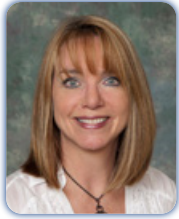


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The lived experience of bedside nurses in transtion during personal loss

Background: Inherent to the profession of nursing are specific and unique skill sets that incorporate vigilant monitoring and problem solving in highly dynamic environments, keeping pace with the ever-changing world of technology, and physical endurance while maintaining flexibility - all within the framework of compassionate care. Yet, few studies have focused on nurses caring for patients using the skills, judgment, and emotional stability required when one has sustained a personal loss.

Purpose: The aim of this study was (a) to illustrate how nurses negotiate their roles as a grieving individual and one who is a compassionate caregiver, and (b) to examine strategies that may have facilitated or hindered optimal functioning during their time of transition back into the workforce.

Methods: A phenomenological qualitative design using thematic analysis was used to analyze and interpret the participants' experiences.

Results: Eight themes were extracted which provided a rich diffusion of data exemplified by patterns of role confusion, lack of preparation despite experience, stratified grief, coping mechanisms, spiritual connectedness, making meaning, creating a new normal and compassion in nursing.

Implications: This study emphasizes the need to support nurses' psychological health through strategic programs and policies during times of transition. Subsequently, this theoretical framework may extend to examining other transitions within nursing practice to create insight as nurses adapt to new situations.

Biography

Debbie Cyncynatus is a registered nurse with 29 years of experience in areas of critical care, medical and surgical care, nursing management and hospital administration. She earned her MBA and also a Bachelor of Science degree in Nursing. She is currently working toward a Doctor in Nursing Practice from Capella University. She is skilled in large-scale change, Big 4 consulting, strategic and tactical planning, clinical operations improvement, transformational and thought leadership, process improvement, patient first, hospital leadership and program management with a track record of breakthrough performance. She is also knowledgeable in transformational change leadership, lean management, healthcare transformation, case management, pharmacy, supply chain, revenue cycle and clinical informatics. Her strengths include effective communication, group and team facilitation, executive leadership, process improvement, relationship-building, physician relationships, data/analytics and clinical skills.

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