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Unit 5 Z. Chapter 19

An ethical issue in nursing today is inadequate staffing and burnout. This is an ethical issue because code two of the ANA Code of Ethics for Nurses states “the nurse’s primary commitment is to the patient, whether an individual, family, group, community, or population” and when a nurse is burned out or when a facility is not being staffed properly, patient care is not being completed.

“Burnout and occupational stress among healthcare workers are increasingly being recognized as a significant threat to patient safety and care quality” (White et al., 2019). The article *Registered Nurse Burnout, job dissatisfaction, and missed care in nursing homes* explains how being burned out and exhausted is linked to adverse events, medical errors, healthcare associated infections, and malpractice lawsuits in the nursing home, but it is also relevant to acute care settings (White et al., 2019). It has been proven that in the hospital setting, when registered nurses are inadequately staffed with not enough resources, it becomes a safety issue and essential care for the patient does not get done (White et al., 2019).

COVID-19 has left a feeling of emotional and spiritual ill-being and has been a large part of healthcare facilities having inadequate staffing (Celano et al., 2022). A focus of healthcare facilities must shift to the recruitment and retention of nurses, and by promoting spiritual health and creating a culture of appreciation for nurses, so healthcare facilities will have less staffing issues. It has been predicted by the year 2030, the United states will be short more than 500,000 nurses, which can create a large issue of taking care of the currently aging baby boomer generation that is living longer with medical advances. The stressors of heavy workloads,

patients with comorbidities, and challenging work environments leads to burnout and compassion fatigue, but with COVID-19, nurses were now fearful of exposing themselves and their family to an unfamiliar illness, and nurses were being floated to unfamiliar floors which is a huge risk for their license if they make a mistake because they are unaware of procedure and policy (Celano et al., 2022).

While compensation, retention and sign on bonuses, and increased wages is a definite incentive to become a nurse and join a specific facility, it does not mean nurses will remain bedside. With this shortage, “it is important to provide whole-person care—mind, body, spirit—of nurses in order to engage and retain them in the workplace” (White et al., 2019).

#### References

Celano, T., Harris, S., Sawyer, A. T., & Hamilton, T. (2022, April). *Promoting spiritual well-being among nurses*. Nurse leader. Retrieved February 22, 2023, from

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