



Exploring Compassion and Challenges: A Qualitative Study of Nurses in Mental Health Institutions in the Philippines

Erika Cortiguiera, Aileen Guillermo, Mariecor Kane Libranza, Ahyrra Jin Opulencia, Jonel Postanes, and Erwin Faller

Saint Bernadette of Lourdes College, Philippines

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ABSTRACT

Background: By delving into the narratives of compassion and challenges, this research sought to provide a comprehensive portrait of the daily realities faced by mental health nurses in the Philippines. The researchers aspired to contribute valuable insights that will not only enrich the academic discourse on mental health nursing but also intended to serve as a catalyst for positive change, enhancing the support structures for mental health nurses and, by extension, elevating the standard of care for those struggling with mental health challenges in the Philippines.

Methods: The study utilized phenomenological qualitative research design to gather data from twenty (20) mental health nurses purposely chosen from mental health institutions in the Philippines, utilizing researcher-made interview questionnaire. The researchers employed Colaizzi's approach to data analysis.

Result: The researchers and acquired three (3) themes: compassionate care of mental health nurses, challenges of mental health nurses, and keys towards quality nursing care of mental health nurses, respectively. Under the first theme, four sub-themes were independent nursing care, holistic approach for patient-care, collaborative multidisciplinary approaches, and health education. The second theme has three sub-themes which includes maintaining therapeutic nurse-patient relationship, personal and professional hurdles, and thoughts and feelings. The third theme acquired three sub-themes which are comprehensive therapeutic strategies, competence and professional development, and empowering own well-being.

Conclusion: In conclusion, handling patients with maladaptive behavior highlights the profound compassion and challenges exhibited by nurses in various dimensions of their practice and the key towards achieving quality nursing care in mental health necessitates a multifaceted approach.

INTRODUCTION

According to the World Health Organization (WHO), mental, neurological, or substance use disorders are ranked as the third most prevalent form of disability in the Philippines. Additionally, the country boasts the third-highest prevalence of mental health issues in the Western Pacific Region [1]. According to the National Statistics Office (NSO), mental health disorders hold the third position in terms of prevalence among health issues faced by Filipinos. The Philippine mental health system assessment indicates that 16% of young individuals experience mental health challenges [2].

As the need for mental health services continues to rise, the significance of healthcare professionals, notably nurses, becomes increasingly vital in providing compassionate care to individuals struggling with mental health conditions [3]. Mental health nurses play a pivotal role in ensuring active patient engagement in their care, fostering a sense of empowerment and self-determination. This approach enables nurses to forge deeper connections with their patients, laying the groundwork for understanding and support crucial to the healing process. The provision of compassionate care is linked to enhanced patient outcomes, heightened adherence to treatment plans, and an overall improvement in mental well-being [4].

Compassion is the cornerstone of nursing practice, a force that propels healthcare providers to reach beyond clinical boundaries and engage with the holistic well-being of their patients [5]. This serves as the link connecting individuals to the assistance they require, fostering open conversations and diminishing the fear and stigma commonly associated with mental health issues. Nevertheless, the specific challenges inherent in their roles within these environments can affect their capacity to deliver such care effectively [6].

Staff individuals in healthcare settings often encounter stressful and at times distressing situations, tasks, and interactions. This includes activities like assisting a patient with self-harm. Effectively managing these challenges without leading to compassion fatigue poses a difficulty for both individuals engaged in the work and the supporting organization [7].

