ETHICS ENGAGEMENT: PROFESSIONAL OBLIGATION?

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AGENDA

Introduction

Moral Inspiration

The State of Nursing
Nurses’ Experience with COVID Study
Academia as an Influencer = Nursing Graduate Course

Daniels Fund Ethics Initiative Principles and Application to the Nursing Profession

Summary
INTRODUCTION

**Ethical engagement:** Building relationships through serving mutual interests which should be a two-way street. Recognizing the diversity of individuals and communities

Based on this informal definition, do we as professionals, citizens of our community, country and society have a professional obligation to engage in ethics (in some fashion)?
Let’s begin with what we know about the state of the nursing profession
THE STATE OF NURSING

- Nursing is the nation's largest healthcare profession, with nearly 4.2 million registered nurses (RNs) nationwide. Of all licensed RNs, 84.1% are employed in nursing.¹
- Projection: more than 203,000 new registered nurse positions will be created each year from 2021-2031.²
- Registered Nurses comprise one of the largest segments of the U.S. workforce; among the highest paying large occupations. Nearly 55% of RNs worked in general medical and surgical hospitals, with an average salary of $77,600 per year according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics.²,³
- Nurses are primary providers of hospital patient care and deliver most of the nation's long-term care.
- Employment of registered nurses is projected to grow by 6% each year from 2021 to 2031.²
- Most healthcare services involve some form of care by nurses.
THE STATE OF NURSING

• Nursing operates independent.\textsuperscript{1}
• With more than three times as many RNs in the United States as physicians.\textsuperscript{3}
• Most registered nurses today enter practice with a baccalaureate degree offered by a four-year college or university.\textsuperscript{2}
• Employers are expressing a strong preference for new nurses with baccalaureate preparation.
• Findings from AACN latest survey on the Employment of New Nurse Graduates show that nearly 41% of employers require new hires to have a bachelor’s degree while 77% strongly prefer baccalaureate-prepared nurses.\textsuperscript{4}
• In 2020, 14.9% of the nation's registered nurses held a master's degree and 2.2% held a doctoral degree as their highest educational preparation.\textsuperscript{1}
Ask yourself: Do we have a professional obligation to engage in ethics (in some fashion)?
NURSES’ EXPERIENCE WITH COVID STUDY
Support from Within: Mental Health Needs and Deficits of Nurses During COVID-19

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We extend the healing ministry of Christ by caring for those who are ill and by nurturing the health of the people in our communities.
Research Team

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All research members have no conflicts of interest to disclose
PURPOSE

Purpose: The purpose of this study is to describe the lived experiences of Nurses who cared/prepared to care for COVID-19 patients.

Specific aims:
- To capture psychological impact including fear and uncertainty among Nurses who cared/prepared to care for COVID-19 patients in the Centura Healthcare System* focusing on mental health.

*Large Regional Healthcare System for Colorado and Western Kansas
AHA House Statement: America’s Mental Health Crisis
February 2, 2022

The Pandemic’s Toll on Behavioral Health of Health Care Workers

The nation’s entire health care workforce is strained from the ongoing pandemic, and health care workers often suffer emotional and physical stress from treating COVID-19 patients. A National Academy of Medicine study found that between 35%-54% of clinicians report at least one symptom of burnout, more than double the amount of burnout found in other fields.

By Tim Brouk, tbrouk@purdue.edu
Moral Inspiration: Nurses’ experience with covid study

Public Health Workers and Professionals

Stress to the public during the COVID-19 pandemic can lead to stress, anxiety, and emotions. How you cope with these emotions can affect your well-being, the well-being of others while doing your job, and the well-being of the people you care for during this pandemic. It is critical that you recognize what stress looks like, recognize and cope with stress, and know where to go if you need help.

Welcome, Nurses

Free Tools and Apps to Support the Mental Health and Resilience of All Nurses

**METHODOLOGY: Areas of Interest Explored**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Overall experience with caring for/preparing to care for COVID-19 patients</td>
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<tr>
<td>Negative experiences while caring for/preparing to care for COVID-19 patients (Emotions)</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Positive experiences while caring for/preparing to care for COVID-19 patients (Emotions)</td>
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<td>Feelings about the nursing profession: leaving/encouraging others to come into the profession; views toward nursing</td>
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<td>Effect on your health behavior</td>
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<td>Impact on personal health</td>
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<td>Impact on mental health</td>
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<td>Feelings about receiving vaccine as a healthcare worker</td>
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**METHODOLOGY: Areas of Interest Explored**

- Feelings about nurses who are not working with COVID-19 patients
- Suggestions for improving your experience
- Tools/resources to improve the situation
- Emotional resources and/or physical resources (i.e. testing, vaccine, etc.)
- Communication issues that you would improve
- Negative or positive experiences with leadership
- Advice would you give providers, staff or fellow nursing colleagues or leadership
- Academia help with training new nurses
QUALITATIVE RESULTS – Mental Health

19 Focus Groups
648 Total Codes

Mental Health – 18 Codes

Mental Health Themes
1. The Human Cost is TOO MUCH to Bear
2. Moral Injury – Relentless
3. Emotionally Worn Out – Whole World is Paused, Not for Nurses
4. No Resources – No Outlets
5. Numbness – Mental PPE

“I would definitely say that mental health it, kind of, gets – – Sent to the sidelines because it’s the last thing on the list”
Mental Health Theme 2

Moral Injury – Relentless

• Situation/Environment did not allow nurses to perform in alignment with ethical code of conduct or personal beliefs
• Core values violated as nurses – Lose-Lose, you cannot win
• Self-identified moral injury by subjects – deeply felt as damaging to their values
• No easing of pressure due to constant emotional and spiritual pain
• Emotional impacts: Guilt, feeling used
2. Moral Injury – Relentless

It's a moral injury if you want to do better and now our hands are tied and we can't, and we're the ones that are going to have to live with that.

