

The Ability to Trust the Recovering Nurse Addict in the Workplace

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Purpose and Rationale: The purpose of this study was to examine the ability of working staff nurses to trust the recovering nurse addict re-entering the workplace.

Research Questions: Little is known about nurses' perceptions of trust in working with recovering nurse addicts. Therefore the following question was posed: Would working staff nurses trust a recovering nurse addict re-entering the workforce?

Synthesis of Review of Literature: There is a growing body of literature about the difficult issue of working with recovering nurse addicts in health care settings (Jaffe, 1982). The concept of trust appears to be a central theme in designing working models to support the re-entry of recovering nurse addicts to the workplace (Meyers, et al., 2008).

Methods & Procedures: A researcher designed quantitative survey was used to gather data.

Results: Nurses have admitted that they have worked with a chemically dependent nurse at sometime in their career. Nurses are willing to trust their recovering colleagues and strongly ascertain that recovering nurse-addicts should be allowed to return to the healthcare profession. It is also evident that there is a knowledge deficit among nurses on how to provide help or where to locate support such as assistance programs or alternative to discipline programs for their impaired colleagues.

Discussion/Application to Practice: This study adds to the body of knowledge in the crucial issue of addiction in nursing. The data show that nurse colleagues desire to help the recovering nurse addict, but are lacking knowledge about chemical dependency and recovery. Healthcare institutions struggle with best practices in assisting recovering nurse addicts. By examining underlying issues such as trust, a better understanding of how to implement educational programs may emerge.

Key words: trust, addiction, nurse