In their daily practice, mental health nurses encounter various challenges as they are tasked not only with providing support and care to individuals undergoing treatment for mental illnesses on their recovery journeys but also with managing administrative responsibilities within the ward. This includes

admitting patients, participating in meetings, administering medication, and engaging with patients [9]. As mental health nurses navigate the intricate webs of psychiatric care, they are confronted with the profound responsibility of not only managing clinical complexities but also fostering genuine connections with individuals experiencing mental health crises. The emotional toll of witnessing the often invisible struggles of patients can be both an enriching and demanding aspect of their profession [10]. Long hours, emotionally charged interactions, and the continuous exposure to human suffering undoubtedly impact the mental and emotional well-being of these caregivers. [5]

METHODS

Study Design: This research study employed phenomenological qualitative research design to gain in-depth understanding regarding the compassion and challenges of nurses caring in mental health institutions in the Philippines. This method is utilized to attain more effective and reliable data about their personal experiences involving the topic of the study; through open-ended interviews and asking the participants to narrate and describe their personal experience. This methodology was employed as a means of investigating and delineating the firsthand experiences of individuals, encompassing processes such as bracketing, intuiting, and analyzing and interpreting data [41].

Sampling Size and Technique: The participants are consisted of twenty (20) registered nurses working in mental health institutions, purposely chosen from the selected mental health institutions in different regions of the Philippines. Purposive sampling is the targeted selection of participants on the basis of their ability to illustrate the specific topic, idea or phenomenon required in the analysis [42]. This helped the researchers to achieve the sample population that ideally represents the entire population being studied. Based on the common characteristics or qualities of the group members, the sampling technique was organized. The researchers ensured that the chosen participants were qualified given the following conditions: a registered nurse in the Philippines who has: (1) 1 year and more experience as a mental health nurse, (2) working in a mental health institution in the Philippines, and (3) a Filipino citizen.

Setting of the Study: The study took place in selected mental health institutions in the Philippines, where mental illness has emerged as the third most prevalent disability. Approximately six million Filipinos grapple with conditions like depression and anxiety, contributing to the country's ranking as the third-highest in mental disorders within the Western Pacific [1].

Data Gathering Instrument: The instrument that was used in the study is a research-made interview guide as the primary tool in gathering the needed data from twenty (20) participants. Preferences for the structure of the research-made interview guide was focused on the main objective of the study. The interview guide comprises questions that was used in exploring the compassion and challenges of nurses in handling patients in mental health institutions in the Philippines. Follow-up questions were provided to describe broadly the narratives of nurses. The research instrument was validated by three experts in the field.

Data Gathering Procedure: For data gathering, the researchers conducted a semi-structured interviews with the participants, focusing on their experiences related to compassion and challenges in their work as mental health nurses. The researchers asked the availability of the nurses and set a date when to conduct the face-to-face interview. For the utilization of online platform, the researchers contacted the participants through Google Mail or Messenger, and determine their preferred platform for interview; either Messenger, Google Meet, or Zoom. Prior to the conduct of the interview, a Google Form link was provided to the participants that directed them to the informed consent.

Limitations of the Study: The research study was focused on understanding the compassion and challenges of the nurses caring for patients in mental health institutions in the Philippines, applying the phenomenological qualitative research design. It sought to discover gaps in the process thereby forming a sound basis in the development of an action plan. Twenty (20) Filipino registered nurses who have one or more years of experience as a mental health nurse in a certain mental health institution in the Philippines were chosen as participants, following the set criteria.

Qualitative data were extracted from the researcher-made interview questionnaire which was administered from October–December of the first semester of Academic Year 2023-2024. Qualitative analysis was applied to data gathered and was limited only to the description of participants' compassion and challenges of nurses in mental health institutions in the Philippines.

One limitation of the study "Exploring Compassion and Challenges: A Qualitative Study of Nurses in Mental Health Institutions in the Philippines" could be the potential for selection bias. Since the study focuses on nurses working in mental health institutions, it may not capture the perspectives of nurses working in other healthcare settings or those who have left the profession, potentially limiting the generalizability of the findings to the broader nursing population in the Philippines.

The findings of this study may have limited generalizability beyond the specific mental health institutions in the Philippines that were included in the research. The experiences and challenges faced by nurses in different geographical regions or healthcare settings may vary, and therefore, caution should be exercised when applying these findings to other contexts or populations.

Data Analysis: To find recurring themes and patterns in the interview transcripts, the researchers used thematic analysis, whereas a descriptive approach will be applied. A prerequisite for the analysis is that it includes data on compassion and challenges of mental health nurses, such as interviews. The analysis establishes a seeking significance phase and progresses to the identification and relation of many meanings. The analysis includes looking for patterns in the meanings that are further investigated and determining how to group those patterns into themes [44].

