Fostering Nurse Resiliency Through Purposeful Interventions

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Background

Resilience involves recognition of a stressor, stepping back and becoming aware of the effects that a stressor is causing, deciding on the next step, and then proceeding. Therefore, resilience is rebounding from a stressor through mindful practice. Resilience is a process that can change over time, particularly as one learns from past stressors.[8, 10]

Nurse leaders in both the clinical practice and academic settings are faced with unprecedented challenges that stem from recovery from a pandemic health care crisis. This, coupled with pre-existing operational challenges resulting in burnout, poses a threat to the safety, quality, and patient experience of care. "Bounce back", described by researchers as a central quality of resilience, is measured on the continuum on how one responds and returns to a normal level of functioning following an adverse or stressful event.[6]

Promoting longevity and retention in the nursing profession is a primary goal of nurse leaders in academic and practice settings. Nurse leaders must provide interventions that build and foster resilience in nursing students, new graduates, and the experienced nurse.

The manifestations of burnout may vary for those aspiring to enter the profession, those immersed with different experience, and those serving in leadership roles. Additionally, the solution to address burnout is not a one-size-fits-all solution; however, strengthening resilience within the nursing profession can positively influence learning, staff retention, morale, and operational financial performance.[5]

Using the Compassionate Connected Care Framework for the Caregiver is essential for addressing the issue with burnout and turnover in a multigenerational nurse workforce. The framework identifies the clinical, operational, cultural and connected aspects of the caregiver experience coupled with measurement of engagement and practice environment to identify area of improvement.[5]

This project serves to provide leaders with a collection of evidence-based interventions to strengthen resilience in the academic and clinical setting.

Compassionate Connected Care Framework for Caregivers

Review of the Literature

Nursing Education

Overcoming adversity and learning from the lessons those experiences afford is a hallmark of building resiliency in nursing students.[10] Nursing faculty must ensure that students entering the profession learn the skills needed to build and foster their resiliency as they move through academia and into the workforce. A review of resilience literature specific to students reveals several strategies to assist students in this process.

Student Strategies
- Social support[10]
  - Family, friends, peers, pets
- Reflect and persevere[10]
- Self-care and mindfulness

- Reframe clinical experiences [1, 10]
  - Negative to positive
  - Link previous experiences to present ones

Faculty Strategies
- Resiliency education in class and clinical settings[9, 10]
- Simulation and debriefing[9]
- Caring relationships with students[1]

Clinical Practice

Resilience in clinical practice can mitigate the effects of workplace stress which ultimately leads to a healthier work environment.[2, 11]
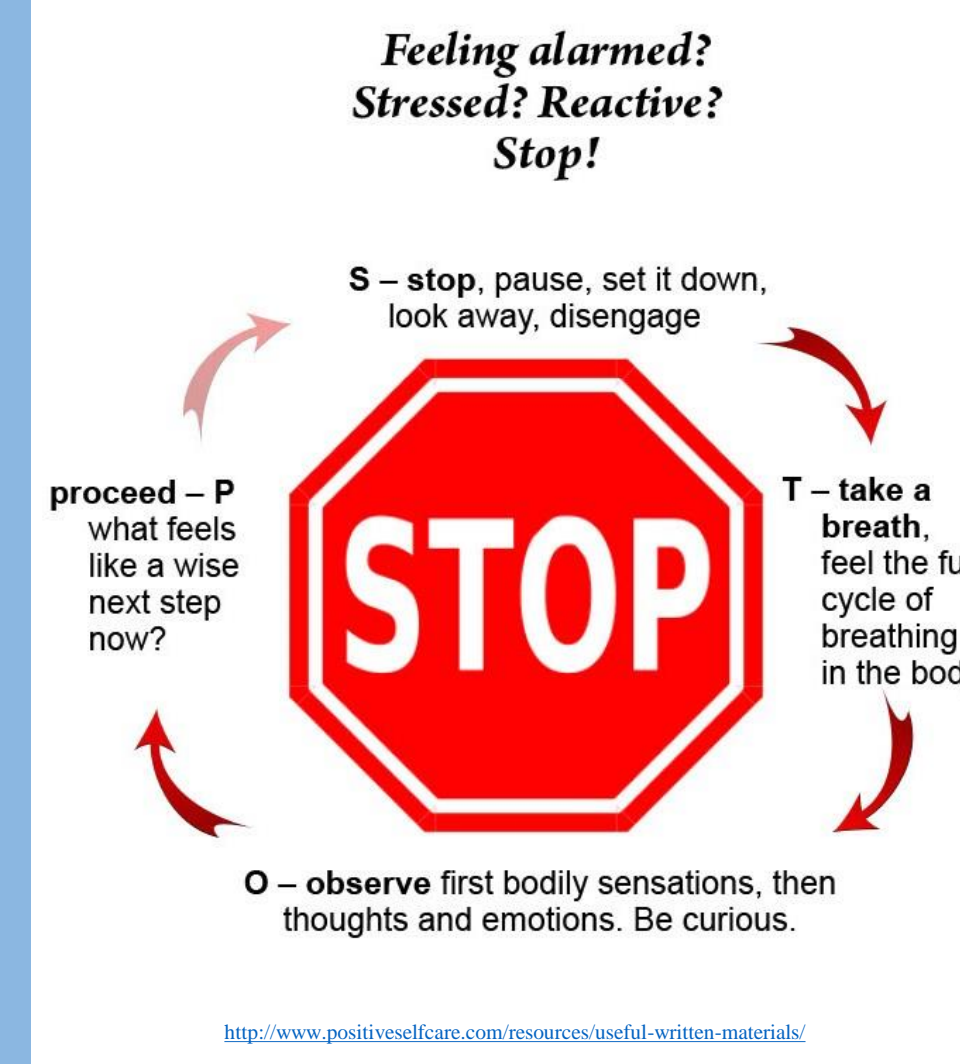
Interventions for Personal Resilience at Work
- Breathing exercises
- Maintaining a positive outlook
- Identify ways to become more engaged at work
- Demonstrate effective prioritization and time management strategies
- Use the STOP practice

