

Critical Care Nurse Surviving in a Toxic Patient Care Environment



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Introduction

Critical care nursing involves the life-saving care of seriously ill patients. Nurses develop critical-thinking skills and provide intensive care using specialized equipment. There are many aspects that contribute to the correct mindset for a critical care nurse. When placed under pressure, the right mindset can help nurses care for patients while feeling prepared and in control. Some health care environments can be very toxic. They can cause stress, emotional burnout, lack of proper resources, and abandonment by co-workers. Learning to maintain a great work environment and mindset can help us better take care of ourselves and our patients. Toxic environments affect everyone differently, but there are ways to combat these feelings and settings.

The clinical environment that we work in can be considered toxic due to the stress from heavy workloads, emotions from patients and families, and added stress from not having enough support or resources. These are just some examples of what can make your work environment feel toxic. Since we know that some environments can be this way, we will discuss what makes up the critical care nurse's mindset and how to thrive in a place that may feel like it's sucking the life right out of you. First, we will discuss some of the different characteristics that make up the critical care

nurse mindset. Once we recognize and understand these characteristics, we can better prepare ourselves to fight toxic environments.

Characteristics of a Critical Care Nurse Mindset

Several characteristics contribute to the critical care nurse's mindset. The first characteristic is resilience. As critical care nurses, we will experience things that may bring us down. Whether it is something involving a patient or family we are supporting, it is important to learn how to bounce back from these situations. Staying resilient will help you feel energized and ready to work, rather than letting stressful situations drain you. The next characteristic is being adaptable. Things can change in a matter of seconds in critical care nursing. Since we are adaptable, we can think on our feet when needed. This can also help improve safety by allowing us to adjust to our patients' needs. Another reason this characteristic is important is that it allows you to work more effectively with your team. Adapting to different situations can help you work through the day's challenges. The last but definitely not least important characteristic is emotional intelligence. Emotional intelligence can help you build better relationships with your team. By creating a better work environment for ourselves, we can overcome the ugly feelings that arise in toxic environments.

Strategies that can Help While Working in a Toxic Environment

While working in a toxic environment, there are things that we can do to help ourselves. One of the best things we can do is practice good self-care. Self-care can include a variety of things, but my favorite things are exercise, eating right, and getting enough sleep. When you practice good self-care, it can support your mental well-being, helping you feel better about work and avoid letting things become toxic. Another helpful tip would be to create a support system. This could include co-workers whom you trust and can talk to about work. We all need someone to talk

to and vent to about things that we are struggling with. Another part of your support system can include finding a mentor. Like we said earlier, resilience is key, but sometimes you can get down on yourself. Mentors can help encourage you to keep pushing through those things that bother you at work. You should also feel comfortable talking to your boss about the things you are feeling. Whether that's too much work or things that are leaving you feeling emotionally drained. Your supervisor may be able to adjust things to make your workday better. Lastly, continuing your education can help you feel more confident in your skills and what you do every day. You can look into taking workshops or even becoming certified in your favorite nursing specialty.

How to Maintain Your Clinical Standards in Difficult Situations

As nurses, we will face situations that test our morals and the standards we have in place for our nursing practice. You may be placed in situations where you feel you are your patient's only advocate. Ensuring you meet your clinical standards can be difficult when you know your patient is not receiving the care they deserve. Although these situations are difficult, you can meet your clinical standards by ensuring that every patient you care for meets them. Never be afraid to speak up for your patient, but also know when to compromise with family, colleagues, and doctors. By working as a team, you can help your patients meet their medical needs while addressing ethical concerns. By standing behind your clinical standards, you are providing future nurses with a safe space to address concerns and prevent potential ethical dilemmas.

Conclusion

To conclude, many things can affect your mindset as a critical care nurse. Having a positive mindset can help you better care for your patients when they need you the most. In this paper, I discussed some characteristics of a critical nurse mindset and how to use them to better ourselves while working in a toxic environment. I also discussed how to maintain your

clinical standards when you know that other patients may not be receiving the best care. Mental health and resilience are very important topics for nurses.

Implications for Nursing Practice

Creating a good work environment not only helps your mental well-being but also helps your patients. If we feel better about where we work and the people we work with, we will be more willing to go above and beyond for our patients. Hospitals should invest in additional resources that help their nurses feel more resilient when dealing with traumatic events. Also, hospitals should consider offering mental health days that we can take when we are feeling stressed or overwhelmed.

In the future, we can better understand how to help ourselves while working in a toxic environment. Studies should examine how we can reduce the effects of a toxic environment on nurses. Also, research should examine resilience and how we can bounce back from tough situations.

References

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