

Work to prevent burnout

By Catherine Spader, RN

From stressed out to burned out

High levels of workplace stress can fuel nursing burnout—and negative outcomes for nurses and patients. A majority of nurses report that stress increases resignations, reduces engagement, and negatively impacts patient care, according to a 2019 work-life balance survey conducted by Bright Horizons in partnership with the journal *American Nurse Today*.^{*} Addressing the stressors that contribute to burnout risk is vital to improving patient safety, job satisfaction, and nurse retention.



Who is stressed?

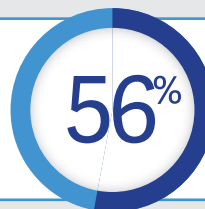
70% of nurses say their **work/workload** causes them **stress**.

39% have **cancelled** or **missed** a shift because they needed a **mental health day**.

Frequency of burnout

On the whole, **one in four** nurses report **feeling burned out** one or more times per month. However, the picture is **much starker** in organizations that **lack** great work cultures.

Among nurses who **don't feel** like their organization **has a great** culture:



feel burned out **multiple** times per **week**.



feel burned out **every day**.

Burnout among the generations

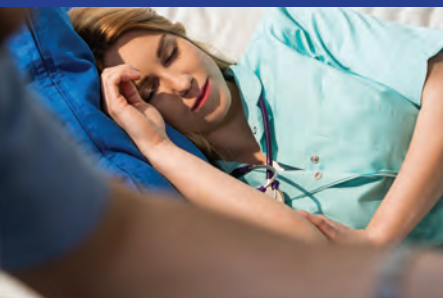
Younger nurses experience **higher rates** of **burnout** than older nurses.

25% of **millennials** experience burnout one or more times a month, and **22%** experience it multiple times a week.

26% of **Gen Xers** experience burnout one or more times a month, and **17%** experience it multiple times a week.

19% of **baby boomers** experience burnout (both monthly and weekly).

What reduces stress?



Nurses were asked to select options their employers could offer that would help them manage stress. Preferences included:

48% desired a quiet or wellness room where they could rejuvenate.

45% wanted more choice in their work schedules.

40% chose mentorship and coaching.

21% picked employee support groups.

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^{*}The survey was conducted in May 2019 and represents 1,323 nurses. Respondents represent a cross section of employment settings, educational levels, and ages, including baby boomers, Gen Xers, and millennials. Sixty percent work in a hospital, 85% work full-time, and 70% have attained a BSN or higher degree.

Staffing, environment, and burnout

Compelling evidence shows a link between nursing work environments and stress, burnout, and staff turnover. A 2017 study published in *International Nursing Review* stated, “Improving the work environment for nurses may lead to lower levels of job dissatisfaction, intention to leave, and burnout.”¹

A key feature of the work environment is staffing. The 2018 Critical Care Nurse Work Environment Study found that “Appropriate staffing is the most concerning element of the health of critical care nurse work environments.”² In addition, a report from Healthy Nurse, Healthy Nation™ noted that:

- More than half (**53%**) of respondents often have to work through their breaks to complete their assigned workload.
- More than a quarter (**26%**) of respondents say they are often assigned a higher workload than they are comfortable with.³

1. Nantsupawat A, Kunaviktikul W, Nantsupawat R, Wichaikhum OA, Thienthong H, Poghosyan L. Effects of nurse work environment on job dissatisfaction, burnout, intention to leave. *Int Nurs Rev.* 2017;64(1):91-98.
2. Ulrich B, Barden C, Cassidy L, Varn-Davis N. Critical care nurse work environments 2018: Findings and implications. *Crit Care Nurse.* 2019;39(2):67-84.
3. American Nurses Association. *Healthy Nurse, Healthy Nation: Year One Highlights 2017-2018.* nursingworld.org/~4ab629/globalassets/docs/ana/practice/hnhn17-18highlights.pdf.



Tips and strategies

Be **proactive** in addressing the **causes** of **burnout** by reducing chief sources of **stress** so nurses **can focus** on giving the **best care** and achieve job **satisfaction**.

● **Increase** nursing control over the work environment by bolstering shared governance programs and supporting members' ideas and decisions.

