

Nursing burnout essay examples

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Burnout and work related stress is rife in the healthcare settings but more rampant in the nursing profession. Leiter and Maslach defined burnout as the index of dislocation between what a person is and what they have to get done. It is seen as eroded values, eroded dignity and ultimately of the human soul. It comprises an emotional exhaustion which is chronic, resulting in detachment from work, cynicism, and feeling of ineffectiveness on the job, feeling a sense of hopelessness, worthlessness and hopelessness and having feelings of failure. It manifests as either psychological, behavioural and physical reactions which include diminished caring, monumental sense of demoralisation and emotional exhaustion. Symptoms such as headache, poor sleep, backache and lethargy are usually experienced. The genesis of burnouts can be traced to nurses taking up extra responsibilities at work and working extra hours. Hence, the effects of burnouts on the nursing profession and on the quality of care cannot be overemphasized. Burnouts reduce effectiveness and blunts productivity. Also, it could place strains on relationships between nurses and patients and also with co-workers. An important source of burnout is a work schedule that is overloaded therefore having very little time and meagre resources to accomplish the task. Also, a situation where the hospital management is bent on reducing costs at all costs without regard for the clients or employees needs. (S. Laschinger et al, 2006). In addition, harsh management styles and practices may lead to disillusionments among employees with symptoms of burnouts appearing. Burnouts have led to a sizeable number of nurses quitting their jobs. The dearth of nurses in the hospitals can be linked to the very high workloads of these nurses. Close to half of hospital nurses have burnout levels that are far

higher than the accepted normal for health care workers. Also, the rate of job dissatisfaction among nurses in hospitals is 4 times more than the average for other workers in the United States of America and 20% of nurses working in hospitals say they intend leaving their present jobs within a year. (L. Aiken et al, 2002) . This led the Californian legislature to make a legislation about the patient to nurse ratios in the hospitals in the state. Prior to the legislation, it was discovered that the ever increasing shortages of nurses in the hospitals was as a result of the gigantic workloads and monumental levels job related burnouts among the nurses and levels of job dissatisfaction. The governor of the State then signed a bill of a nurse to five patients into law.

Burnout is directly related to the nursing shortages encountered in the country. Hospitals are short staffed, because the hospitals are keen on cutting costs, they relieve some nurses of their jobs and do not employ more hands. The few remaining nurses are faced with a monumental workload which keeps increasing every day. Eventually, the few ones on the job get burnt out, they become tired of the job and also opt out, and this is a vicious cycle that happens over and over. This phenomenon portends danger for the profession and also for the patients. To stem the tide, hospitals should employ more nurses to reduce the workload of the present ones, there should be legislation in place for the minimum nurse- patient ratio acceptable all over in the country, and adequate rest advocated for the nurses.

In conclusion, burnout is a serious issue that needs to be tackled head on in the nursing profession. On the short term, it leads to reduced quality of care

for the patients and also, on the long run, it has been implicated as a major factor in the shortage of nurses pervading the healthcare setting. Ambiguous roles should be eliminated, whenever the workload is enormous, co-workers should help each other out, more legislation should be passed reducing the nurse-patient ratio, nurses should have deserved holidays and adequate rests to recharge their batteries.

References

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