The analytical procedure commences with phenomenological reduction, involving a revisit to the initial acknowledgment of the phenomenon being studied. To achieve this, the researchers consistently check for bias to maintain a neutral stance. This practice ensures that the researchers' attitudes and

beliefs do not influence the study [45]. In describing the compassion and challenges faced by nurses caring for patients in mental health institutions in the Philippines, the focus was on highlighting the commonalities in participants' lived experiences to attain a unified description.

This study uses Colaizzi's approach of data analysis. This technique offers a way to analyze qualitative research data, to find significant data, and to group it into themes or categories.

Ethical Consideration: Accordingly, following ethical standards on conducting a research study is a must; as they are considered morally right and just (Research Ethics Committees, 2019).

Respect. The researchers placed importance on respecting the dignity and value of all participants, being mindful of perceived authority or influence dynamics in client relationships.

Informed consent. The researchers took measures to provide respondents with ample information and time to comprehend the nature and purpose of their involvement in the research.

Privacy and Confidentiality. The researchers took measures to uphold accurate record-keeping and limit the extent of information disclosed to what aligns with educational objectives.

Self-determination. The researchers ensured that participants were aware of their right to withdraw from the study at any stage without facing adverse repercussions.

Anonymity. The researchers conveyed the details of the study to participants in a comprehensible manner. They clarified that personal identifiers, including names, were omitted.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The analysis of the mental health nurses' lived experiences on handling patients with maladaptive behavior by descriptive phenomenology revealed three main themes: compassionate care of mental health nurses, challenges of mental health nurses, and keys towards quality nursing care of mental health nurses.

Table 1. Final Thematic Map

First Theme: Compassionate Care of Mental Health Nurses	Second Theme: Challenges of Mental Health Nurses	Third Theme: Keys Towards Quality Nursing Care of Mental Health Nurses
Independent nursing care <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Empathy of mental health nurses ● Therapeutic environment Holistic approach for patient-care <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Personalized and therapeutic care Collaborative multidisciplinary approaches <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Interprofessional collaboration Health education <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Providing education and proper information 	Maintaining therapeutic nurse-patient relationship <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Risk of physical harm and non-compliance Personal and professional hurdles <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Complexity of career ● Self-awareness Thoughts and feelings <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Emotionally drained ● Compassion fatigue 	Comprehensive therapeutic strategies <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Combination of rapport, therapeutic communication, and therapeutic care plan Competence and professional development <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Continuous education and collaboration Empowering own well-being <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Self-care and support system

Theme 1: Compassionate Care of Mental Health Nurses

Beginning with Florence Nightingale's early period studies, portrayals of nurses as kind people have persisted to the present day. According to Florence Nightingale, competent nurses are decent people with some qualities, including compassion. The nursing profession naturally entails providing compassionate care, and compassion serves as a code of conduct for professional conduct [22]. The compassionate care of mental health nurses was described with reference to independent nursing care, holistic approach for patient-care, collaborative multidisciplinary approaches, and health education.

Subtheme 1: Independent nursing care

Independent nursing care is described in terms of empathy of nurses and provision of therapeutic environment to patients. It is a cornerstone of the nursing profession, emphasizing the unique contributions nurses make to healthcare. It reflects the dedication, expertise, and compassionate nature of nurses as they work to promote health, prevent illness, and provide optimal care to those in need.

Empathy in independent nursing care is the ability of nurses to understand and share the feelings of their patients, fostering a compassionate connection. This emotional understanding is important in providing holistic and patient-centered care, as nurses strive to put themselves in the patients' situations, offering not only medical support but also a sense of strength, safety, and comfort to enhance overall well-being.

Moreover, therapeutic environment is part of compassion which serves as the link connecting individuals to the assistance they require, fostering open conversations and diminishing the fear and stigma commonly associated with mental health issues. Nevertheless, the specific challenges inherent in their roles within these environments can affect their capacity to deliver such care effectively [6].

