

# UNDERSTANDING NURSING BURNOUT: A CAPSTONE PROJECT

A closer look at nursing burnout and its affects on todays workforce. By understanding the root causes we aim to promote resilience among nurses joining the workforce.

## Authors

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## Introduction

Burnout is a common problem among healthcare workers. Nurses are the backbone of patient care, yet they often face overwhelming pressures that can result in burnout. Burnout not only impacts nurses but also compromises quality of patient care. This capstone project aims to look at the root causes and consequences of nursing burnout. By looking at real-life experiences and research the intent is to suggest ways for healthcare organizations to better support nurses.

## Methodology

### Literature Review:

- Comprehensive review of existing literature on nursing burnout. This included peer reviewed articles and academic journals.
- Identified key themes, theories, and empirical findings related to the causes of burnout
- Critically analyzed the literature to gain a comprehensive understanding and inform future research

### Interviews:

- Conducted semi-structured interviews with nurses, nurse clinicians and others in the field for their subjective experience with burnout.

## Findings

- Ontario's nursing shortage is a big factor for nursing burnout. This leads to increased workloads with the shortage of nurses. Nurses may be required to work longer hours and take on additional responsibilities. This increased workload can lead to emotional and physical exhaustion which is a key component of burnout.
- Other issues such as Bill 124 also play a role in nurses burning out. Bill 124 imposes restrictions on public sector compensation. This leads to challenges in retention of staff and in gaining additional nurses to join the workforce. Nurses feel underappreciated when compensation is limited by legislation such as Bill 124. It causes low morale. The sense of being unacknowledged contributes to the feelings of burnout.
- Personal knowing in nursing is connected to the concept of self-awareness and self-care. It is the inner understanding about your own emotional, physical, and mental states. Personal knowing is about how nurses navigate their personal health and well-being in the demanding profession.
- Strategies such as engaging in reflective practice, physical activity, focus on mental health, and having strong interpersonal relationships is crucial in combatting nursing burnout.

## Proposed Solution

### Individual

Nursing burnout can be related to multiple factors that lead to nurses leaving the profession. This includes; workplace environment, lack of equipment, negativity between staff, and unsafe patient-to-nurse ratios. The solution to the issue of burnout is best exemplified through emancipatory knowing. Emancipatory knowing in the context of nursing burnout emphasizes the importance of addressing systemic and structural issues that contribute to stress and exhaustion among nurses. This perspective goes beyond individual coping strategies and looks at the root causes of burnout in the healthcare system.

### Systemic

At the organizational level, different staffing models can be implemented to ensure adequate staffing. The Registered Nurses Association of Ontario speaks about the Patient Care Delivery System Model. This model touches on effective staffing decision-making and promoting the satisfaction of nurses. The model promotes job satisfaction, health and safety, balance of effort and reward, and their value. Implementing this model and the improvements associated with it will decrease the burden placed on nurses. Additionally, nurse leaders can be more involved with management and human resources to ensure proper staffing and lead to a better work life balance.

### Organizational

Nurses are responsible for advocating for themselves and their patients. Mandating patient ratios is not something that can be accomplished by a single nurse, through advocacy it can be accomplished. Nurses who feel as though they are working in an unsafe environment should voice their complaints to their supervisors and their union representatives. There are barriers to this as staffing is a big problem in nursing today. But, through advocacy changes can be made and mandating ratios is a solution that can be reached. The Ontario Nurses Association continues to fight for mandated patient ratios through advocacy and taking nurses complaints seriously.

## Challenges

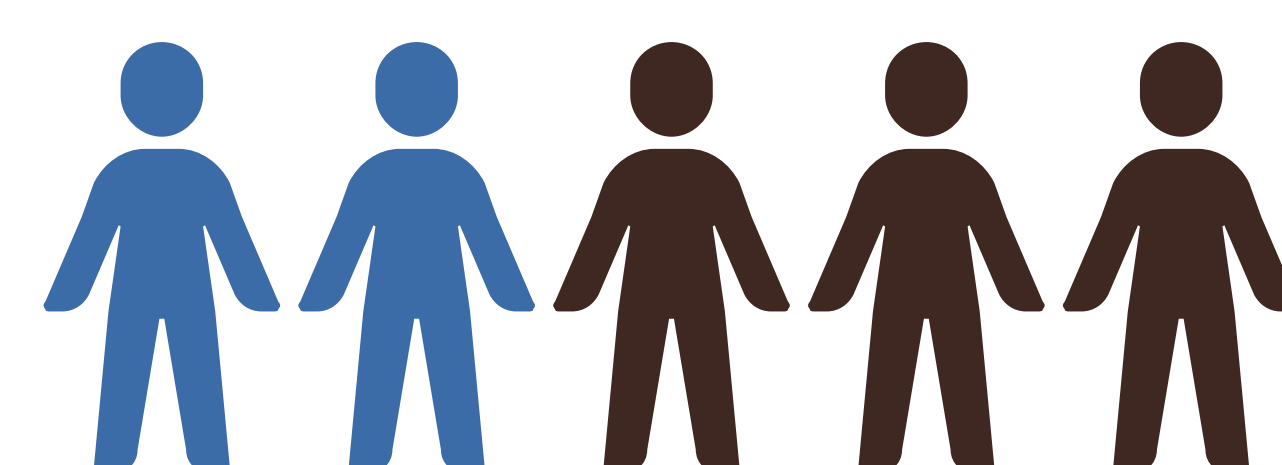
- Lack of data of lived experiences from local hospital
- Unable to access information about North Bay Hospital stats on how many nurses have left
- Lack of resources in Ontario that were credible when looking at burnout
- Lack of resources for Canada and patient ratios being mandated in British Columbia- unknown of its effectiveness, cost as it is something new. Hard to use US based hospitals like California because US hospitals are very much profit driven.
- Lack of responses from ONA, RNAO,CNO, the ONA union rep at North Bay Hospital- not enough time to gather all the information that we wanted to.

