

Restoration rooms

A safe place for nurses to recharge

SOMETIMES, 10 to 15 minutes of quiet time in a comfortable space is all it takes to recharge. That's especially true for RNs experiencing on-the-job stressors that may lead to physical exhaustion and emotional burnout.

A 2017 survey by RN Network (rnnetwork.com/blog/wp-content/uploads/2017/02/Modern-Physician-Survey-Final.pdf) found that nearly half of nurses working in the United States have considered leaving the field. Reasons include feeling overwhelmed and overworked—two factors that restoration rooms strive to address. These calming spaces are growing in popularity in hospitals across the country. Their purpose is to provide a relaxing area for nurses—especially those in higher stress departments like the ED, operating room, intensive care unit (ICU), neonatal ICU, or cancer care—to decompress.

At Rush Copley Medical Center in Aurora, Illinois, clinical manager Mary Applequist, BSN, RN, CNML, was part of an effort to introduce restoration rooms to help nurses relax and recharge so they could reconnect with patients.

What's a restoration room?

These safe places for nurses can be created in any type of room in a healthcare setting. For example, Applequist's team transformed a former chapel into a restoration room. The ideal areas are quiet, centrally located, and dimly lit.

Restoration rooms usually have calming amenities such as:

- massage chairs
- yoga mats
- aromatherapy
- guided meditation
- music therapy
- waterfalls or calming sounds
- privacy.

Nurses come and go from the room, but no telephones or food are allowed. At Rush Copley, nurses and certified nursing assistants need to swipe their badges to enter the room so hospital visitors can't wander in. Leadership trusts staff to return to their jobs in a reasonable amount of time.

Before this project was initiated at Rush Copley, leadership surveyed its nursing staff to identify how many nurses would use the restoration room; 59.1% said they would.



*Restoration room at
Rush Copley Medical
Center in Aurora, IL.*

Benefits

Applequist and her team are still tracking data to determine how the restoration room is impacting nurses, but she's witnessed many benefits. Nurses can:

- clear their minds so they can reconnect with patients
- get out of the "stressful spin"
- receive a mental boost to get through their shift
- refocus so they can work to improve patient outcomes.

Because nurses are pulled in so many different directions, Applequist notes that the restoration room gives RNs an opportunity to center themselves, revive, and get through the rest of their shift.

Creating a restoration room

Key ingredients to establishing a restoration room are leadership and nurse buy-in. Leaders and staff nurses must agree on use, goals, and rules of the room. If you want to create a restoration room at your facility, start by having a meeting with representatives from each group to discuss the vision and logistics, and send a survey to nursing staff to gauge interest.

The next elements are trust and respect. Leadership needs to trust nursing staff to use the room responsibly. Nursing staff must respect leadership and patients by using the room responsibly. You also need time, financial resources, and physical space to bring your restoration room to life. When it comes together to produce calmer, happier, more satisfied nurses, it's all worth it.

According to Applequist, the restoration room at Rush Copley receives about 500 visits from nurses per month. The feedback shows that it's helping nurses relieve stress so they can return to work recharged. ★

Content developed in association with Healthy Nurse, Healthy Nation™ and Aha Media.