I'm not a hero; I went through moral injury because I was put in a situation that I could never win. So, does that make me a hero or does that make me stupid for going through that?

I think one of the hardest things was to watch like the broken spirit of the hospital that I was working for; I mean my floor had two codes a night with like 44 patients—like that's not good odds, and it was just constant like all over the hospital, and you could just tell everybody, they had given up before they started, things like watching their basic BLS skills fall apart, watching them just waiting until they could call it after the second round of Epi; like it was really, really hard because you could tell that they had just been inundated for so long.
Ask yourself: Do we have a professional obligation to engage in ethics (in some fashion)?
ACADEMIA AS AN INFLUENCER TO PROMOTE ETHICAL ENGAGEMENT
Assignment Preparation: This assignment is designed for you to begin applying principle-based ethics to a real-life scenario that you could possibly face in your own nursing practice.

- Make sure you have read the articles/documents on Daniels Fund Ethical Principles.
- Play the following video that captures an interview where RaDonda Vaught talks to Eva Pilgrim about her tragic mistake that left a patient dead and the unprecedented criminal charges and conviction that followed.

Address the following:
- What are the key facts in this situation? (5 points)
- What do you know for sure? (2 points)
- What is not known? (3 points)
- What are the personal values of the person making the decision and the organization's values? (5 points)
- Which of the following Daniels Fund Ethical Principles are most relevant to this situation? NOTE: Ensure that you address at least 4 of the principles. (10 points)
- If you had an opportunity to sit with the stakeholders (fellow nurses, leadership, local/state/national policy makers), what moral courage strategies would you recommend? Also, what motto would you promote to help nurses become stronger in their courage? (5 points).
RADONDA VAUGHT: FORMER NURSE SPEAKS AFTER SENTENCING IN FATAL DRUG ERROR

https://youtu.be/69hdAy6oay8
Application to Nursing
“…Reminding nurses to take accountability for their actions, because it’s the right thing to do, even if there are consequences.”
Moral Inspiration: Academia as an Influencer

THIS IS WHAT STUDENTS SAID ABOUT MORAL COURAGE

- Periodic ethics training
- Hotline: “safe to tell”
- Open door policy
- Sit with stakeholders
- Develop trust

- Use “CODE”: Courage, obligation, Danger and Expression
- Communication
- Promote moral courage
- Be honest and set an example
WHAT MORAL COURAGE STRATEGIES WOULD YOU RECOMMEND?

• Take a 3 x 5 card from your table
• Write down 3 moral courage strategies that you feel could be implemented within your work environment
• Can you share one of these strategies with all of us?
MORAL COURAGE, MORAL DISTRESS & MORAL INJURY ETHICS ASSIGNMENT

• Assignment Preparation: Identify a moral injury, moral distress or a moral courage article.
• Address the following:
  • Describe an ethical dilemma that you recently have been involved in and how this dilemma went against your organization's policy. If it did not go against your organization's policy, how did it affect your moral courage? (5 points)
  • As a professional nurse, how can you help yourself and colleagues develop moral courage in order to face real world ethical dilemmas and engage with others or respond to ethical situations that might impact outcomes related to other's experiences. (5 points)
  • As a professional nurse, write an “elevator” statement (one paragraph) to describe how nursing leadership can improve the work environment to decrease moral distress and moral injury. (7 points)
  • Attach the article you found that addresses either moral courage, moral distress, or moral Injury, and its relationship to leadership (search the literature with these terms). (3 points)
HOW WE GET THERE

MORAL DISTRESS

• Occurs when one knows the right thing to do but institutional constraints (policies, etc.) make it nearly impossible to take the right course of action
• Results in anger, frustration, hopelessness, depression, anxiety, fatigue, distancing, violence

MORAL INJURY

• Damage to done to one’s conscience
• Psychological, social & spiritual trauma which results from acts transgress ethical values
• Results in stress, tension disorder, burnout, depression, health crisis

MORAL COURAGE

• Mental and moral strength to venture, preserve, and withstand danger, fear or difficulty
• Pulling from attributes such as persistence, bravery, overcoming fear & self-advocacy
• Results in fairness, quality, team spirit, honesty and what you describe as a successful outcome
“…nurses who are conscientious, who display **courageous actions**, provide high quality care, and have a **strong set of personal values**, show a link between moral courage and this **conscientious behavior**. In general nurses who are likely to display moral courage and **speak-out** if there is a concern or question about an ethical incident, are the nurses who have a strong commitment to the profession, value principles, **display quality human characteristics** and are **sensitive to others suffering**, and who respect workplace polices, and are compassionate in their overall abilities to care.”
WHAT IS YOUR “ELEVATOR” STATEMENT?

• As a promotor of ethics, here is a little exercise to engage your MORAL COURAGE.
• Turn to a colleague, friend or new friend at your table or sitting next to you. If you are attending virtually, this is a time you can talk to yourself about how you would improve the work environment.
• In 1 minute, give your elevator statement to your new colleague (or old) on how you would improve your work environment to decrease moral distress and moral injury
• Who wants to share their “elevator” statement?
AGAIN: Ask yourself:
Do we have a professional obligation to engage in ethics (in some fashion)?
MORAL RESILIENCY

BUILD A DAILY MENTAL PRACTICE

FIND A BUDDY

TAKE ACTION
Moral courage is the most valuable and usually the most absent characteristic in men

George S. Patton
REFERENCES


6) Daniels Fund Ethics Initiative Collegiate Program at UCCS College of Business. https://business.uccs.edu/resources/ethics/about
THANK YOU!

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