Interventions for Fostering a Resilient Work Environment
- Identifying a quiet space for reflection
- Facilitate event debriefing
- Offer strategies for recognition
- Define roles and responsibilities
- Provide and maintain a safe work environment

The STOP practice [2]

Feeling alarmed? Stressed? Reactive? Stop!

S – stop, pause, set it down, look away, disengage

T – take a breath, feel the full cycle of breathing in the body

proceed – P what feels like a wise next step now?

O – observe first bodily sensations, then thoughts and emotions. Be curious.

http://www.positivedCare.com/resources/useful-written-materials/

Nursing Leadership

For nurse leaders, the development of resilience in ourselves supports well-being and engagement in those we lead. Modeling behaviors that foster personal resilience is key to developing a workforce that is able to "bounce back" in times of adversity or stress, preventing burnout and promoting joy. Resources in the environment can be innate or learned and support wellness and resilience in more than one category. [3, 4, 12]

Interventions for Physical Resilience
- Sleep
- Exercise/ decompression
- Healthy eating

Interventions for Mental Resilience
- Mindfulness practices such as meditation
- Journaling
- Reflective practices
- Healthy decompression activities

Interventions for Social Resilience
- Seek out and provide mentoring
- Expect good work-life balance and integration
- Nurture high-quality relationships, both personal and professional

Interventions for Emotional Resilience
- Cognitive reappraisal- reframing negative thoughts
- Gratitude Practices
- Develop self-awareness through leadership training or coaching
- Identify core values and vision - understand your "why"

file:///C:/Users/awilk001/Downloads/LOWB01_UM_School%20of%20Nursing%20NLI_Leading%20Authentically%20Workbook_FINAL%20(1).pdf

Be a Resiliency Leader

Using evidence-based recommendations and improvement science, nurse leaders are in a unique position to assess student and staff resiliency and implement key interventions to foster increased resiliency skills.

Resiliency Training Programs
- Implement resiliency programs, beginning in undergraduate curricula and extending into clinical practice settings. Topics should include [4, 7, 10]
  - resiliency
  - empowerment
  - conflict management
  - teamwork
  - positive coping strategies
  - mindfulness
  - values clarification
  - emotional intelligence

