

# **Reducing the Risks of Stress with the Implementation of the Bundled Strategy Plan**

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## **PROBLEM/BACKGROUND**

COVID-19 pandemic made a lasting impact on the nursing profession. The pandemic has left nurses with increased anxiety, high stress levels, and depression leading to high levels of nurse turnover. Nursing is a highly stressful occupation that can be emotionally and physically draining. The prolonged exposure to the heavy workload, patient acuity, complex decision making, and challenging situations contribute to high levels of stress and burnout in Critical Care Units. A recent study indicated 92% of nurses reported being moderate to high stress, with more than 60% said dealing with stress side effects such as physical or mental health problems. Many organizations ignore the signs and symptoms of stress and burnout in vulnerable individuals, which leads to high turnover rates and inefficient coping measures for individuals (Zheng, 2020). Because stress may lead to burnout and depression, decreasing stress levels is vital for the nurses' well-being.

## **PURPOSE**

The purpose of the DNP project aims to promote and evaluate the effectiveness of implementing bundled strategy intervention plan to reduce stress and prevent burnout, depression, and suicide in critical care units during and after the COVID-19 pandemic.

## **THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

The frameworks used to guide this DNP project are Kotter and Cohen's Model of Change and Overview of Institute for Healthcare Framework for Improving Joy in Work. The three main ideas in Kotter and Cohen's Model of Change are: create a climate for change, engaging the people, implement and sustain the change. The framework Overview of the Institute for Healthcare Framework for Improving Joy in Work has been utilized by healthcare industries to improve the health and well-being of the employees, boost joy in work, increase staff engagement, and improve the overall quality of care. The frameworks will guide the development of the proposed strategy to prevent stress and burnout to adapt when stressful situations may start to become overwhelming during and after the effects of the Coronavirus pandemic.

## **METHODOLOGY**

The proposed DNP project is an implemented quality improvement plan focusing on a rural hospital located in the east-central portion of Alabama. The sampling procedures, consisting of pre-survey, intervention plan, and post-survey, will be limited to the Intensive Care Unit and COVID Intensive Care Unit staff. A brochure titled "Reducing Stress With the "Bundled Strategy Plan for Hope and Joy" was created by the DNP student to provide important information in preventing stress, which was provided to employees to deal with stress and avoid burnout in personal and professional situations.

## **IMPLEMENTATION**

The DNP implementation project's pre-initiation phase began with a pre-stress survey for the critical care health care providers. The results were calculated and interpreted as stress being of serious concern in the staff members. Educational classes were provided to relay information on the prevention of stress. The initiation phase was implemented through bundled strategy intervention plan for four weeks.

## **EVALUATION**

The ICU and COVID-19 ICU nurses were provided a post-evaluation survey with closed-ended questions. The feedback evaluation provided to analyze the effectiveness of the structured project. The pre-and post-evaluation surveys were reviewed and analyzed to determine the effectiveness of the bundled strategy plan.

## **RESULTS**

The healthcare providers firmly agreed that the education classes were beneficial in recognizing signs of increased stress and methods to change behaviors to improve physical and psychological well-being. The pre-surveys indicated moderate to high-stress levels in the nurses. After four weeks of interventions, there was a significant improvement in the stress levels of the ICU and COVID-ICU healthcare providers. The post-survey results will be evaluated and analyzed to determine the effectiveness of the bundled strategy plan. Results of retention scores were analyzed and assessed.

## **IMPLICATIONS FOR PRACTICE**

This project will impact nursing and patient outcomes to understand better the stress the critical care nurses experience during and after working full time in ICU and COVID-19 ICU. Stress levels may increase to burnout, depression, and possible suicidal ideations if appropriate resources are not available. The education and intervention tool can be recommended for healthcare providers in any setting to implement to decrease stress and prevent burnout in healthcare providers. With the increasing development of stress and burnout, implementing organizational and personal interventions improves anxiety, stress, burnout, and resilience among nurses to maintain healthy organizations to provide safe, high-quality care.

## **REFERENCES**

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