interventions to support the nursing workforce in building resilience. This toolkit was created in partnership with the WCN in an effort towards achieving this goal and is available for use to those interested in furthering this work.

Implementation

This resilience toolkit aims to provide nurse leaders with a resource that can be used with frontline nursing teams as a resilience building intervention. A range of different tools have been included to make the toolkit adaptable for varying departments and clinical settings. These tools may be used

independently or in combination with one another, requiring no specific order of use, dependent on the needs of the individual or the team. Also included in this toolkit is the Brief Resilience Scale (BRS), which nurse leaders can provide to their teams as a reflective exercise for staff to obtain a baseline measurement and understanding of their personal state of resilience.

The BRS is an evidence-based and validated tool for measuring the baseline resilience of an individual. The BRS is included so that nurse leaders can provide their team the opportunity to think and about and identify their personal resilience level. Completing the BRS allows an individual to reflect on why their score does or does not align with their personal perception of themselves and begin the process of better understanding their own resilience. The intended use is for nurse leaders to encourage their team members to use the BRS as a tool for reflection rather than a means of collecting data.

To access the full toolkit, follow the link below.

(Link to toolkit once toolkit is posted to WCNursing.org) A Resilience Toolkit: Helping Nurse Leaders Foster Resilience Amongst Frontline Nurses

(*Attachment link) Emerg Medicine Australasia - 2021 - Brazil - How to lead a hot debrief in the emergency department

References

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