● **Consider** self-staffing options and budget for increased staffing when numbers and acuties rise unexpectedly.

● **Develop** support services that help reduce stress, such as an employee-driven wellness committee, a mentorship program, and group social offerings.

● **Provide** an employee assistance program and family benefits that help nurses navigate child and elder care challenges.

● **Ensure** nurses can take allotted breaks in the cafeteria or designated break room away from patient care.



“To reduce burnout, Children’s Health offers an array of benefits to help address stressors outside of the work environment. In addition to healthcare and retirement benefits, we offer day-care services, including home or facility backup care for sick children or inclement weather situations. We subsidize transit passes and provide employee care funds to help staff impacted by a catastrophic event. Children’s Health also partially matches dependent day-care flexible spending accounts and offers virtual doctor visits for urgent or mental health care.”

—Tim Adams, Director, Benefits & Wellness Programs,
Human Resources, Children’s Health, Dallas

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Recruit and retain with education and certification

By Catherine Spader, RN

What nurses want: More than a paycheck

Nurses in today's rapidly evolving job market are looking for more than a paycheck. They're ambitious and want to build fulfilling, meaningful careers that take them from new grad to retirement. Education and certification are prized as critical elements in their drive to continue to learn and grow, according to a 2019 work-life balance survey conducted by Bright Horizons in partnership with the journal *American Nurse Today*.*

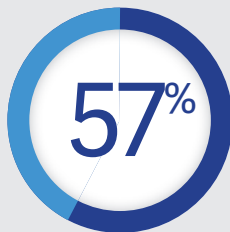


Nurses are looking for professional growth and career advancement

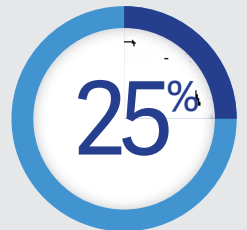
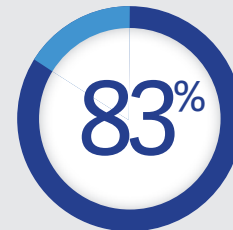
44% of **nurses** plan to **continue** or **are** currently continuing **their education**.

#1 **ADN** and **BSN** nurses' career path **choice** is an **advanced clinical position**.

Cost is a **barrier** to educational goals for **57%** of **nurses**.



83% would give **preference** to an **employer offering tuition** assistance; **25%** of millennial and Gen X nurses would **accept** a **job only** if tuition assistance was **offered**.



Financial assistance helps recruit and retain nurses



Nurses were asked what would keep them with their employer for 5 years. Baby boomers, Gen Xers, and millennials all answered the same way: They want to stay with employers who financially support education and certification.

- 65% of nurses would stay at their current job 5 years if their employer covered the cost of their next degree or certification.
- 47% of nurses would stay at their current job for the next 5 years if it paid down their student debt.
- Paying down student debt was significantly more important to millennial and Gen X nurses than baby boomers.

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Education is a win-win

You can improve the quality of care at your organization by supporting nurses to obtain higher education. According to a 2018 analysis in *Health Affairs*, "...[E]ach 10-percentage-point increase in the hospital share of nurses with a BSN was associated with 24 percent greater odds of surviving to discharge with good cerebral performance among patients who experienced in-hospital cardiac arrest."¹ A 2017 systematic review published in *International Nursing Review* noted, "...Nurses with higher education also embraced professional values as fundamental for quality nursing care practice."²

1. Harrison JM, Aiken LH, Sloane DM, et al. In hospitals with more nurses who have baccalaureate degrees, better outcomes for patients after cardiac arrest. *Health Aff.* 2019;38(7):1087-1094.
2. Sibandze BT, Scafide KN. Among nurses, how does education level impact professional values? A systematic review. *Int Nurs Rev.* 2018;65(1):65-77.



Tips and strategies

Recruit and **retain** career-driven nurses by **providing** what they **want** most for **long-term** career **growth**: **opportunities** to gain knowledge, develop skills, and **grow** in their careers to **fulfill** their **dreams**.

- **Ensure** your human resources department, talent acquisition team, and all managers and staff are aware of education benefits.

