

# Safety and Quality Begins with a Strong Professional Identity- A Mixed Methods Study

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1



## Objectives

Participants will be able to:

- Describe results from a study on Professional Identity in Nursing from the perspective of practicing nurses
- Discuss the relationships between Professional Identity in Nursing, Safety and Quality in Healthcare, and Nurse Retention
- Consider the implications of ensuring strong Professional Identity in all nurses

2

## Study methods

- Survey using Qualtrics
  - N = 718 in a northwestern state in the US
  - Descriptive statistics and qualitative responses
    - Thematic Analysis

A few of the questions....	
Are you familiar with the concept of Professional Identity?	Yes 70% No 30%
Do you think professional identity is critical to functioning in a nursing role?	Yes 74% Not Sure 21% No 5%
Nurses with a strong professional identity to nursing stand out as having a higher impact than those who do not possess this attribute.	True 92% False 8%
Healthcare agencies can contribute to professional identity through their mission, values, programs, practices, and other mechanisms.	True 97% False 3%
Healthcare agencies have an obligation to advance professional identity.	True 80% False 20%
Does the clinical agency you are associated with have a process for ensuring nurses have a strong professional identity?	Yes 28% Not sure 25% No 26% N/A 20%

Rank	Values/Ethics	Knowledge	Prof. Comportment	Leadership
1	330 (58.3%)	148 (26.1%)	66 (11.7%)	22 (3.9%)
2	160 (28.3%)	203 (35.9%)	161 (28.4%)	42 (7.4%)
3	58 (10.2%)	162 (28.6%)	208 (36.7%)	138 (24.4%)
4	18 (3.2%)	53 (9.4%)	131 (23.1%)	364 (64.3%)
Avg. Rank	1.6	2.2	2.7	3.5

3

## Qualitative Results

- How do you think having a strong professional nursing identity impacts practice?
- How do you think failure to form a strong professional identity impacts practice?
- Describe the process at your clinical agency for ensuring that nurses have a strong professional identity.

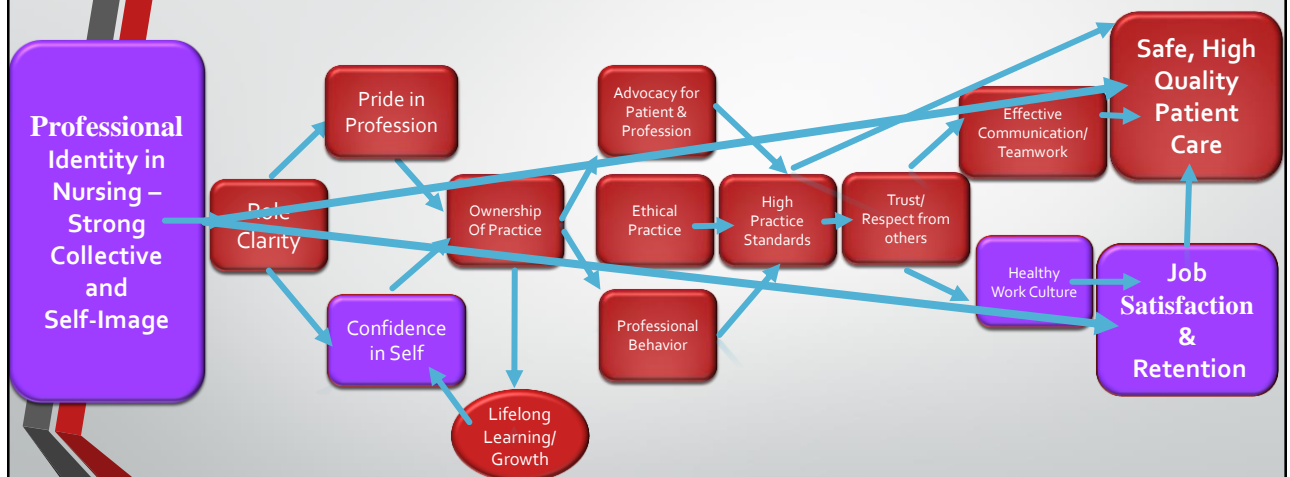
4

## How do you think having a strong professional nursing identity impacts practice?

- "I believe that nurses with a strong professional identity inherently know how to do what is best for the patients. They are able to advocate for patients by active listening, applying what they learn to make sound decisions regarding a patient's care. Without that professional identity, nursing is just a job with tasks to perform."
- "Every thing I do and every way I do it when I am a nurse comes from my nursing identity which, for me is an inherent part of my soul and core identity and how I live in the world from breath to breath and moment to moment."

