



Stress Management Reduction in the Emergency Department Using Healing Touch in a Serenity Room

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Background

Compassion fatigue is a prevalent nursing issue leading to increased sick time, decreased patient outcomes, and lower customer service scores. The emergency department (ED) setting is susceptible to nurse high turnover due to the unique demands of the role. Emergency Nurses Association and research indicates serenity rooms are a valuable self-care tool.

Sentara Princess Anne Hospital ED re-purposed an office in the ED leadership suite and created a peaceful space for staff to increase awareness in self-care.



Collaboration with our facility Healing Touch Certified Practitioner (HTCP) allowed staff to have dedicated sessions to mitigate stress management. Healing touch has been used in our facility for staff and patients to improve healing, pain management and decrease stress. The HTCP applies healing intention using the hands to channel and balance energy fields leading to relaxation.

Project Aims

Mitigate stress in ED staff members using Healing Touch, essential oils (EOs), and self-directed mindfulness tips inside the serenity room.

Methods

Supplies were provided by the unit practice council:

- Heated massage pad
- Himalayan salt lamp
- Water fountain
- Soft lighting
- Pictures
- Yoga ball
- Spa noise machine
- EO's/diffusers



The office was repainted a soft blue by the project lead and new flooring was placed. Further enhancement need for a zero-gravity chair was identified and donated by the HTCP.

One two-hour block was scheduled weekly with the HTCP Staff members had 20 dedicated minutes to fully relax while the educator covered their assignment. Radios and phones were removed prior to use. Staff completed anonymous 5-point Likert survey to evaluate before and after stress levels. Level 1 indicated most stress; level 5 least stress.

Initially, nurses and ED technicians scheduled sessions, but it was expanded to other ED ancillary services.



Results

- Collected 45 surveys November/December 2020
- Prior to HTCP session, 91 % had moderate to high stress levels
- After session, 96 % reported mild to no stress
- Anecdotal comments collected during sessions or written on survey: *“My migraine improved,”* and *“My smartwatch recorded a 34-beat drop”*

Surveys indicated project was successful, and manager continues to prioritize sessions for staff led by leadership team in 2021.

Recommendations

- Unit champion
- EO replenishment cost
- Water fountain and diffuser refilling
- Room cleaning a priority
- Research recommends continued commitment in using stress management techniques to achieve optimal wellness

References

Emergency Nurses Association. (2015). ENA Topic Brief: The Well Nurse. Retrieved from https://www.ena.org/docs/default-source/resource-library/practice-resources/topic-briefs/the-well-nurse.pdf?sfvrsn=a2c01cf1_8

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