

The Daily Post - MARCH

OVERWORKED NURSES: Low pay – high stress

The findings of the latest Daily Post **survey** are startling: over fifty percent of Springfield County nurses feel **overworked**. The survey asked three hundred **full-time** and **part-time** nurses to rate their work experiences. The results reveal that the majority of nurses work long **shifts** with few breaks in between. Most reported feelings of fatigue and lack of energy.

Nurses cited several reasons for this **exhaustion**. Low pay drives nurses to work longer hours to earn **overtime** pay. Furthermore, high stress on the job leads many nurses to retire early, which increases strain on the current workforce. And although **demand** for nurses is high, few hospitals have the **budget** to hire more.

The dangers of such strain are obvious. Low energy and tiredness can negatively affect job performance and put patients at risk. But the surveyed nurses also offered solutions to these issues.

Among their suggestions is providing financial **incentives** to prevent early **retirement**. Also suggested was an increase in part-time positions to reduce stress on nurses

working long hours. Finally, a majority of nurses requested shorter shifts with lighter **workloads** to prevent exhaustion and on the job errors.

And they want these changes soon. According to the nurses, delaying these improvements threatens the well-being not only of medical providers, but that of patients, too.



budget



exhaustion

Get ready!

1 Before you read the passage, talk about these questions.

- 1 Why is it necessary for some nurses to work long hours?
- 2 What are the dangers of nurses working too much?

Reading

2 Read the article from The Daily Post. Then, mark the following statements as true (T) or false (F).

- 1 ___ The Post survey interviewed half of Springfield County nurses.
- 2 ___ Hospitals are not hiring new nurses for financial reasons.
- 3 ___ The nurses suggested that early retirement reduces stress on the workforce.

Vocabulary

3 Match the words (1-7) with the definitions (A-G).

- | | |
|-----------------|------------------|
| 1 ___ shift | 5 ___ retirement |
| 2 ___ incentive | 6 ___ overworked |
| 3 ___ full-time | 7 ___ demand |
| 4 ___ budget | |

- A a plan that details how money is spent
 B working at least 36 hours per week
 C the need for something to be available
 D the period during which a person works
 E the stage when people stop working
 F having worked until you are exhausted
 G something that motivates people

4 Fill in the blanks with the correct words or phrases from the word bank.

WORD BANK

survey part-time overtime
workload exhaustion

- 1 Greg only works four hours a day at his new job. It is a _____ job.
- 2 Melissa has to grade fifty tests today. She has a heavy _____.
- 3 Adam created a _____ to study people's opinions.
- 4 Jason works so much that he is constantly tired. He is suffering from _____.
- 5 Abby's shift ends at 5 p.m., but last night she worked until 8 p.m. to get _____ pay.

- 5 Listen and read the article again. What proposals are made to stop fatigue and mistakes at work?

Listening

- 6 Listen to a conversation between a nurse and a supervisor. Choose the correct answers.

- 1 What is the dialogue mostly about?
- A the length of the man's shifts
 - B overtime pay that the man earned
 - C a nurse asking to work fewer hours
 - D problems caused by an overworked nurse
- 2 According to the dialogue, what will the supervisor try to do?
- A offer some of the other nurses overtime
 - B get someone else to take over the man's shifts
 - C try to lighten the man's daily workload a bit
 - D give the man more breaks while he is at work

- 7 Listen again and complete the conversation.

Nurse: Excuse me, Janet. Can I talk to you?

Supervisor: Sure. What's 1 _____ ?

Nurse: I was wondering if another nurse could take over a couple of my shifts.

Supervisor: Why? Is everything okay?

Nurse: Yeah, I'm fine. But I leave work feeling really tired on most days. And the 2 _____ is starting to get to me.

Supervisor: So you're feeling overworked?

Nurse: A bit. My workload is 3 _____ .

Supervisor: I'm 4 _____ that. But unfortunately, I'm not sure I can do much.

Nurse: Oh. May I ask why?

Supervisor: Well, it's not that I don't want to help, but we're already short on nurses.

Nurse: So there's no way to 5 _____ ?

Supervisor: Not really. It would mean giving the other nurses 6 _____. And that's just not in the budget.

Speaking

- 8 With a partner, act out the roles below based on Task 7. Then, switch roles.

USE LANGUAGE SUCH AS:

So you're feeling overworked?

My workload is ...

So there's no way to ...?

Student A: You are a nurse who feels overworked. Talk to Student B about:

- exhaustion
- workload
- reducing hours

Student B: You are the head nurse of the hospital. Discuss the above points with Student A.

Writing

- 9 Use the conversation from Task 8 and the article to write a petition to your supervisor asking to improve your work conditions (100-120 words). Write about:

- The reasons for your exhaustion
- The dangers of being overworked
- Solutions to help change the situation





empathy

Get ready!

