

How to Reduce Stress for Overworked Nurses

By Mark Aquino

Nursing is one of the most stressful professions. Even from the time students begin receiving hospital/clinic practice, they are exposed to very stressful situations. At least 6 out of 10 nurses suffer from stress and this is a problem that cannot be ignored.

The situations that nurses experience daily can be very stressful indeed. Between dealing with patients and families, being aware of the needs of each case they must attend to, having to do their homework, they can feel pressured by the time constraints. In these situations, a nurse can be under a lot of stress, and this can trigger other problems such as tiredness and blurred vision among other symptoms that can end up affecting the patient.

Therefore, managing and reducing stress for nurses is essential not only for their health but also for them to be able to perform their jobs properly and for patients to receive the best possible care. Since we understand how difficult it is for nurses to deal with stress, here is a list of techniques that are useful for reducing and managing stress.

#1 Support from fellow nurses

The nurses' union is very united, and they gather together in so many battles that they become more than co-workers, they become a family. An ideal technique for reducing stress is to support each other as fellow nurses and talk about the situations that are causing you so much stress. This can be really useful for everyone because by talking about what is happening, they can get it out of their system, and together find solutions to problems. It's good to get together to talk about these things outside the workplace. An ideal option is to go to lunch with your co-workers at the end of your shift. For example, if you are on the morning shift, you can go to lunch with your co-workers, and together you can clear your mind and reduce stress by talking about what is bothering you away from work.

#2 Talk about what concerns you

Usually, nurses are looking to finish their shifts and want to go home and try to disconnect from work. But many times they have been under so much stress at work that they don't leave. In fact, many nurses have trouble falling asleep naturally after long shifts, and this prevents them from getting a good night's rest. And this can have a negative impact on the next shift because they haven't been able to reduce the stress and it can create a snowball effect that if not treated in time can have serious consequences for the nurse's health.

After having a stressful and agitating shift, an ideal option is to talk about what worries you so much and keeps you stressed out. However, it can be difficult to talk about it with someone who does not work in the health sector, but it is still advisable to talk about it with a friend, your partner, or a family member since the objective is not to solve the problem but to get rid of it and relieve the stress you have. Many psychologists recommend talking about the situations that stress us because by talking about it, we relieve the tension we have.

In fact, talking about what stresses you out can give you a better perspective on what is causing it. That is, a nurse who has gone through a shift under a lot of stress may not notice at the time why she feels that way, but by talking about it with someone else she can understand what has happened, and maybe she has had to do some of someone else's work and that's why she feels so stressed. And the problem can be solved by talking to the head of the department to prevent this from happening again.

#3 Work out

It's true that the last thing a nurse might want to do after being so exhausted after a 12-hour shift is exercise, although there are people who do, it's unlikely but very understandable. Nevertheless, it has been demonstrated that exercising is an efficient stress reducer. Since the exercise helps to diminish cortisol and adrenalin, and in the same way it stimulates the release of feel-good endorphins. Besides, it helps to increase energy, so that nurses are not always so exhausted at the end of their shifts.

So it's important to exercise, but you shouldn't be mortified by a strict schedule, so when you can do it, whether it's a lot or a little, it's better than doing nothing. You might think that exercising at work is fine, but it is usually better that you go to another place, in a completely different environment, different from everything concerning work, so that in this way you disconnect totally from the source of the stress. Listening to music when you exercise is very beneficial in reducing stress. Exercising before, after, or on your day off will give you great benefits for your mental and physical health. So exercising will keep you healthy.

#4 Take up a hobby

Another great way to decrease stress is to find a hobby or a way to be able to entertain yourself. This way nurses will have something more and different to focus on and enjoy as well. It is well known that hobbies allow people to feel good about themselves, sometimes generating a feeling of accomplishment and pride. The good thing about having a hobby is that it doesn't take much time to do. You could read, dance, do some sport, an art project, sing, among many other activities you can do. There are many possibilities to practice a hobby, which will generate enormous health benefits for those who practice it.

#5 Breathing

Taking deep breaths will greatly help reduce stress. Everyone who wants to reduce stress should apply this technique, as there is scientific data on how deep breathing is an excellent method of stress relief. This is because deep breathing will bring oxygen to the brain and stimulate the parasympathetic nervous system, which will reduce stress. Blood pressure and heart rate are reduced by making the muscles relax.

This is a quick and easy way to decrease stress. In fact, it is an activity that can be done at work even during commotion. You can even isolate yourself for a moment in a break room and apply this technique for a couple of minutes. This activity can also be done very quietly at home, in a yoga or meditation mode, greatly relieving stress.

#6 Get help

For many people, stress becomes very difficult to manage on their own, even if they can use the techniques listed above. Nurses need to keep in mind that it is okay to get professional help if they feel it is necessary. There are stressors in the workplace that often become intolerable to the point of physical symptoms, interpersonal relationships that are very tense, or the case in which job performance is affected and patient safety is at risk, so nurses who have these symptoms should seek help immediately. So, nurses should be aware that stress is rampant and that taking the step to ask for help is paramount to their health.

Nurses take care of others and often stop taking care of themselves. This must change, because how can someone efficiently care for others when they are suffering from stress? It is easy for nurses to sense compassionate fatigue, as this is a feeling that is at the root of their DNA. However, being in touch with their emotions, feelings, and recognizing the stress and the effects it can have on their lives will help nurses have a longer and healthier career. To learn more, [click here](#) for a free introductory course on relieving any stress.