Is it my problem?

Why to care and what to do when concerned that a colleague has substance use disorder (SUD)

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Objectives:

1. Recognize common signs and symptoms of substance use and/or abuse in a nursing colleague

2. Explain the different actions a nurse can take to intervene if s/he is concerned about possible SUD in a nursing colleague

3. Discuss the role of the Minnesota Health Professionals Services Program (HPSP) in assisting and monitoring nurses with SUD

4. Describe regulatory reporting obligations in Minnesota for a nurse concerned about SUD in a colleague, including the ethical and legal features of such reports

Test your Knowledge #1

Why should I care?

- SUD in nursing is a personal issue, a workplace issue and a systems level issue
- Life threatening - High risk for suicide among nurses with SUD
- High personal cost for nurses in active use – maladaptive coping
- In workplace, staffing issues and discrepancies in care
- **Conspiracy of silence** perpetuates the problem
- Nursing as a profession needs to view SUD as a chronic disease in which there are effective treatments and not a moral failure

What Should I do?

Know the Risks

- Attitudes
- Access
- Lack of Education
- Stress

What Should I do?

Be aware and know the signs:

- Behavioral signs – attendance issues, frequent breaks, slurred speech, errors in judgement, self isolation, irritability
- Physical signs – changes in appearance, red eyes, odor of alcohol, drowsiness, hyperactivity, wearing long sleeves when warm, sweatiness, clumsiness
- Signs of diversion – volunteering to give meds and/or work overtime, c/o ineffective pain management of patients, discrepancies in med counts, high amounts of opioid waste

Test your Knowledge #1

What might you see in a colleague who has a problem with SUD?

- **Drowsiness**
- **Wearing Long sleeves in a warm environment**
- Dyed hair
- Tattoos
- Dry skin
- **Excessive sweating**
- **Self isolation**

One Nurse's Story:

How it all started

Test your Knowledge #2

Shame

EXAMPLES OF SHAME

- Inability to deal with the "wreckage of the past"
- Feeling embarrassed, inadequate, and flawed
- Living in secrecy
- Fearful that others will find out

DECREASING SHAME

- Identification of self
- Overcome the perception of inferiority
- Education on SUD
- Finding pride and accomplishment in sobriety
- Support of others

- Defined as an attitude, discrimination, or prejudice directed towards an individual or a group
- Prevents seeking out proper care, support, and treatment
- Promotes fear and shame
- Can lead to feelings of distrust or disgrace
- Can lead to anger or frustration

What's my part in reducing stigma?

- Learn about the disease and prevention strategies
  - SAMHSA – Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration
- Learn about harm reduction strategies
  - Overdose prevention – Naloxone
  - Viral infections – HIV/AIDS
  - Hep C, Cirrhosis, Suicide prevention
- Learn about recovery
  - Treatment, AA, Alanon, Alateen
- Speak up, speak out, and share what you have learned
  - TedTalk – Dr. Carolyn Greer – Shaming the Sick: Substance Use and Stigma

Test your Knowledge #2

What are some examples of barriers to action that you have witnessed or anticipate experiencing in your practice?

- **I don't want to be a snitch**
- **Somebody else will address the problem**
- **It doesn't matter what I report, nothing will probably happen about it anyway**
- **I don't want to break the trust of my colleague**
- **The guilt of getting someone in trouble would be overwhelming**

One Nurse's Story:

Barriers to Getting help

Test your Knowledge #3

Ethical, Legal and Regulatory Reporting Obligations

- **Nurse Practice Act: 148.263 REPORTING OBLIGATIONS**
- Subd. 1. A person who has knowledge of any conduct that may be grounds for discipline under the Nurse Practice Act (NPA) **may** report the violation to the Board.
- Subd. 3 Licensed Professionals: A person licensed by a health-related licensing board (including BON) **shall** report to the board any personal knowledge of any conduct the person reasonably believes constitutes grounds for discipline under the NPA, including conduct indicating the nurse may be incompetent, engaged in unprofessional or unethical practice, or is mentally or physically unable to practice safely.
- Failure to report could subject a person to a civil penalty
- **HPSP Governing Legislation**
- Minnesota Statute Section 214.33 REPORTING. Subdivision 1.Permission to report. A person who has personal knowledge that a regulated person has the inability to practice with reasonable skill and safety by reason of illness, use of alcohol, drugs, chemicals or any other materials, or as a result of any mental, physical, or psychological condition **may report that knowledge to the (HPSP) program or to the board. A report to the (HPSP) program under this subdivision fulfills the reporting requirement contained in a regulated person's practice act.**

Ethical, Legal and Regulatory Reporting Obligations

- **Minnesota Nurse Practice Act (NPA)**
- **148.261 GROUNDS FOR DISCIPLINARY ACTION.**
- Subdivision 1.**Grounds listed.**
- The board may deny, revoke, suspend, limit, or condition the license and registration of any person to practice advanced practice, professional, or practical nursing under sections 148.171 to 148.285, or to otherwise discipline a licensee or applicant as described in section 148.262. The following are grounds for disciplinary action:
- 9) Actual or potential inability to practice nursing with reasonable skill and safety to patients by reason of illness, use of alcohol, drugs, chemicals, or any other material, or as a result of any mental or physical condition.
- (10) Adjudication as mentally incompetent, mentally ill, a chemically dependent person, or a person dangerous to the public by a court of competent jurisdiction, within or without this state.

