



7 Signs of Burnout in Nurses (and How to Prevent It from Happening)

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While every profession has its stressors, the nursing industry has some of the highest burnout rates. The massive influence on patients' lives, the long hours, and many other factors put nurses at risk of severe burnout. And with the rise of **COVID-19** since 2020, many healthcare professionals feel the strain more than ever.

Burnout in nurses affects everyone — individual nurses suffer, patients are impacted, and employers struggle with enormous turnover. It's crucial to watch for signs of nurse burnout and take steps to provide a healthier workplace.

What Is Nurse Burnout?

According to the **World Health Organization (WHO)**, burnout is categorized as an “occupational phenomenon” that results from “chronic workplace stress that has not been successfully managed.” Burnout affects a worker’s energy on physical, emotional, and psychological levels, including patient care.

What Are the Signs of Burnout in Nurses and Healthcare Workers?

What does nurse burnout look like? Below are some of the common signs. Employers should be careful to watch for burnout symptoms in their healthcare staff — and not ignore them. Burnout is very real, and it has widespread consequences when left unaddressed.

Frequent burnout symptoms in healthcare include:

1. Constant Tiredness

It's common to associate nursing with a lack of sleep. Nurses often work 12-hour shifts — and rarely at times when the rest of the world is bright-eyed and alert. But regular tiredness from less sleep or a long schedule is different from total fatigue and exhaustion.

Feeling tired all of the time, being so exhausted that it affects daily life, or struggling to wake up or go to sleep can be signs of burnout.

2. Compassion Fatigue

If a nurse experiences compassion fatigue, they might begin to feel less empathy towards patients and their situations. Symptoms include:

- Irritability
- Chronic exhaustion
- Headaches
- Lack of sleep
- Low job satisfaction

Long hours, excessive demands, and lack of support at work often contribute to compassionate fatigue.

3. Feeling Unappreciated

Nurses work hard. If they don't feel appreciated for what they do, that can lead to burnout. At this point, resentment towards the job, employer, or patients overshadows any fulfillment.

4. Emotional Detachment

Most nurses are empathetic people who enjoy making connections with their patients. But if a nurse starts to feel emotionally disconnected, insensitive, or lacking empathy towards patients, something is off.

Emotional detachment is a glaring red flag for burnout. It also prevents an organization from maintaining a **patient-centric approach**.

5. Constant Anxiety Related to Work

None of us can avoid stress and anxiety completely, especially doctors and nurses. These individuals have a lot on the line, and worrying is a facet of care. However, constant, crippling anxiety is not normal, and it's a sign of burnout.

6. Finding No Enjoyment in the Job

No career is rainbows every day, and nurses deal with things that most workers wouldn't dream of. But, nursing should provide fulfillment (overall) rather than daily dread. Losing any enjoyment in the job is a common sign of nurse burnout.

7. Unexplained Sicknesses

Excessive stress, anxiety, and fatigue can lead to sickness. Nurses might have low immunity, heart palpitations, or pain that doesn't let up. These could be signs of the body responding to the physical and psychological effects of burnout.

How to Prevent Nurse Burnout Before It's Too Late

While you can't prevent every type of stress or anxiety associated with the nursing profession, employers can take steps to make situations better for their nurses like:

- Regular vacations (and encouraging or requiring nurses to use vacation days)
- Shorter shifts and less overtime for nursing staff
- Access to emotional support
- Encouraging communication between staff and management
- Better health benefits

Every year, the demand for nurses increases as companies struggle to recruit and retain good talent. If you have nursing recruitment needs, contact us today. Alabama Media Group knows how to attract, recruit, hire, and retain nurses in a way that's best for everyone. [Reach out today to learn more.](#)

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