Shining a Light on Mental Health

By Stephanie T. Wynn

Promoting Nurse Self-Wellness with AI

Although nursing is a "calling" for many, the demanding nature of the job has increased the importance of workplace wellness. During work hours, nurses combat emotional, physical, and ethical challenges. Consequently, nurses' well-being is influenced by daily work stressors that affect productivity. If nurses are not supported in maintaining well-being, their capability to care for patients and their families is compromised. Often nurses work long shifts and are unable to find the time for self-wellness activities. To change this trend, nurses must incorporate self-wellness activities into their daily routines. As well-being strategies should be adaptable and acknowledge the contextual needs of nurses, nursing schools are prime organizations to introduce novel means for promoting *self-wellness*.

Self-wellness is a pursued goal to take care of one's emotional, physical, psychological, and spiritual health. Desired changes must be identified: to get healthier or more active; be less stressed; or make more time for fun, self, or God. Setting goals can be enjoyable as well as possibly fearful, especially if failure has occurred in the past. Goals that lack clarity, are unrealistic, or inappropriately planned could hinder progress. Likewise, unexpected life events can result in abandoning a goal prematurely. Putting in the effort to increase spiritual and mental well-being requires work. It is important to seek solutions that match one's lifestyle; not being able to fulfill desires can lead to shame and self-loathing. Motivation acts as a force to persevere through trials and tribulations and assists in achieving self-wellness goals.

In 2020, the Joint Commission recognized a safety issue: promoting psychosocial well-being of healthcare staff during a crisis. Since then, healthcare organizations have searched for ways to successfully promote employee self-wellness. Köse and Murat (2022) found that interventions that affect nurses' well-being and mental health have positive outcomes. Tools to motivate nurses to complete self-wellness activities focused on maintaining physical, psychological, and spiritual well-being are warranted. The goal of such tools is to implement interventions that motivate nurses to participate in self-care activities regardless of daily obstacles and stressors.

Artificial intelligence (AI) is being integrated into many aspects of life. In healthcare, AI is used to improve patient care and alleviate administrative duties. Furthermore, AI has shown promise in revolutionizing mental healthcare by enhancing accessibility, efficacy, and ethicality (Olawade et al., 2024). Hence, AI could assist in motivating nurses to participate in workplace self-care. Hardin et al.'s study (2024) used automated text announcements (ATA), a feature of AI, to deliver messages to nursing students for the purpose of promoting online engagement, including improving self-wellness. Each ATA included a wellness tip. For example, one message instructed students to "take a break and walk in place" or "meditate" for 15 minutes. Overall, students reported that the ATAs helped them meet self-wellness goals. Several students planned to continue using the tips when they transitioned to practice. Ultimately, ATAs could be individualized to provide tips focused on improving nurses' well-being throughout the day.

The promotion of workplace self-wellness reflects a current change in nursing. Fatigue from long shifts, work overload, and busy lifestyles contributes to nurses not partaking in self-care activities such as exercising, eating appropriate nutrition, and utilizing spiritual and mental health techniques. The transition of nursing curricula to competency-based education offers a perfect opportunity to implement innovative approaches to better prepare the next generation of nurses for self-wellness. Mindfulness apps such as *Calm*, *Headspace*, and *Moodfit* offer guided meditation, offering nurses opportunities to incorporate moments of calm amidst workday turmoil. *Faith and Health Connection* (https://www.faithandhealthconnection.org/affirmations-by-text-messages/) texts Scripture affirmations. Integrating AI into self-wellness interventions may motivate nurses to act accordingly, ultimately improving patient care, safety, and healthcare nationwide.

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