As stated: *“Dealing with patients exhibiting maladaptive behavior requires a great deal of empathy. I strive to put myself in my patient's shoes, considering their discomfort and fear”* [Participant 5]. Nurses demonstrate empathy by understanding and sharing the feelings of their patients, fostering a compassionate connection that goes beyond the clinical aspects of care.

For a patient to feel understood, nurses use empathy and active listening. As stated: *“Through the use of empathy and attentive listening, nurses aim to make patients feel acknowledged and comprehended, fostering a more positive overall patient experience.”* [Participant 12]

Putting yourself in their situation as a nurse involves empathizing with the emotional and physical challenges faced by patients. As stated, *“putting yourself to their situation...I need to be strong and make them feel they are safe and give the right treatment that they need.”* [Participant 17]

Nurses create a therapeutic environment by fostering a caring and supportive atmosphere that promotes healing, comfort, and holistic well-being for patients. As stated, *“Helping patients to have a safe environment, boost self-confidence by having self-care and also teach them strategies that can help them to handle their own emotions”* [Participant 17].

“I focused on building trust, understanding triggers, and collaborating on coping strategies. It's all about creating a supportive environment” [Participant 3]. The overarching goal is to cultivate a supportive environment, emphasizing the importance of relationships and shared strategies for managing difficulties.

As stated, *“collaborative approach fosters a supportive environment, enhancing the overall effectiveness of the treatment plan”* [Participant 6]. This collaborative and supportive environment contributes to improving the overall effectiveness of the treatment plan.

Subtheme 2: Holistic approach for patient-care

Holistic approach for patient care is described in terms of personalized and therapeutic care. It addresses not only the physical aspects of health but also considers the emotional, social, and psychological well-being of individuals, promoting a more complete and integrated approach to healthcare.

Most mental health illnesses necessitate a combination of psychotherapy and medication, a nurse can assist in developing a well-balanced treatment plan, treating patients from a variety of viewpoints in their daily practice, including biological, psychological, emotional, and social. [20]

As stated, *“I employed a holistic approach, considering their psychological, social, and biological factors”* [Participant 1]. Nurses ensure a comprehensive and well-rounded perspective in their approach.

“Collaborate with other healthcare professionals for a holistic approach” [Participant 12]. Engaging in collaboration with other healthcare professionals emphasizes the importance of working collectively to adopt a holistic approach, ensuring comprehensive care that addresses various aspects of a patient's well-being.

Nurses employ a multifaceted approach to assessment to attain a comprehensive insight into the patient's mental health. As stated, *“I use standardized tools, conduct interviews, and consider environmental factors to gain a holistic understanding of the patient's mental health”* [Participant 2].

Subtheme 3: Collaborative multidisciplinary approaches

Collaborative multidisciplinary approach is described in terms of interprofessional collaboration. This involves the integration of diverse expertise and perspectives from various healthcare professionals, working collectively to enhance the overall quality and effectiveness of patient care.

Hildegard Peplau's Theory of Interpersonal Relations emphasizes the nurse-patient relationship. This approach is commonly used by mental health nurses to establish a therapeutic relationship with patients dealing with mental disorders, thereby promoting trust, communication, and collaboration in the course of recovery. Peplau further advanced an interpersonal model that prioritized collaboration between the nurse and client, moving away from a passive recipient approach for the client and a passive executor role for the nurse following the doctor's directions [37].

“Collaboration with Multidisciplinary Teams Working closely with psychologists, psychiatrists, and social workers and other interagency government offices can offer a comprehensive approach, providing diverse perspectives and strategies” [Participant 5]. Collaborating with psychologists, psychiatrists, social workers, and interagency government offices fosters a comprehensive approach, incorporating diverse perspectives and strategies to optimize patient care and support.

As stated, *“It also involves the patient in the assessment process to gain insights into their perspective, with the collaboration of the healthcare team”* [Participant 13]. By involving the patient in the assessment process, the approach seeks to gain valuable insights into their perspective, fostering collaboration with the healthcare team to ensure a more patient-centered and comprehensive care strategy.