5

## How do you think having a strong professional nursing identity impacts practice?



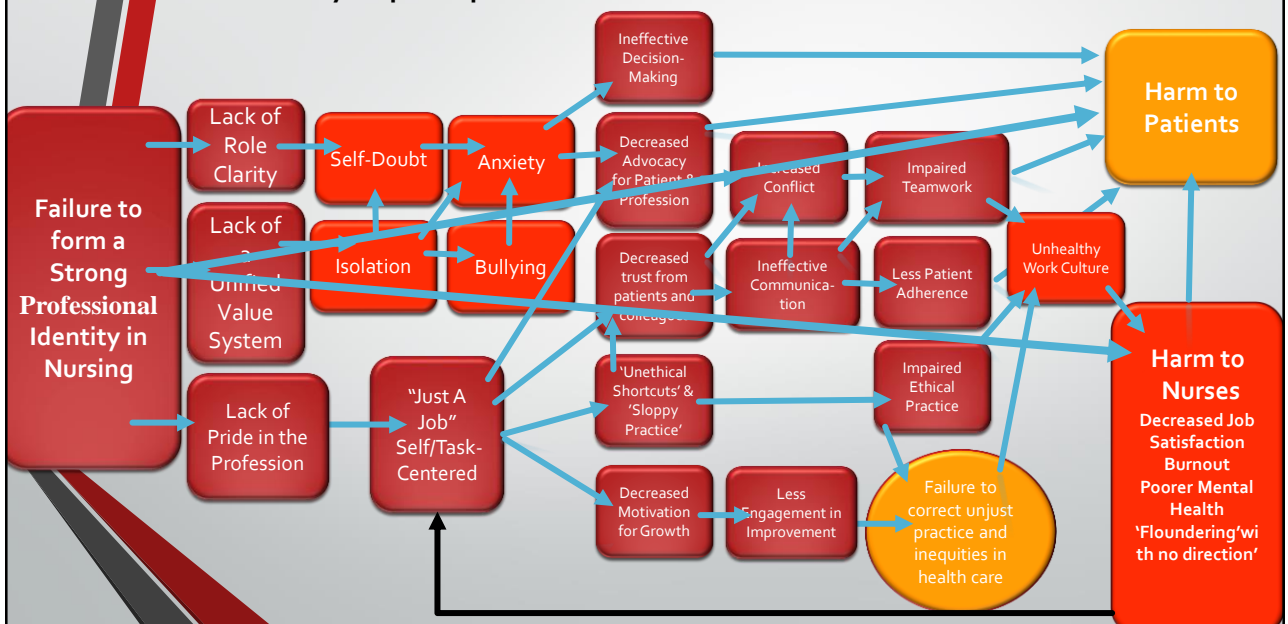
6

## How do you think failure to form a strong professional identity impacts practice?

- “Currently I’m on extended leave disabled from work injuries. I have severe PTSD from not being respected. Some of my injuries would have been avoided had there been consideration to my expertise.”
- “Without a strong sense of professional identity we risk nursing being seen as just another job and we might fail to take a stand on issues impacting nurses and human rights globally.”

7

## How do you think failure to form a strong professional identity impacts practice?



8

## Describe the process at your clinical agency for ensuring that nurses have a strong professional identity.

- "I worked for a hospital system that highly valued nursing education and encouraged the nursing staff to advance their career by furthering their education. We felt empowered to be the best nurses we could be."
- "My hospital is going through its 4th Magnet designation. The administration is committed to a strong nursing identity and provide significant differentials for certification and for clinical ladder. In addition, they have a new nurse mentoring program and they are sponsoring a nursing research instruction program known as boot camp."

9

## DESCRIBE THE PROCESS AT YOUR CLINICAL AGENCY FOR ENSURING THAT NURSES HAVE A STRONG PROFESSIONAL IDENTITY.



10

## Implications of this Study

- If we don't define who we are, others will; to the detriment of patients and nurses.
- Professional Identity in Nursing is essential to quality patient care.
- People and organizations that value Professional Identity in Nursing have better retention and job satisfaction.
- Nurses working outside of clinical nursing settings and in advanced practice roles do not feel supported in expressing their professional identity.

11

## Strong Professional Identity

### Limitations

- One geographic location in the US
- Mid-COVID surveys
- Unidirectional Qualitative Data

### Next Steps

Foundational structures of Nursing:

Future of Nursing  
AACN Essentials- Domain 9  
Tri-Council

S-DINE- Entry level Curricular Toolkits  
Advanced level Curricular Toolkits  
Healthy Work Environments  
Leadership Initiatives

12

# Thank you!

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