## Future

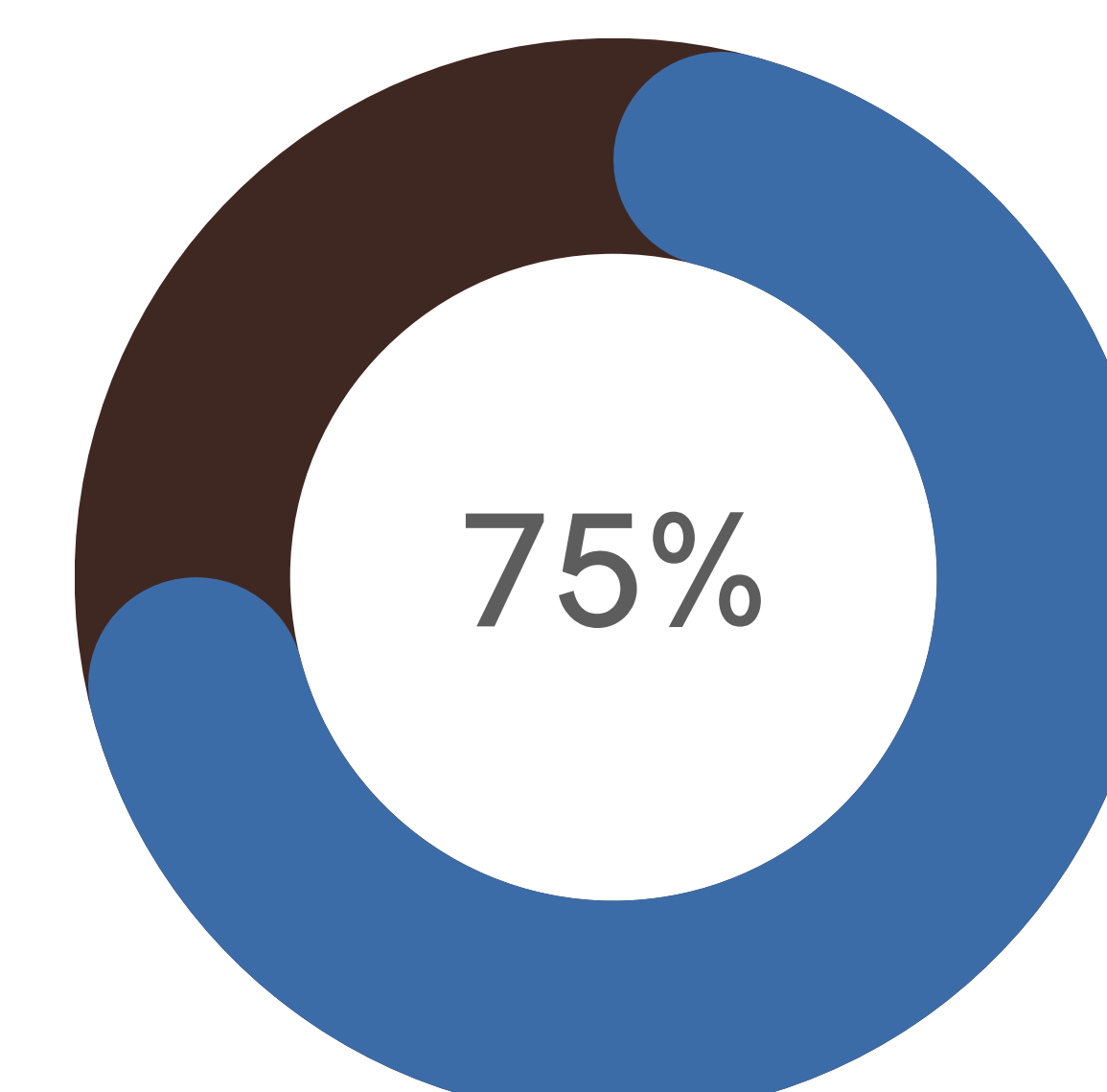
- Educating nurses that they have the right to advocate for their safety and patient safety by refusing unsafe assignments
- Educating nurses on resources available for burnout, union reps, fitness to practice
- Educating nurses about burnout outside the workplace, reflection and reflective practices
- Educating employers about having the resources available to help retain nurses

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2 out of 5 nurse are considering leaving nursing within the next year.



75% Canadian nurses are burned out.