Continued training in evidence-based interventions, coupled with collaboration with a multidisciplinary team, serves to elevate the overall quality of care by integrating current best practices and diverse expertise. As stated, *“ongoing training in evidence-based interventions and collaboration with a multidisciplinary team can enhance the overall quality of care”* [Participant 1].

Subtheme 4: Health education

Health education is described in terms of providing education and proper information in mental health nursing for both patients and their families is essential for fostering understanding, empowerment, and effective coping strategies in navigating the complexities of mental health challenges.

Nurses engage with patients without judgment, demonstrating a commitment to educating and enlightening, thereby dispelling misconceptions surrounding mental illness [5]. Compassion serves as the link connecting individuals to the assistance they require, fostering open conversations and diminishing the fear and stigma commonly associated with mental health issues [6].

Offering educational resources to the family empowers them with a deeper understanding of the patient's maladaptive behavior. As stated, *"providing educational resources to the family can empower them to better understand and navigate the challenges associated with the patient's maladaptive behavior, contributing to a more comprehensive and sustained care strategy"* [Participant 6].

"Education and Psychoeducation: Provide information about the patient's condition and treatment options" [Participant 12]. The concept of education and psychoeducation involves imparting information about the patient's condition and available treatment options, facilitating a better understanding for informed decision-making and engagement in their healthcare journey.

As stated, *"I think the first intervention would be education, proper information especially to the patients, the family; so that the family will be able to handle their relative who has maladaptive behavior"* [Participant 14]. The primary intervention strategy involves providing education and accurate information, particularly to patients and their families, to equip them with the knowledge and skills needed to effectively manage a relative exhibiting maladaptive behavior.

Theme 2: Challenges of Mental Health Nurses

Specific challenges inherent in the role of nurses within these mental health institutions can affect their capacity to deliver such care effectively [6]. The challenges of mental health nurses were described with reference to maintaining therapeutic nurse-patient relationship, personal and professional hurdles, and thought and feelings.

Subtheme 1: Maintaining therapeutic nurse-patient relationship

The challenge in maintaining a therapeutic nurse-patient relationship is described in terms of risk of physical harm and non-compliance. It lies in navigating potential barriers, such as time constraints, communication gaps, and external factors, to ensure sustained trust, understanding, and collaboration.

Psychiatric nurses face verbal assaults and physical harm in their workplace [32]. Additionally, there is a risk of verbal and physical aggression directed at staff members by service users, with some personnel even experiencing instances of physical and sexual abuse from patients [34]. In addition to facing a variety of practical difficulties like overcrowding, drug stock-outs, staff shortages, inadequate infrastructure and equipment, stigma, and sexual harassment, mental health nurses also deal with physical violence, emotional stress brought on by verbal abuse, stigma, and discrimination [4].

As stated, *"Balancing empathy and professional boundaries becomes challenging when patients display erratic or harmful behaviors. It's tough when patients resist treatment or exhibit aggressive tendencies"* [Participant 4]. Juggling empathy and professional boundaries gets tricky when dealing with patients who show unpredictable or harmful behaviors, especially when they resist treatment or act aggressively.

Patients acting aggressively could pose a risk to themselves or others. As stated, *"Patients might act out aggressively, potentially causing harm to themselves or those around them"* [Participant 5].

Dealing with patients experiencing cognitive decline presented the difficulty of them not consistently following instructions. As stated, *"patients with cognitive decline posed the challenge of non-compliance with instructions"* [Participant 6].

Subtheme 2: Personal and professional hurdles

Navigating personal and professional hurdles requires resilience, adaptability, and a balance between one's individual challenges and the demands of a chosen career. This is described in terms of complexity of career and self-awareness.

Physical, psychological, and administrative difficulties were just a few of the difficulties that the mental health nurses discussed they faced on the job every day [4]. In their daily practice, mental health nurses encounter various challenges as they are tasked not only with providing support and care to individuals undergoing treatment for mental illnesses on their recovery journeys but also with managing administrative responsibilities within the ward. This includes admitting patients, participating in meetings, administering medication, and engaging with patients [9].