Mindfulness
- Assist students and staff to reframe negative experiences into positive ones simply by asking, "What did you learn?" [10]
- Encourage "reflection-in-action" in the clinical setting, but also through journaling when students and staff are away from the busyness of class and practice experiences [1, 10]
- Teach the STOP technique for stressful situations
- Create a "Gratefulness" board on which students and staff can share anonymously that which makes them grateful
- Provide stress-relief activities in the lounge, i.e. coloring posters and markers
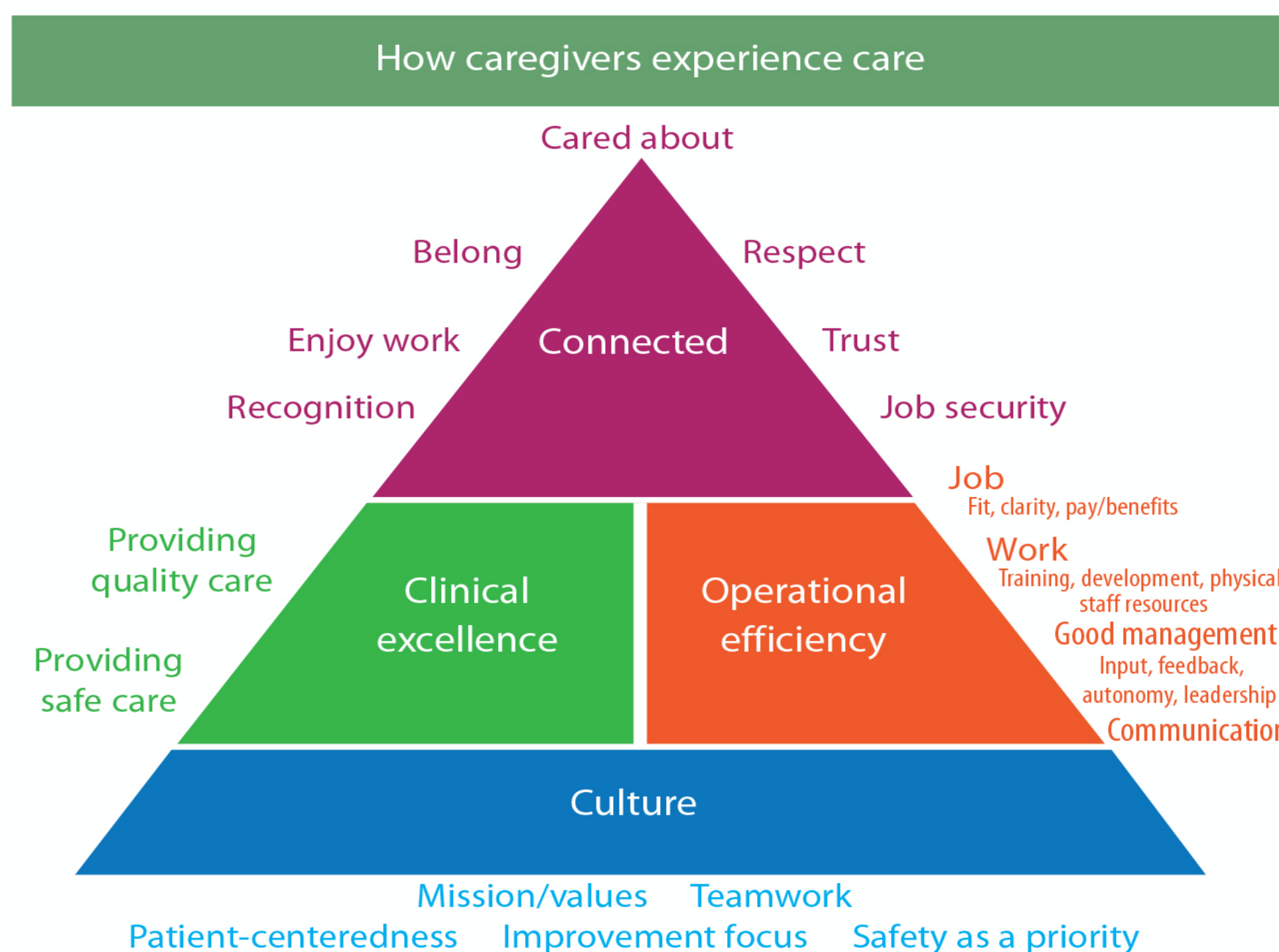- Frequent workplace group interventions such as yoga, meditation, music [12]

Culture
- Use Institute for Healthcare Improvement's tool kit
  - Ask staff (students) what matters to them
  - Identify impediments to a positive environment
  - Commit to an organization-wide approach to joy
  - Use improvement science to test interventions/change ideas
- Model and promote teamwork through relationship building
- Meaningfully recognize students and staff
- Ensure role clarity [3]
- Model and support work-life balance as a priority for the team [4]

Social Support
- Be approachable, accessible, and authentic
- Demonstrate and expect kindness and compassion [3]
- Academia
  - Include families and significant others in nursing program orientations
  - Encourage students to engage with their support systems [1, 10, 12]
  - Develop a caring and supportive relationship with students [1]
  - Check-in with students often about their anxieties as they move through their education and toward professional practice [1]
  - Encourage social gatherings inclusive of faculty and students
- Clinical practice
  - Actively mentor staff, and seek out mentoring yourself [4]
  - Encourage social gatherings inclusive of staff and leadership

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https://www.nyuuntcampus.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/11/aat11-CE/Suffering-CompassionateCaregivers.png

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