

**What factors contribute to nurse burnout and how can we find solutions?**

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Author Note

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**Abstract**

Nurse burnout has become a significant issue in healthcare, affecting the well-being of nurses and the quality of patient care. This paper explores the main causes of nurse burnout and explores solutions derived from those issues to inspire changes on an institutional and personal level to prevent burnout.

### **Introduction**

Our mental health can affect our ability to interact with one another. But what if interacting and providing care for others while struggling was your job? Those not acquainted with the nursing field or the struggles that come with being a health care provider may need a grasp on how vast the issue of burnout spans as well as how deeply this can affect patients. The job of nurses can be incredibly demanding. From long hours to difficult patients, nurses experience severe mental and physical stress. After a while, this can lead to the phenomenon known as burnout. Burnout is the mental state of exhaustion due to prolonged stress. Burnout is not limited to nursing and happens across every profession, however, healthcare professionals are at increased risk because of the stressful nature of their jobs.

Current research now dives into the top contributing factors of nurse burnout. With unexpected circumstances such as the recent COVID-19 pandemic, internal facility problems, and many issues may arise. The main method used by scientists so far has been conducting surveys in facilities and drawing conclusions in the form of percentages attributing to a specific cause. An example of this is in one study done to find the causes of nurses leaving their jobs, 26% stated that it was due to burnout or emotional exhaustion.

Unexpected circumstances such as the recent COVID-19 pandemic, internal facility problems, and many issues that may come up may all very well contribute to burnout. When learning about nursing as a profession, one of the first things that students hear is how well the pay is but at the cost of mental health. I believe this shouldn't have to be such a normalized issue as it is now. It is important to identify which issues are most prevalent so then we can find accessible solutions for them as a resource for our healthcare providers. Whether this be by outreach programs, or to

figure out other viable solutions that will be explored. In short, this is in effort to investigate how nurse burnout affects patients in long-term care facilities, what factors contribute to it, and how they can be reduced.

### **Methods**

Existing research serves as a baseline to measure how frequent nurse burnout can be. Using literature was relevant for this topic as there have been countless surveys and studies done on nurse mental exhaustion and statistics however I want to tie in how this phenomenon influences patient satisfaction and what we can do to fix it. To fix the problem of nurse burnout, we need to identify and address the causes by showing the statistics on how prevalent it is and putting how much this can affect patients into perspective to stress the importance that this can affect not just nurses as humans but their work which is patient care.

The process by which I selected my sources was split into categories; a. Nurse burnout (what it is and statistics that have relevance to nurse burnout) and b. What sort of impact does it have on patients? c. What are some solutions for this moving forward? I will be utilizing information from different studies performed on the frequency of nurse burnout as well as the causes to identify what issues appear the most to find solutions for the top causes. I made sure to use reliable information by gathering information from Google Scholar, NovelNY, and information about nurse burnout from institutions such as the American Nurses Foundation.

### **Discussion**

It has been found in a three-year report done by the American Nurses Foundation (2024) that as many as 84% of nurses were dealing with burnout or feeling stressed. At the time that

data was compiled in 2023, about 3.5 million Registered Nurses were working in the United States of America. That means an estimated 2.9 million nurses reported feeling burnt out or stressed. This comes as no surprise after the effects that the COVID-19 pandemic impacted the medical field with nursing staffing shortages leading to a 10.5% increase in deaths within nursing homes as a result. (Joshi, 2023)

The main contributors across studies that lead to burnout were reported as inadequate numbers of staff, lack of respect and support from their employer, too many administrative tasks, job stressors, and need for recovery (ANF, Albar Marín, García-Ramírez). The effects of nurse burnout can affect not only the nurse but also their patients. Studies show that if nurses experience high levels of stress, both the nurses who work and patients receiving care in hospitals are less likely to recommend the facility. (Aiken).

There has been research to suggest that one of the ways to help nurses cope with this stress is through effective communication strategies. As collaboration with other healthcare providers can be the cause of stress which could lead to burnout, minimizing stress using effective communication techniques would in theory minimize stress. One found to be effective in trials between pharmaceutical students and nurses was the SBAR technique, which is mostly used in medical environments to enhance communication between healthcare providers, but it also served as an effective communication technique.

### **Conclusion**

Nurse burnout is an ongoing problem that needs to be prevented as the effects can be both detrimental to the nurse and patients. Plausible solutions for the aforementioned problems that

lead to burnout include increasing the involvement that supervisors have during times of stress since their presence can impact the emotional toll the stress can take on the nurse; Increased availability leads to less stress than when compared to less availability. Additionally implementing more effective communication techniques could in theory decrease stress which is what ultimately leads to nurse burnout

I believe that my research here will bring more awareness into the causes and severity of nurse burnout. I hope this will inspire management in healthcare institutions to listen to nurses more and acknowledge that burnout can go far beyond nurses and all healthcare providers' mental health deserves to be listened to.

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