

Healthy Work Environments for Nursing Practice

Learning Objectives

By the end of this lecture, students will be able to:

1. define the healthy work environment
2. recognize the factors influence healthcare work environments, and
3. demonstrate the fatigue in nursing, the workplace violence and incivility, and optimal staffing

A healthy work environment is one that is safe, empowering, and satisfying, not merely the absence of real and perceived physical or emotional threats to health, but a place of physical, mental, and social well-being, supporting optimal health and safety.

A culture of safety is paramount, in which all leaders, managers, healthcare workers, and ancillary staff have a responsibility as part of the inter-professional team to perform with a sense of professionalism, accountability, transparency, involvement, efficiency, and effectiveness.

All must be mindful of the health and safety of both the healthcare consumer and the healthcare worker in any setting providing health care, providing a sense of safety, respect, and empowerment to and for all persons.

Factors influence healthcare work environments

Economic challenges,

The rapidity with which new information and healthcare technologies are introduced into healthcare settings,

Demographic shifts,

Aging and obesity of both the nursing workforce and the general population, and

The impact of healthcare reform.

These factors have created significant changes, sometimes perceived as barriers to achieving healthy work environments that support and promote the best patient care and the health and well-being of the nurse.

Fatigue in Nursing Practice

The 2015 *Code of Ethics for Nurses with Interpretive Statements* affirms that all nurses, regardless of specialty, have an ethical responsibility to report to work alert, well-rested, and prepared to give safe, quality patient care.

Nursing work can be both physically and emotionally exhausting.

Long and variable hours, heavy patient loads, and complex care needs that require multi-tasking are just some of the challenges that nurses face every day.

American Association of Critical-Care Nurses Standards

The American Association of Critical-Care Nurses has identified six standards for establishing and maintaining healthy work environments that remain unchanged today:

Skilled Communication: Nurses must be as proficient in communication skills as they are in clinical skills.

True Collaboration: Nurses must be relentless in pursuing and fostering a sense of team and partnership across all disciplines.

Effective Decision-making: Nurses are seen as valued and committed partner in making policy, directing and evaluating clinical care, and leading organizational operations.

Appropriate Staffing: Staffing must ensure the effective match between healthcare consumer needs and nurse competencies.

Meaningful Recognition: Nurses must be recognized and must recognize others for the value each brings to the work of the organization.

Authentic Leadership: Nurse leaders must fully embrace the imperative of a healthy work environment, authentically live it, and engage others in achieving it.