Mental health nurses play a pivotal role in ensuring active patient engagement in their care, fostering a sense of empowerment and self-determination. This approach enables nurses to forge deeper connections with their patients, laying the groundwork for understanding and support crucial to the healing process [4]. According to Peplau, psychodynamic nursing involves the capacity to self-analyze one's behavior to aid others in recognizing emotional challenges and applying human relations concepts to address issues that arise at various levels of experience [37].

"Balancing empathy with maintaining a therapeutic environment adds another layer of complexity to the job" [Participant 2]. The job becomes more complex when trying to balance empathy while also maintaining a therapeutic environment.

Nurses encounter challenges in communication, and the unpredictable aspect of maladaptive behavior further complicates their ability to deliver effective care. As stated, *“Nurses may face situations where communication is strained, and the unpredictable nature of maladaptive behavior adds an extra layer of complexity to providing effective care”* [Participant 1].

“It involves working through communication difficulties, handling possible aggression, and trying to give good care while understanding the complexities of mental health situations” [Participant 12]. The task at hand includes overcoming communication challenges, managing potential aggressive behavior, and providing quality care while navigating the intricacies of mental health situations.

As stated, *“It requires constant self-awareness and the ability to de-escalate tense situations effectively”* [Participant 2]. The task demands continual self-awareness and the skill to successfully defuse or ease tense situations as they arise.

Finding a balance between being empathetic towards others and taking care of oneself is challenging in caring for patients with maladaptive behavior. As stated, *“It's hard to balance empathy and self-care in those situations”* [Participant 4].

“Before you can enter or employ in a rehab facility you must first do self-actualization, how can we take care of our ourselves mentally and be mentally stable” [Participant 10]. Before being admitted to or working in a rehabilitation facility, individuals need to engage in a process of self-actualization, focusing on understanding and enhancing their mental well-being to achieve mental stability.

Subtheme 3: Thoughts and feelings

Thoughts and feelings are described in terms of emotionally drained and compassion fatigue. Nurses experience a dynamic range of thoughts and feelings as they navigate the challenges and rewards of providing compassionate care, often balancing empathy with the demands of their profession.

Mental health nurses deal with physical violence, emotional stress brought on by verbal abuse, stigma, and discrimination. Because of the nature of their job and their interactions with individuals with mental illnesses, mental health nurses face the potential of developing depression or anxiety [4].

Continuously witnessing patients' distress may lead to compassion fatigue, characterized by a diminishing capacity for compassionate and empathetic responses due to prolonged exposure to individuals experiencing mental illness. Mental health nurses, especially those working in settings with frequent crisis presentations, such as inpatient facilities and crisis teams, are at risk of compassion fatigue [27]. Compassion fatigue is a prevalent response to work stress within this demographic. This could be attributed to the frequent demand for and experience of compassion [7]. Those nurses experiencing intensified compassion fatigue are more prone to indicating lower mental health, heightened stress, and an increased inclination to consider leaving their organizations [43].

Assisting individuals through challenges is both difficult yet fulfilling, while also acknowledging the potential emotional exhaustion that comes with such support. As stated, *“On one hand, it's challenging but rewarding to help them navigate through it. On the other hand, it can be emotionally draining”* [Participant 3].

“My encounters with patients exhibiting maladaptive behaviors have been emotionally challenging. It's difficult witnessing their struggles and knowing the limitations of what I can do to help them” [Participant 4]. A nurse has found emotional challenges in dealing with patients displaying maladaptive behaviors and there is a difficulty in witnessing the patients' struggles and recognizing the limitations in the nurse's ability to provide substantial assistance.

Handling patients who exhibited disruptive or problematic behavior was emotionally and professionally challenging. As stated, *“Dealing with patients who acted out was tough both emotionally and professionally”* [Participant 12].

