

# The Effects of Mandatory Therapy Sessions on the Reduction of Stress and Burnout Among Nurses Working During a Global Pandemic

Loveth Emmanuel, Michelle Tat, Ifeoma Chike-Egboh

Dr. Andrea Brooks, PhD, RN, PPCNP-BC, Professor Shermel Edwards-Maddox, MSN, RN, CNE, RN-BC, and

Dr. Kelle Houng Phan, DNP, RN, NNP-BC, FNP-BC

UNIVERSITY of  
**HOUSTON**  
COLLEGE of NURSING

## PICOT Question

For nurses working during a global pandemic, does the implementation of mandatory therapy sessions reduce the prevalence of stress and burnout compared to nurses who do not receive any therapy sessions?

## Literature Search

### Databases:

- PubMed
- EBSCOhost
- PsycINFO

### Keywords searched:

- Mental health AND nursing
- Mental health during COVID-19
- Nursing during COVID-19
- Burnout AND nurses
- Benefits of therapy for nurses
- Cognitive therapy AND nurses
- Nursing AND Employee Assistance Program

### Article selection criteria:

- Peer reviewed articles
- Published within last 5 years (2016-2021)

## Synthesis of Findings

- Studies found that stress-related illness increases during the years of nursing training (Frögéli et al., 2019; Luo et al., 2019).
- Interventions can be implemented to protect the mental health of employees in busy work environments (Murat et al., 2020; Tarro et al., 2020).
- Studies found that the use of workplace counseling interventions were effective in reducing employee absenteeism (Attridge, 2019; Tarro et al., 2020).
- Proactive engagement in stressful situations reduces stress because it facilitates effective problem-solving and development of skills (Attridge, 2019; Frögéli et al., 2019; Luo et al., 2019).
- Using acceptance techniques that involves acknowledging stressful thoughts, feelings, and sensations, exploring them, and letting them come and go freely while still engaging in valued actions reduces stress (Dincer & Inangil, 2021; Frögéli et al., 2019; Luo et al., 2019).
- Online counseling interventions is an effective, time-efficient treatment in improving the mental health of employees (Dincer & Inangil, 2021; Tarro et al., 2020).



## Decision to Change Practice

Implement mandatory paid therapy sessions for nurses. Therapy sessions can include positive thinking through emotional freedom techniques and cognitive behavioral skill building. Each nurse would be required to show proof of one therapy session per month with any licensed therapist, psychologist, or psychiatrist of their choice. Nurses would be paid for their time in therapy.

## Evaluation

Reduction in burnout 1 year post mandatory therapy intervention measured through the Maslach Burnout Inventory.

## References

- Attridge, M. (2019). A global perspective on promoting workplace mental health and the role of employee assistance programs. *American Journal of Health Promotion*, 33(4), 622–629. <https://doi.org/ezproxy.lib.uh.edu/10.1177/0890117119838101c>.
- Dincer, B., & Inangil, D. (2021). The effect of emotional freedom techniques on nurses' stress, anxiety, and burnout levels during the COVID-19 pandemic: A randomized controlled trial. *EXPLORE*, 17(2), 109–114. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.explore.2020.11.012>.
- Frögéli, E., Rudman, A., & Gustavsson, P. (2019). Preventing stress related ill health among future nurses: Effects over 3 years. *International Journal of Stress Management*, 26(3), 272–286. <https://doi.org/ezproxy.lib.uh.edu/10.1037/str0000110>.
- Luo, Y., Li, H., Plummer, V., Cross, W. M., Lam, L., Guo, Y., Yin, Y., & Zhang, J. (2019). An evaluation of a positive psychological intervention to reduce burnout among nurses. *Archives of Psychiatric Nursing*, 33(6), 186–191. <https://doi.org/ezproxy.lib.uh.edu/10.1016/j.apn.2019.08.004>.
- Murat, M., Köse, S., & Savaşer, S. (2020). Determination of stress, depression and burnout levels of front-line nurses during the covid-19 pandemic. *International Journal of Mental Health Nursing*. <https://doi.org/10.1111/inm.12818>.
- Sampson, M., Melnyk, B. M., & Hoying, J. (2019). Intervention effects of the MINDBODYSTRONG cognitive behavioral skills building program on newly licensed on registered nurses' mental health, healthy lifestyle behaviors, and job satisfaction. *JONA: The Journal of Nursing Administration*, 49(10), 487–495. <https://doi.org/10.1097/NNA.0000000000000792>.
- Tarro, L., Llauredó, E., Ulldemolins, G., Hermoso, P., & Solà, R. (2020). Effectiveness of workplace interventions for improving absenteeism, productivity, and work ability of employees: A systematic review and meta-analysis of randomized controlled trials. *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health*, 17(6). <https://doi.org/10.3390/ijerph17061901>.

## Acknowledgements

We would like to thank Dr. Andrea Brooks, PhD, RN, PPCNP-BC, Professor Shermel Edwards-Maddox, MSN, RN, CNE, RN-BC, and Dr. Kelle Phan, DNP, RN, NNP-BC, FNP-BC for their constant support and guidance through the production of this assignment. We would also like to thank our fellow cohort for their encouragement and feedback.