1 Before you read the passage, talk about these questions.

- 1 Why is clear communication between doctors and patients important?
- 2 What kind of misunderstandings can arise between doctors and patients?

Reading

2 Read the memo to the nursing staff of the Hayward Health Clinic. Then, fill in the blanks with the correct words from the word bank.

Word BANK

improve jargon communication
trust empathy confuse health

Hayward Health Clinic believes that clear 1 _____ is necessary to provide good care. They suggest that miscommunication can occur due to poor 2 _____ literacy. Or a patient may not 3 _____ doctors and nurses. To help 4 _____ communication, nurses should show 5 _____. They also should limit their use of 6 _____, because this might 7 _____ the patient.

HAYWARD HEALTH CLINIC MEMO

Subject: Communicating with Patients

Nurses, as you know, clear communication is vital to providing the best care possible. However, it seems that as of late, we are not getting all the information we need.

If you suspect you are not getting enough information from a patient, remember some of the possible causes of such **miscommunication**:

- ✓ Poor **Health Literacy** – Uninformed patients may not understand key terms.
- ✓ Negative **Preconceptions** – Patients may not trust medical professionals or may experience **anxiety**.
- ✓ **Cultural Differences** – Different cultures may have different approaches to dealing with illness. If you recognize any of these issues, a few simple steps can be taken to help improve communication:
- ✓ Establish a good **rapport**. It's very important to the **therapeutic** process.
- ✓ Show **empathy**.
- ✓ Be aware of how your **verbal** and **non-verbal** cues affect the interaction
- ✓ Don't use too much **jargon**, since this may confuse or intimidate your patient.
- ✓ Ask **open-ended questions** to help signal to patients that you care about their input.

Remember, you are our first and most important line of communication to patients. The more information we can give and receive, the better care we can provide.

Vocabulary

3 Match the words or phrases (1-6) with the definitions (A-F).

- 1 ___ health literacy
- 2 ___ miscommunication
- 3 ___ verbal
- 4 ___ empathy
- 5 ___ cultural differences
- 6 ___ preconception

- A different behaviors in different societies
- B the ability to relate to other people's feelings
- C related to the use of spoken language
- D the ability to understand health information
- E an assumption
- F a mistake in an exchange of information

4 Choose the word or phrase that is closest in meaning to the underlined part.

- Gina asks her patient about his day to develop a connection.
A preconception B rapport C anxiety
- Some patients say music is helpful for healing or feeling relaxed.
A therapeutic B verbal C non-verbal
- The nurse is using too much specialized vocabulary.
A jargon B anxiety C empathy
- Hospitals can cause feelings of nervousness and worry.
A rapport B jargon C anxiety
- Ask more questions that require answers longer than one-word responses.
A cultural differences
B open-ended questions
C preconceptions
- Frowning is a type of communication that is done without the use of spoken language.
A therapeutic B empathy C non-verbal

5 Listen and read the memo again. What may patients find confusing when talking to medical staff?

Listening

6 Listen to a phone conversation between two nurses. Choose the correct answers.

- What is the main idea of the dialogue?
A how cultural differences affect communication
B why a nurse is having trouble talking with a patient
C why it's important to ask open-ended questions
D how to improve patients' health literacy
- According to the dialogue, how can the nurse establish a good rapport?
A explain jargon when talking to the patient
B focus on the patient's medical history
C ask why the patient feels nervous or anxious
D start by asking non-medical or personal questions

7 Listen again and complete the conversation.

- N 1:** Well, she's complaining of constant headaches. I asked about her medical 1 _____, but she didn't say much.
- N 2:** Is it just a 2 _____? Maybe she doesn't know what you're asking for.
- N 1:** It's possible. But I can't tell because she's barely speaking to me.
- N 2:** She might just be anxious. It can be scary to feel terrible but not know why.
- N 1:** Yeah, she does seem 3 _____.
- N 2:** Did you use lots of 4 _____? In my experience, that makes things worse.
- N 1:** I might have. I mean, I asked her if she thought they might be migraines or cluster headaches.
- N 2:** See, if she has 5 _____, those terms might sound scarier than they are.

Speaking

8 With a partner, act out the roles below based on Task 7. Then, switch roles.

USE LANGUAGE SUCH AS:

- Maybe she doesn't know what you're ...*
She might just be ...
Did you use lots of ...?

Student A: Student B asks your advice about a patient. Talk about:

- miscommunication with patient
- how the patient may be feeling
- using too much jargon

Student B: You are a nurse having trouble talking with a patient. Ask Student A for advice.

Writing

9 Use the conversation from Task 8 and the memo to write tips on improving communication (100-120 words). Write about:

- patients' feelings
- avoiding jargon