Continual exposure to certain challenging behaviors can result in compassion fatigue, causing challenges in sustaining the same level of empathy and care over time. As stated, *“The constant exposure to such behaviors can lead to compassion fatigue, making it difficult to maintain the same level of empathy and care”* [Participant 4].

As stated, *“Dealing with patients showing challenging behavior is tough...compassion is believed to be important”* [P12]. Managing patients with challenging behavior is difficult, and it emphasizes the perceived importance of maintaining compassion in such situations.

The impact of consistently facing such situations requires self-care and support to prevent compassion fatigue” [Participant 5]. Regularly encountering challenging situations necessitates practicing self-care and seeking support to prevent experiencing compassion fatigue.

Theme 3: Keys Towards Quality Nursing Care of Mental Health Nurses

The Mental Health Act of the Philippines safeguards the nurses' rights to a secure working environment, access to ongoing education, and autonomy in their professional practices [16]. As per mental health nurses, the keys towards quality nursing care were described with reference to comprehensive therapeutic strategies, competence and professional development and empowering own well-being.

Subtheme 1. Comprehensive therapeutic strategies

Comprehensive therapeutic strategies are described in terms of combination of rapport, therapeutic communication, and therapeutic care plan. It encompasses a multifaceted approach integrated to address the diverse needs of patients and enhance overall well-being.

According to Townsend & Morgan (2017), because most mental health illnesses necessitate a combination of psychotherapy and medication, a nurse can assist in developing a well-balanced treatment plan, treating patients from a variety of viewpoints in their daily practice, including biological,

psychological, emotional, and social. As a result, in a team, they act as a mediator and collaborate with every other member, sharing patient information [20].

The nurses outline a multifaceted approach to addressing mental health concerns. It involves utilizing Cognitive-Behavioral Therapy (CBT) to target cognitive patterns, implementing structured modification strategies, involving support systems, and considering medications when deemed appropriate, all under the guidance of professionals. The comprehensive strategy emphasizes a tailored and collaborative approach to mental health treatment. As stated, "*Cognitive-Behavioral Therapy (CBT) to address cognitive patterns, the establishment of a structured modification strategies, the involvement of support systems, and, when deemed appropriate, the consideration of medications with the guidance of professionals*" [Participant 13]

The nurses advocate for incorporating behavioral therapies, providing coping skills training, and working collaboratively with an interdisciplinary team to adopt a comprehensive and holistic approach to patient care. As stated, "*Introduce behavioral therapies, implement coping skills training, and collaborate with the interdisciplinary team for a holistic approach to patient care*" [Participant 1]

As stated, "*Establishing trust and rapport opens the door to effective communication*" [Participant 3]. Building trust and establishing a positive rapport with others creates a foundation for effective communication.

Subtheme 2: Competence and professional development

Competence and professional development are described in terms of continuous education and collaboration. These are inseparable, as continuous learning and skill enhancement are essential for nurses to provide high-quality, up-to-date care in the dynamic healthcare landscape.

A mental health professional refers to a qualified individual, such as a medical doctor, psychologist, nurse, or social worker, possessing specific abilities related to mental health service provision. The legislation also recognizes the pivotal role of mental health professionals, ensuring their participation in the planning and development of mental health services. Moreover, it safeguards their rights to a secure working environment, access to ongoing education, and autonomy in their professional practices [16]. The primary worry for mental health nurses revolves around insufficient education and experience, leading to potential errors in care and judgment [10]. There is a call for psychiatric nurse practitioners to actively engage in regular updates and in-service training pertaining to the care of psychiatric patients [31].

As stated, "*Involve patients in their care plans, considering their preferences and goals. Collaborate with other healthcare professionals for a holistic approach*" [Participant 12]. This emphasizes the importance of patient involvement in the development of their care plans, taking into account their preferences and goals. Additionally, it encourages collaboration with other healthcare professionals to adopt a holistic approach.

Ongoing learning and a willingness to embrace new approaches are important for effectively managing patients. It underscores the importance of staying informed and adaptable in the dynamic field of patient care. As stated, "*Continuous education and remaining open-minded to new approaches are key in managing patients*" [Participant 2].

