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QUESTION:

In the nursing population, how does a nurse using moral and psychological empowerment help provide positive outcomes compared to nurses who do not affect how they handle moral distress?

SUMMARY:

Healthcare workers go through a lot of moral distress, especially nurses. Nurses are with the patient most of the time and get to know their patient on a different level. Therefore, it is no surprise the moral distress a nurse must go through during their career. For example, a patient refusing beneficial treatment because they cannot afford the cost can be a lot for nurse to handle if they run into this situation often. It is important for nurses to have some type of intervention that supports them when they feel they cannot do anything to shake the negative feelings. If a nurse were to never find a way to cope, then the career can turn out to be tough on an individual's life. According to the article *Effect of Moral Empowerment Program on Moral Distress in Intensive Care Unit Nurses*, "Moral distress has been experienced by about 67% of critical care nurses which causes many complications such as job dissatisfaction, loss of capacity for caring, and turnover for nurses and poor quality of care for patients as well as health system" (Abbasi et al., 2018). This statement alone shows just how common it is for nurses to experience moral distress. The writers of the article *Moral Courage and Psychosocial Empowerment Among Nurses* state "Psychological empowerment is an appropriate solution for enabling individuals to cope with mental pressures and work stressors" (Khoshmehr et al., 2020). The article also stated, "studies have shown that psychological empowerment is correlated with professional satisfaction, exerting a predictive effect on emotional commitment" (Khoshmehr et al., 2020). One can see here that empowerment plays a big role in nursing when it comes to coping with situations that cause moral distress. Texas A&M International University and their article *How Nurses Can Cope with Moral Distress* explained ways on how to recognize when one is experiencing moral distress.

1.) Ask yourself, "Am I feeling distress or showing symptoms?'
2.) Affirm it. "Yes, I am suffering, and I will share my feeling with a trusted colleague."
3.) Assess your willingness to change. "What can I do personally? How can I help my team?"
4.) "I plan to make changes to help myself."

(How Nurses Can Cope with Moral Distress, 2021)

CONCLUSION:

In conclusion, some may think that nursing is just a job where you go and give mediation and take care of patients all day, but it is so much more than that. After researching the positive impact moral and psychological empowerment that nurses use versus the ones who do not, there is indeed a difference in the outcomes. Moral distress creates and environment where the nurse finds it hard to do his/her job to their best potential. On the other hand, a nurse who takes a step back and realizes that they are experiencing moral distress can do something about it before it escalates. "The findings of other studies also demonstrate that increased development and

empowerment leads to reduced staff displacement, fatigue and work leave, prompted quality of nursing care, increased patient satisfaction, increased occupational satisfaction, and decreased turnover of nurses" (Khoshmehr et al., 2020). Nurses should consider having a plan to build on moral resilience, which can be very beneficial to nurse all over.

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Primary Article

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