

Every year there are nurses and ancillary staff that are verbally and physically abused and even killed due to violence. A serious ethical issue that has plagued the Nursing Profession in recent years is workplace violence on the front of patients and family members. According to Nurse.org, 1 out of 4 nurses report being while on the job (Full Beaker, Inc., 2023). Violence in the nursing profession has quickly rose to the level of epidemic (Full Beaker, Inc., 2023). The joint commission has found that nurses are 4 times more likely to be assaulted than workers in private industries (Full Beaker, Inc., 2023). The US bureau of Labor Statistics cited healthcare workers are five times more likely to experience workplace violence compared to other professions (Full Beaker, Inc., 2023). A grim reality that most nurses recognize is that not all patients are the most warm and thankful. According to the article many nurses who report workplace violence sadly get accused of doing wrong to the patient, or provoking them, to act in the way the was abusive (Full Beaker, Inc., 2023). Some nurses even reported being disciplined or losing their job after these incidents (Full Beaker, Inc., 2023).

Most nurses enter the profession eager to care for and have compassion for their patients but find themselves in violent or abusive situation with patients or family members. These individuals are often provoked by mental illness, long wait times, inadequate care, frustration, and stress along with other issues. This puts nurses in a very tight corner deciding how to protect themselves in situations without themselves getting in trouble. Angela Simpson, a survivor of patient abuse, started a non-profit called Silent No More Foundation. She created a six-step plan to protect themselves (Full Beaker, Inc., 2023). First you must look to escape, next create a barrier between you and the attacker, then defend yourself with equal force to the attacker but not more, fourth report the attack, if needed take a leave of absence, finally get support or help if you need it (Full Beaker, Inc., 2023). The Silent No More Foundation encourages everyone to reach out to their state representatives to enact laws that protect health care workers. The foundation insists on the following terms: assault on a healthcare worker is a felony, two law enforcement officers should be present when caring for past offenders, facilities should have locator badges and panic buttons in all patient care areas, and healthcare workers should have anti-retaliation protections in place like any other assault victim (Full Beaker, Inc., 2023).

This directly correlates to number six of the ANA Code of Ethics for Nurses, "The nurse, through individual and collective effort, establishes, maintains, and improves the ethical environment of the work setting and conditions of employment that are conducive to safe, quality healthcare." No nurse should "accept" or "tolerate" that violence is "just part of the job." This article and foundation listed above are working to advance the nursing profession by increasing the safety of nurses in many different environments. By increasing penalties, identification of high-risk patients, and implementing protocols and safety measures nurse will be able to feel more comfortable come violent interactions. This topic should be more discussed in the workplace and information should be provided to all healthcare staff as to their rights and duties should a situation arise rather than being reactive after the fact.

Reference:

Full Beaker, Inc. (2023, September 10). *Nurses say violent assaults by patients are a silent epidemic*. Nurse.org. <https://nurse.org/articles/workplace-violence-in-nursing-and-hospitals/>