"*Continuous education on mental health conditions and therapeutic communication techniques*" [Participant 1]. This underscores the significance of ongoing learning about mental health conditions and therapeutic communication techniques. It suggests a commitment to staying informed and improving skills.

Subtheme 3: Empowering own well-being

Empowering own well-being of nurses is described in terms of self-care and support system. It is vital for sustaining their physical and mental health, ensuring resilience, and fostering the ability to deliver quality patient care.

The elevated prevalence of depression in mental health nurses might require the nurse to seek treatment for their own personal challenges [4]. Nurses require a strong support system, must prioritize their own well-being and cultivate awareness about the importance of mental and physical health which empowers nurses to prioritize self-care, to effectively provide quality care to others.

"*Regular supervision, debriefing sessions, and seeking support from colleagues*" [Participant 1]. This implies the importance of regularly engaging in supervision, debriefing sessions, and seeking support from colleagues as part of a proactive approach to maintaining mental and emotional well-being.

Emphasizing self-care by adopting strategies such as seeking supervision or peer support, practicing mindfulness or stress-reduction techniques, and establishing appropriate boundaries. The goal is to prevent burnout, promoting well-being and resilience in the face of professional challenges. As stated, "*focus on self-care strategies, seek supervision or peer support, engage in mindfulness or stress-reduction techniques, and ensure proper boundaries to prevent burnout*" [Participant 4].

As stated, "*Prioritize self-care to stay strong and emotionally balanced*" [Participant 12]. The nurses advise making self-care a priority in order to maintain emotional strength and balance. It underscores the importance of taking care of one's well-being for overall mental and emotional health.

CONCLUSION

1. Compassionate Care of Mental Health Nurses

In conclusion, the data highlighted the profound compassion exhibited by nurses in various dimensions of their practice. Through independent nursing care, mental health nurses demonstrate empathy, fostering a compassionate connection with patients. The emphasis on creating a therapeutic environment

and adopting a holistic approach to patient care further underscores the commitment of nurses to providing personalized and compassionate interventions. The collaborative multidisciplinary approaches, coupled with interprofessional collaboration, showcase the collective effort of healthcare professionals in ensuring the well-being of patients. Additionally, the role of health education in providing proper information reflects nurses' dedication to empowering patients through knowledge. Overall, the data paints a comprehensive picture of nurses as compassionate caregivers who prioritize not only the physical but also the emotional and educational needs of those under their care.

2. Challenges of Mental Health Nurses

In conclusion, nurses face various challenges in their profession, as highlighted by the data. The maintenance of a therapeutic nurse-patient relationship brings about the inherent risks of physical harm and non-compliance, posing significant obstacles. The personal and professional hurdles nurses encounter, characterized by the complexity of their career and the necessity for self-awareness, further contribute to the demanding nature of their roles. Moreover, the emotional toll on nurses is evident through feelings of being emotionally drained and the onset of compassion fatigue. Recognizing and addressing these challenges is crucial for the well-being of nurses and the delivery of high-quality patient care. The healthcare industry must prioritize support systems, ongoing education, and strategies for mitigating the emotional burden on nurses to ensure a resilient and sustainable nursing workforce.

3. Keys Towards Quality Nursing Care of Mental Health Nurses

In conclusion, achieving quality nursing care in mental health necessitates a multifaceted approach encompassing comprehensive therapeutic strategies, competence, and personal well-being. Mental health nurses can enhance patient outcomes by implementing a combination of effective rapport-building, therapeutic communication, and well-designed therapeutic care plans. Continuous education and collaboration are pivotal for maintaining competence and fostering professional development, ensuring that nurses stay abreast of the latest advancements in mental health care. Equally important is the recognition of the need for self-care and the establishment of a strong support system, empowering mental health nurses to navigate the challenges of their profession while safeguarding their own well-being. By integrating these key elements, mental health nurses can deliver high-quality, holistic care that addresses both the clinical and personal dimensions of their role.

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