

## Managing Nurse Burnout

Nurses, who comprise the largest segment of the healthcare workforce, are experiencing an increasing amount of burnout on the job from working conditions.<sup>1</sup> Almost two-thirds of nurses (62 percent) face burnout, according to the American Nurses Enterprise.<sup>2</sup> Additionally, 69 percent of nurses younger than 25 report burnout.<sup>3</sup>

To manage this prevalent issue, healthcare organizations need to address systems-level causes of burnout to protect not only their nurses, but also their patients.

Nurses' job demands should be balanced with their job resources to create a constructive work culture. In such a culture, leaders will aim to manage team conflict, ensure appropriate staffing levels, create fair work schedules, optimize benefits, develop leaders, and facilitate professional growth and care advancement. Additionally, leaders should be trained to recognize and address burnout.

Below are various risk tips that healthcare organizations can employ to reduce the risk of nurse burnout.<sup>4</sup>

1

Assess nurses for burnout and address work environment and systems factors that contribute to burnout and erode nurses' well-being. Educate nurses to identify behaviors caused by burnout and compassion fatigue.

2

Develop and implement management policies that support nurses' well-being. Adopt well-being in the healthcare organization as a core value, and implement wellness programs for nurses. Designate rest periods for nurses so they can recharge and regroup.

3

Involve nurses in scheduling decisions, and ensure appropriate staffing and safe working conditions. Implement policies that enhance flexibility at work (such as in staffing and scheduling), and support work–life balance. Work to improve nurse-to-patient ratios.

4

Provide adequate workplace safety resources, including sufficient and effective personal protective equipment, hand hygiene and respiratory hygiene supplies, cleaning products, etc.

5

Set forth zero tolerance for violence, incivility, and bullying directed toward nurses in the healthcare organization from other nurses, providers, staff members, and patients.

6

Make confidential mental health services available for nurses. Offer mental health screenings, provide early supportive interventions, and facilitate access to high-quality mental health services. Work to address and eliminate any stigma associated with seeking out those services.

7

Advocate that licensure policies of your state board of nursing include provisions that allow nurses to seek mental health care without negative consequences.

8

Provide a way for individuals and teams to manage moral distress. Teach nurses to identify potential signs of distress and suicide risk.

9

Assess the potential impact of new rules, requirements, systems, and technology on nurses' workload and work efficiency before implementing them.

10

Identify solutions and develop policies that reduce the burden of administrative and other nonclinical tasks on nurses.

11

Assess whether the healthcare organization's current electronic health record system may be customized so that it optimally supports nursing workflow.

12

Allow for increased nurse leadership in the healthcare organization, and provide opportunities for nurses to be involved in policy discussions.

13

Ensure that nurses are trained and oriented to assigned areas. Consider cross-training nurses in other areas in the healthcare organization to improve support and coverage.

## Resource

For additional information on this topic, see MedPro's [Risk Resources: Burnout](#).

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## Endnotes

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<sup>1</sup> American Nurses Enterprise. (2024, April 25). *What is nurse burnout? How to prevent it*. Retrieved from [www.nursingworld.org/content-hub/resources/workplace/what-is-nurse-burnout-how-to-prevent-it/](http://www.nursingworld.org/content-hub/resources/workplace/what-is-nurse-burnout-how-to-prevent-it/)

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

<sup>4</sup> The risk tips in this publication are based on the following sources: Aiken, L. H., Clarke, S. P., Sloane, D. M., Sochalski, J., Silber, J. H. (2002). Hospital nurse staffing and patient mortality, nurse burnout, and job dissatisfaction. *Journal of the American Medical Association*, 288(16), 1987-1993. doi:10.1001/jama.288.16.1987; Gavidia, M. (2021, May 12). EHRs, COVID-19, and understaffing: Spotlighting contributing factors to nurse burnout. *American Journal of Managed Care*. Retrieved from [www.ajmc.com/view/ehrs-covid-19-and-understaffing-spotlighting-contributing-factors-to-nurse-burnout](http://www.ajmc.com/view/ehrs-covid-19-and-understaffing-spotlighting-contributing-factors-to-nurse-burnout); Howell, B. A. M. (2021, June 15). Battling burnout at the frontlines of health care amid COVID-19. *AACN Advanced Critical Care*, 32(2), 195–203. doi: <https://doi.org/10.4037/aacnacc2021454>; American Medical Association. (2021, March 29). *Managing mental health during COVID-19*. Retrieved from [www.ama-assn.org/delivering-care/public-health/managing-mental-health-during-covid-19](http://www.ama-assn.org/delivering-care/public-health/managing-mental-health-during-covid-19); Guideway Care. (n.d.). *9 strategies for decreasing nurse burnout*. Retrieved from <https://guidewaycare.com/6-strategies-for-decreasing-nurse-burnout/>

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