- **Develop** or expand clinical ladder programs, which typically include points for staff education efforts.

- **Cover** the cost of specialty certification, including prep courses and test fees, through your tuition program.

- **Offer** college planning support such as financial planning.

- **Develop** flexible scheduling practices that allow nurses to attend classes and study for certification exams.

- **Evaluate** how education benefits meet career needs at different life stages.



"Children's HealthSM in North Texas encourages education and certification by providing a Learning Concierge Service. Through this service, a Learning Advisor connects nurses and other team members to learning opportunities and programs, while supporting the creation of individual development plans. The advisor promotes self-directed professional development in line with Magnet Recognition Program[®] targets including degree programs, specialty certifications, and scholarships."

— W. David Campbell, MSN, RN-BC, Senior Director, Organizational Learning

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Enhance nurse engagement

By Catherine Spader, RN

Positive work culture = nurse engagement

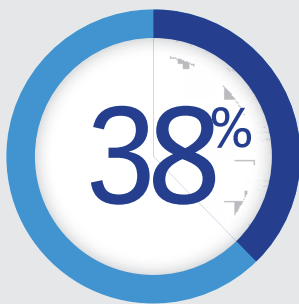
How do you foster a work environment that supports and engages nurses? An engaged nurse is less prone to competitor poaching and improves patient safety and outcomes by:

- embracing continuing education
- supporting teamwork and mentoring other staff
- actively participating in shared governance
- advancing and perfecting skills.

A positive work culture is the keystone of nurse engagement, and it can help recruit and retain nurses by promoting quality care. Nearly all (99%) nurses agree that a healthcare organization's work culture affects patient care, according to a 2019 work-life balance survey conducted by Bright Horizons in partnership with the journal *American Nurse Today*.*



Work culture impacts turnover and recruitment



of respondents say their organization **does not** have a **great work culture**, and this **inversely correlates** with likelihood to **recommend** their employer to others.

Of those who say their organization **does not** have a **great work culture**...

76% have **seriously considered** leaving their employer in the past 6 months.

Only 2% of nurses are **highly likely** to **recommend** their employer (9 or 10 on a 10 point scale), **compared** with 55% of nurses working in a **great culture**.

Education bolsters engagement



Nurses are motivated to advance their skills, and young nurses are especially hungry to continue learning. They aspire to advanced clinical roles and teaching jobs at significantly higher levels than older nurses, so it's vital that employers support education and foster a positive work culture to engage the new generation of career-minded nurses.

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How relationships shape **work culture**

Negative workplace relationships have a negative impact on work culture and nurse engagement and retention.

- Unchecked bullying in healthcare organizations can lead to lower morale, lower productivity, absenteeism, and increased turnover, according to The Joint Commission.¹
- A report from Healthy Nurse, Healthy Nation™ found that over 25% of nurses have experienced verbal or nonverbal aggression from a peer in the last year.²
- Among nurse respondents in the work-life balance survey, 65% say that a negative relationship with a supervisor would make them leave their current job.

1. The Joint Commission. Quick Safety: Bullying has no place in health care. June 2016. [jointcommission.org/assets/1/23/Quick_Safety_Issue_24_June_2016.pdf](https://www.jointcommission.org/assets/1/23/Quick_Safety_Issue_24_June_2016.pdf)

2. American Nurses Association. *Healthy Nurse, Healthy Nation: Year One Highlights 2017-2018*. nursing-world.org/~4ab629/globalassets/docs/ana/practice/hnhn17-18highlights.pdf.



Tips and strategies

Improve nurse engagement by building a framework to support a healthy, positive work culture.

● **Create** an environment where continuing professional development is valued, supported, and rewarded through clinical ladder programs, tuition assistance, and advancement opportunities.

● **Develop** a competency program for all staff that teaches skills in professional communication and conflict negotiation.

● **Provide** a nonpunitive process that allows staff to express and work out grievances and differences.

● **Enforce** a zero-tolerance policy for bullying.

● **Nurture** a Just Culture in the organization. This includes supporting and rewarding staff for reporting adverse events, as well as providing safety-related information.



