

## ABSTRACT

Nurse burnout is increasingly becoming more prevalent in all settings of healthcare where more than half of nurses will experience burnout at some point in their career. Reducing the prevalence of nurse burnout will not only increase retention of nurses, but it directly affects and improves the safety and quality of care that is delivered to patients. Authentic leadership traits decrease the rate of burnout, more specifically increasing leadership engagement, and ultimately leads to an increased perception by employees that leaders support their staff. This project focuses on how leadership involvement can reduce burnout and increase retention of nurses in the workforce. Evidence-based practice is the foundation of this project and has been used to generate the urgency that this concern requires. This project also suggests a curriculum that can be taught to leadership teams to build and strengthen authentic leadership qualities to combat nurse burnout.

## PICO QUESTION

How does an authentic approach to leadership affect nurse burnout in acute care settings compared to no managerial support?

## LITERATURE REVIEW

The evidence-based practice that was researched for this project assisted in the development of themes for reducing nurse burnout. The main themes that the literature represents include the effects of leadership involvement, stressors of the work environment leading to burnout, and the use of Maslach's Burnout Inventory to be able to quantify burnout. Multiple studies were researched to develop the main points in the literature review:

- Burnout decreases when leadership support increases <sup>(1)</sup>
- Voluntary turnover will decrease if leadership involvement increases <sup>(2)</sup>
- Authentic leadership traits balance the high job stressors that nurses develop and in turn reduces burnout <sup>(3)</sup>
- Emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and lack of personal accomplishment quantify symptoms of nurse burnout and allow focus for areas of improvement <sup>(4)</sup>

# Addressing Nurse Burnout: A Leadership Role to Increase Retention

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## PROJECT METHODOLOGY

The suggestion that this project introduces is the creation of a curriculum to be taught to departmental leadership teams that emphasizes the importance of recognizing nurse burnout and what leadership traits can be utilized to decrease burnout. Project materials that have been developed include a curriculum to outline major themes and important points, a pre/post-test to evaluate the growth of knowledge, a survey given to the staff to evaluate presence of burnout, and a handout summarizing main points to be given to leadership teams as a reference.

### PLAN AND IMPLEMENTATION

The implementation of this project will take place within an acute care setting, such as a surgical center, to target an individual setting. The plan for implementation will be as follows:

1. First meeting with leadership team to discuss initial thoughts and perceptions of burnout within the department.
2. Anonymous survey is dispersed to staff. Results evaluated within leadership team. Pre-test is given to team followed by introduction of curriculum. Post-test to be given after curriculum is presented to cement main points. Handouts given to leadership team for reference.
3. Encourage leadership team to engage in opportunities to utilize authentic leadership traits within the department to decrease burnout.
4. Follow up meeting to discuss how the process is going and if any modification needs to take place.

### EVALUATION

To evaluate the effectiveness of this project, follow-up meetings with the leadership team will be important. The meetings will be a place for discussion of strategies that have worked and what has not worked. This discussion will lead to further modification of the process to incorporate best practices that are unique to the department and to the employees.

In addition to follow-up meetings, another anonymous survey will be dispersed to the staff to evaluate if any improvement has been made in the perceptions of the staff. Trends can then be developed to determine any events that may be increasing the prevalence of burnout or external forces that need to be considered. This is a way to evaluate the process, but also serves as a direct visualization that the leaders are engaged and want to improve the environment, which decreases burnout.



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## THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The Advancing Research and Clinical Practice Through Close Collaboration (ARCC) is the evidence-based practice model utilized for this project. The five-step program discusses how evidence-based practice (EBP) is applied by utilizing leaders during the development and implementation phases. Creating urgency and buy-in from employees is the most important aspect of this framework, followed by addressing and removing barriers to allow successful implementation to take place <sup>(5)</sup>.

This framework focuses on creating long-lasting change, which is why it was selected for this project. The incorporation of nurse leaders in the process for change follows the teamwork-centered approach that nursing is founded from and allows a connection between leaders and employees to ensure the change is supported.

## CONCLUSIONS

The diverse literature review that was conducted during this project had various reasons attributed to nurse burnout, however the underlying theme of lack of leadership involvement is difficult to misinterpret. Studies show that when job satisfaction increases, nurse retention increases. Authentic leadership traits can create positive work environments that decrease burnout among nurses and retention is increased. The achievement of this project can be attributed to the literature review and extensive research that has been completed to develop a comprehensive approach to decreasing the prevalence of nurse burnout.

## REFERENCES

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