Effective Interventions for Nursing Student Burnout

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Abstract

Background/Introduction
Burnout in nursing students negatively impacts students' health, decreases academic success, increases attrition, and threatens the quality of patient care. Moreover, burnout during nursing school is linked to lower levels of skill mastery and intention to leave nursing one-year postgraduation. As of February 2022, the average turnover rate in bedside nurses is up to 37%, and burnout is a key driver of nurse workforce attrition. There is an urgent need to address the overwhelming severity of nursing student burnout to build a resilient nursing workforce and improve the quality of patient care.

Purpose
To identify empiric research evaluating the effectiveness of interventions to prevent nursing student burnout.

Methods or Processes/Procedures
This scoping review examined the PubMed, CINAHL, PsycINFO, and Google Scholar databases to identify original studies evaluating burnout interventions in nursing students.

Results
Of the 258 studies identified in the primary search, 208 were screened, and 29 were selected for full-text review. Five quantitative reports and one qualitative study met the inclusion criteria. Six reports that evaluated six different interventions were included in this review. Effective interventions included recreational music-making, mindfulness-based and resilience education, integral-caring-holistic-science curriculum, Acceptance and Commitment Training, and progressive muscle relaxation. Statistically significant reductions in burnout were reported in all 5 of the quantitative studies.

Limitations
This review captured reports evaluating the effectiveness of nursing student burnout interventions, but there may be value in identifying all interventions attempted for nursing student burnout. Significant limitations reported in the studies were attrition and study design.

Conclusions/Implications for Practice
The variation in study design, sample size, analysis, findings reported, and intervention types, doses, and duration limited the ability to compare intervention effectiveness. More research is needed to determine the most effective interventions to combat nursing student burnout. Burnout interventions should be embedded in the nursing curriculum to yield a more sustainable profession.

Biography

Shannon Burleson received a B.S. in Biology (2008), BSN (2012), MSN in nursing education (2019), and PhD in nursing with an integrative health and education focus (2023). Shannon has worked in critical care settings as an ICU RN, a flight RN, a cardiovascular catheterization lab RN, and a chest pain coordinator. With over 25 years of horse experience, Shannon also founded Sage Patch Ranch, a 501c3 equine rescue and equine-assisted activity center. She currently teaches at the Orvis School of Nursing with a primary research interest in studying a resilience equine-assisted learning program to reduce nursing student burnout.

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