

What Hospitals Need to Know

Return on Investment: Transcendental Meditation® Course for Nurses

Are nurses leaving the bedside? A survey of new graduate nurses by Bowles and Candela in 2005 showed that 30% of respondents left their first nursing job during the first year, and 57% left by their second year. This is a time of increased learning and great stress. If we can help the new RN relieve stress on a daily basis, her chance of success in a new job increases.

The cost to orient a new nurse to replace one who has left a position: Sources vary between \$44,000-\$50,000 per nurse, while the cost of orienting a critical care nurse can go as high as \$300,000. (Burns and Hutchins, 1992, Messmer et al, 1995)

Research already demonstrates that the TM technique reduces nurse burnout, and improves compassion satisfaction and resilience. A pilot study at Sarasota Memorial Hospital with 27 nurses who learned Transcendental Meditation showed statistical significance for reduction of burnout, reduction of compassion fatigue and increased resilience.

A study by Nidich et al showed decreases in perceived stress, mood disturbance, including anxiety, depression, anger, confusion and fatigue, and an increase in spiritual well-being (meaningfulness in life and faith optimism in the future) in caregivers

We can extrapolate 2 things from these findings:

- 1) **Cost of Retraining:** If one nurse leaves her job due to burnout, it will cost the hospital \$50,000 to train a new employee. If one nurse remains in her position because practicing the TM technique has allowed her to be more resilient to the stress and avoid burnout, the hospital saves \$50,000. This savings could pay for 50 nurses to take the Transcendental Meditation course (course fee \$1000.) Nurse retention improves as well as nurse and patient satisfaction.
- 2) **When a nurse is exhausted and burned out, patients also suffer- infection rates increase:** Cimiotti et al. concluded that the degree of burnout experienced by nurses directly influenced hand hygiene and the frequency of hospital acquired patient infections, particularly urinary tract and surgical site infections. The researchers hypothesized “that the cognitive detachment associated with high levels of burnout may result in inadequate hand hygiene practices and lapses in other infection control procedures among registered nurses [further] if the proportion of nurses with high burnout could be reduced to 10 % from an average of 30% some 4,160 infections would be prevented in Pennsylvania hospitals, leading to an estimated cost savings of \$41 million”. (Nurse Staffing, Burnout and Health-Care Associated Infection, Cimiotti, Aiken, Sloane, Wu, American Journal of Infection Control, 2012, 486-490.)

The Transcendental Meditation technique has been shown to reduce burnout. An idea for further research would be to look at the rates of hospital acquired infections in the study group that practices the TM technique vs. a control group. Hospitals could potentially save millions of dollars by not having to treat hospital acquired infections.