



The Impact of Daily Gratitude Practices on Psychological Resilience in Healthcare Workers

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DESCRIPTION

Healthcare professionals, especially nurses, often work under intense emotional and physical pressure. The demands of patient care, long shifts and the emotional toll of dealing with illness and trauma can steadily erode emotional well-being. Over time, these challenges may result in burnout, compassion fatigue and emotional exhaustion. As awareness of mental health issues in frontline professions continues to grow, the need for effective, low-cost and accessible methods to support healthcare workers has become increasingly urgent. One simple yet powerful approach that has gained attention is the practice of daily gratitude. Gratitude, when cultivated intentionally, can help shift focus from stress and negativity toward moments of appreciation and connection. In the context of healthcare, this change in perspective can play a meaningful role in restoring emotional balance. Nurses, who spend much of their time attending to others' needs, often have little opportunity to reflect on positive experiences. A brief daily gratitude practice can provide that moment of pause, allowing individuals to recognize small victories and acts of kindness that might otherwise go unnoticed.

The principle behind gratitude writing is straightforward. Taking a few minutes each day to record things one is thankful for whether small, personal joys or professional successes can gradually reframe perception. Instead of dwelling on exhaustion or frustration, individuals begin to recognize sources of meaning and satisfaction in their routines. Over time, this conscious shift in focus can nurture resilience and improve emotional regulation. The positive effects of gratitude are supported by psychological theories that link it to increased serotonin levels and improved emotional processing. When practiced regularly, gratitude can strengthen one's ability to manage stress and recover from emotionally draining experiences. For healthcare workers, this means being better equipped to maintain compassion without becoming overwhelmed by the emotional demands of their roles. Many nurses who adopt gratitude practices report feeling calmer, more centred and more capable

of separating their personal emotions from the intensity of their workdays.

Gratitude exercises also encourage a mind-set of reflection rather than reaction. In an environment where situations can change rapidly and emotions run high, reflection creates space for mental recovery. Nurses who practice gratitude often describe it as a grounding ritual that helps them transition between shifts or decompress after challenging days. Even short sessions of journaling or mindful reflection can create a sense of closure and renewal. By identifying positive aspects of their day such as teamwork, patient progress, or personal growth they gradually cultivate a more balanced emotional outlook. One of the greatest strengths of gratitude writing lies in its simplicity and accessibility. Unlike therapy or formal intervention programs, it requires no special training, equipment, or additional time outside of a demanding schedule. It can be practiced privately, at any moment and adapted to individual preferences. This makes it particularly suitable for healthcare workers whose unpredictable routines often limit their ability to engage in structured mental health activities.

However, while gratitude practice can enhance emotional well-being, it is not a replacement for systemic improvements or clinical care. Healthcare organizations must still address the root causes of burnout, such as excessive workloads, staffing shortages and insufficient support systems. Yet small, personal interventions like gratitude writing can complement institutional efforts by strengthening individual coping mechanisms. When paired with organizational wellness strategies such as access to counselling, fair scheduling and supportive management gratitude can contribute to a more sustainable and compassionate workplace culture. The impact of gratitude extends beyond individual emotional health. A more positive and resilient nursing workforce benefits the broader healthcare environment. Nurses who feel emotionally balanced are better able to connect empathetically with patients, collaborate with colleagues and sustain the motivation required in high-pressure settings. This not only enhances patient care but

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also improves teamwork, job satisfaction and retention within healthcare institutions.

Encouraging gratitude practices among nurses can therefore serve as a meaningful step in addressing the emotional challenges inherent in healthcare professions. Simple reminders such as journaling prompts, peer sharing opportunities, or workplace initiatives that highlight positive moments can help integrate gratitude into daily routines. Institutions that recognize the emotional realities of caregiving and provide tools to support reflection and appreciation are more likely to foster resilient, engaged staff. Ultimately, the practice of gratitude offers a gentle yet transformative approach to maintaining emotional stability in healthcare settings. It helps individuals notice small joys amid

the chaos, appreciate human connections and find renewed purpose in their work. For those who spend their days caring for others, a few quiet minutes of reflection can make a lasting difference in mental clarity, mood and motivation. In professions defined by compassion and responsibility, emotional resilience is as vital as clinical skill. While no single solution can eliminate the pressures of healthcare work, gratitude stands out as an accessible and effective way to nurture strength from within. By promoting this simple habit, both individuals and institutions can contribute to healthier, more emotionally balanced care environments where appreciation becomes not just a personal practice but a shared foundation for well-being and professional fulfilment.