ANA Code of Ethics for Nurses

Provision 3.6 Patient Protection and Impaired Practice

- Nurses must protect the patient, the public and the profession from potential harm when practice appears to be impaired.
- The nurse's duty is to take action to protect patients and to ensure that the impaired nurse receives assistance.
- Start by consulting supervisory personnel…
- The nurse should extend compassion and caring to colleagues throughout the processes of identification, remediation and recovery
- Care must also be taken to identify any impairment in one's own practice, seeking assistance if needed.
- Advocacy includes supporting the return to practice for those ready to return.
- If impaired practice poses a threat or danger to patients, self, or others, a nurse must report the practice to authorized persons.

ANA Code of Ethics for Nurses

Provision 6

- The nurse owes the same duties to self as to others, including the responsibility to promote health and safety, preserve wholeness of character and integrity, maintain competence, and continue personal and professional growth.
- self-regarding duties include: promotion of health & safety, preservation of wholeness of character and integrity. . .
- As professionals who care for others in all respects, nurses have a duty to care for their own health and safety.
- Nurses should model the same health maintenance and health promotion as they teach…
- Eat healthy, exercise, get sufficient rest, maintain family and
- personal relationships, engage in adequate leisure and recreational activities , and attend to spiritual or religious needs.
- Seek balance

Test your Knowledge #3

Which of the following are true / accurate?

- Nurses who get fired from their jobs automatically get reported to HPSP or the BON.
- **1 in 3 nurses who suspect a peer is impaired report it to a supervisor.**
- **Nurses are obligated under the Code of Ethics for Nurses to intervene when concerned that a colleague is impaired in the workplace.**

One Nurse's Story:

Being reported to BON and monitoring by HPSP

Test your Knowledge #4

Interventions you can take to help a struggling nurse colleague

- Document the behaviors observed, date, time, and situation
- Talk to the nurse
- Seek out a trusted colleague to discuss what you've noticed or experienced
- Anonymously report the nurse
- Send an email to your manager

Test your Knowledge #4

From the list below, what are appropriate actions or interventions nurses can take?

A. Gossip about the nurse
B. Talk to the nurse
C. Seek out a trusted colleague to discuss what you have observed and make a plan
D. Document the behaviors
E. Anonymously report the nurse
F. Ignore the situation
G. Send an email to your manager about the nurse

One Nurse's Story:

Entering Recovery

Test your Knowledge #5

What to know from your place of employment

- Policies about Substance Use
- Union Contract language about Substance Use
- Employee Benefits (FMLA, Insurance)

Test your Knowledge #5

What support do most employers offer?

A. Employee Assistance Programs
B. FMLA (Federal Medical Leave Act)
C. Union assistance
D. All of the above

One Nurse's Story:

Return to Practice…

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Nurses Peer Support Network

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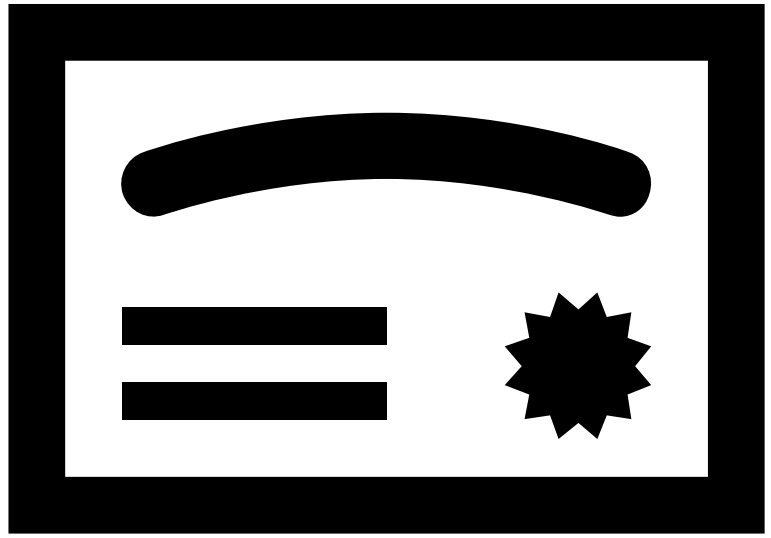

Questions
&
Answers

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