"An investment in professional development has been helpful in decreasing turnover and improving nurse engagement. To support nurses to achieve professional certification, we have worked to remove as many barriers as possible. We host certification review courses, cover the registration fees, provide paid education time for the nurses to attend the review courses, and pay examination fees up front so the staff have little out-of-pocket expense."

— Jamie Wiggins, DNS(c), RN, NEA-BC, FACHE, Senior Vice President, Chief Nursing Officer, Children's Hospital New Orleans

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Preserve talent by supporting the whole nurse

By Catherine Spader, RN

A key factor in nurse recruitment: *Work-life balance*

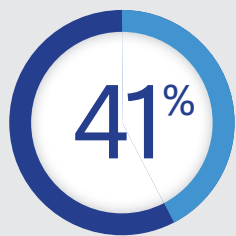
Today's nurses are looking for employers that help them balance the challenges of work with the need to rest and recharge, care for family, and improve wellness. In fact, work-life balance was the most important factor considered by nurses when accepting their current positions, according to a 2019 survey conducted by Bright Horizons in partnership with the journal *American Nurse Today*.* This top choice was consistent across all generations.



Family-friendly benefits that attract nurses

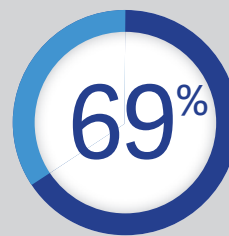
76% of millennial nurses prefer or will **only accept** a position that offers **paid parental leave** (compared to **34%** for baby boomers and **45%** of Gen Xers).

42% of millennial nurses want **better family care** supports, such as **childcare**, **elder care**, and **backup care**.



of **Gen X nurses** give preference to an organization that **offers emergency back-up care** for adult relatives.

Work-life balance impacts turnover



of nurses say **poor work-life balance** would make them **leave their current jobs**.

Unmet family needs impact absenteeism



- Nurses with caretaking responsibilities were overwhelmingly more than noncaretakers to miss/cancel a shift in the past 6 months (**56%** vs. **44%**).
- Caretakers report a much greater need than noncaretakers to miss/cancel a shift to care for a sick child or adult (**30%** vs. **1%**).

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Nurse wellness **optimizes patient** care

A report from Healthy Nurse, Healthy Nation™ revealed that 64% of nurses surveyed put the health, safety, and wellness of their patients before their own.¹ The report also says that “Nurses give the best care to patients when they’re operating at their own peak wellness.” This underscores the need for employers to champion nurse wellness and make it part of their work culture.

1. American Nurses Association. *Healthy Nurse, Healthy Nation: Year One Highlights 2017-2018*. nursingworld.org/~4ab629/globalassets/docs/ana/practice/hnhn17-18highlights.pdf.



Tips and strategies

Help nurses **strike** the optimal **work-life balance** by **creating** a **foundation** of **support**.

Establish a wellness committee that champions good health for the staff. Examples of committee activities include distributing healthy recipes and planning staff activities, such as yoga classes.

Consider offering benefits that help nurses balance family and work responsibilities. Examples include paid parental leave, on-site childcare, and backup child and adult care.

Provide plenty of fresh fruits and vegetables, whole-grain carbohydrates, and low-fat protein and dairy foods in the cafeteria. Stock vending machines with low-sodium, low-fat snacks with no added sugar.

Offer free health screenings and programs to address smoking cessation, dietary and meal planning, and mental and emotional health, and track associated reductions in health plan costs.

Communicate wellness benefits in personalized ways, related to nurses’ life stage, family needs, and health goals.



“At Houston Methodist we prefer the term work-life integration. How do we encourage our nurses and other employees to integrate work into their lives? We make it easier for them to access support for what they prioritize in life. For many, staying healthy and fit is a priority, so all our facilities have fitness centers that are open 24/7. We also provide hundreds of wellness classes every year from yoga to managing stress to nutrition and weight loss. We also encourage ongoing education by offering direct billing (up to \$4,000 per year) from colleges for employees enrolled in courses. We know the better our employees can integrate work with their priorities, the more engaged and committed they are to our patients and to Houston Methodist.”

—Carole Hackett, Senior Vice President of Human Resources

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