

The R³: Resilient Nurses Initiative of Maryland Resources for Nursing Students, Faculty, and Practicing Nurses

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The long tail of the COVID-19 pandemic has profoundly impacted the nursing profession. Rates of burnout, moral suffering and turnover have intensified existing workforce challenges present before COVID-19. In the aftermath nursing faculty, students, and newly minted nurses are affected. Nursing faculty, already taxed to take on additional students, were stretched beyond their capacities as they attempted to pivot in response to the pandemic and the resulting financial pressures. Although nursing program enrollments remain flat or reflect modest increases, a gap remains in increasing nursing supply, especially in registered nurse (RN) to Bachelor of Science in Nursing (BSN) pro-

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Nursing educators, students, and practicing nurses are experiencing persistent post-pandemic challenges that undermine their wellbeing and integrity. The R³: Resilient Nurses Initiative of Maryland has created resources to integrate resilience and ethical practice skills into existing curricula.

Keywords: Resilience, integrity, ethical practice, wellbeing.

grams (American Association of Colleges of Nursing, 2024). Nursing students and new nurses face a changing healthcare landscape where the typical clinical experiences have been negatively impacted and transitions into practice are truncated or eliminated. Nurse residency programs (NRPs) have been overwhelmed with a new hamster wheel of constant re-orientation when newly trained nurses leave their roles or organizations after just one year. Not only do these challenges impact the pipeline of nurses into the profession, but they also have implications for sustaining those who are already trained. It is estimated that an additional 338,000 nurses will be needed to meet the needs of patients across America by 2036 (Smiley et al., 2023). With a current nursing turnover rate hovering at 21% (NSI Nursing Solutions, 2024), past strategies are insufficient to meet the complexities of today's workforce.

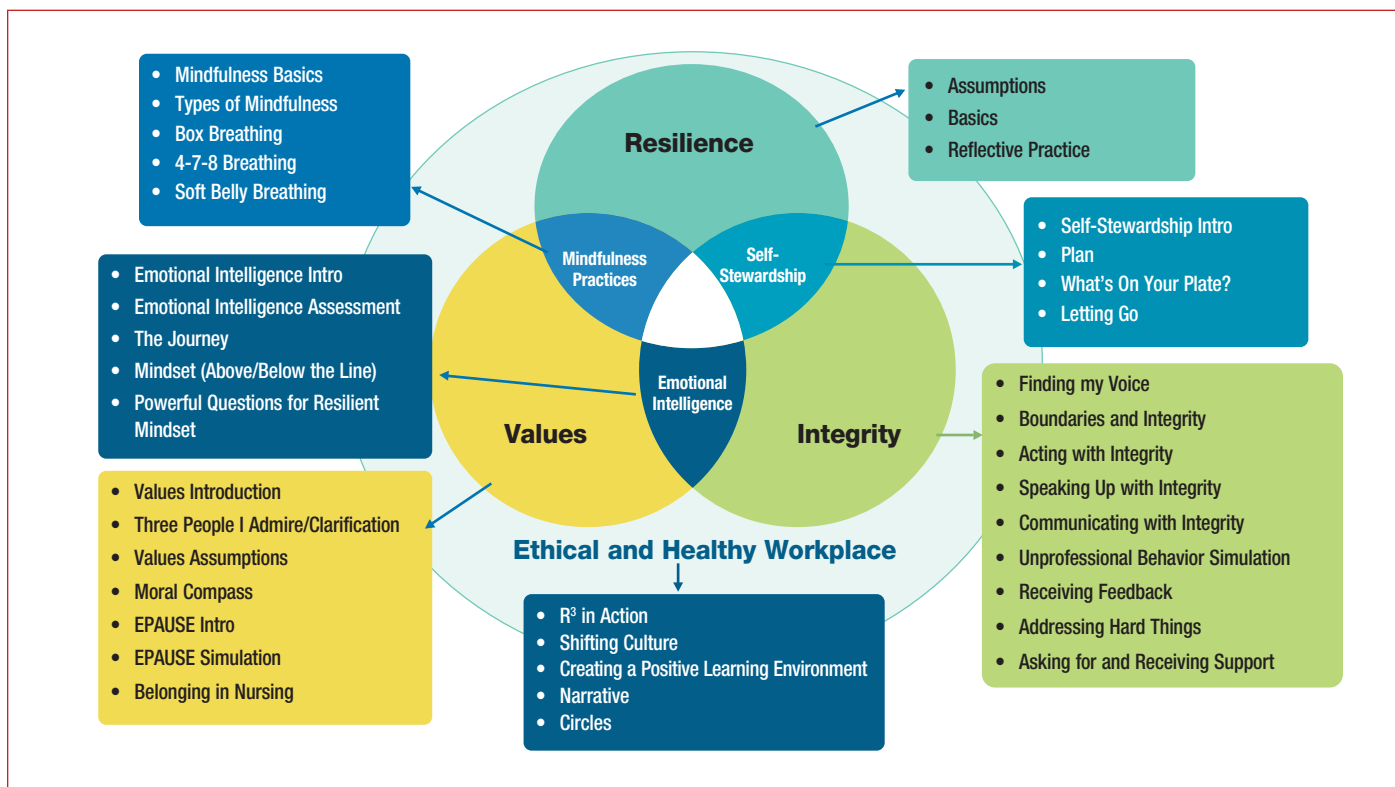
Solving these longstanding and intensified workforce issues will require concerted and multipronged solutions. Investments to remove barriers to increasing supply must be equilibrated with investments to create work environments where nurses can thrive. It is an opportunity for nurses in all roles and specialties to join in bridging the longstanding academic/practice gaps and dismantling the barriers to healthy work-

places. Driving this effort could create a seamless trajectory for nursing students and newly trained nurses to sustain themselves and their commitment to the profession throughout their careers. No longer can the profession afford the historical hierarchies and narratives that privilege certain nursing roles, specialties, or education over others. These patterns contribute to inequities concerning nursing's diverse contributions to our nation's health. Essential resilience, values, and integrity skills are necessary to sustain the workforce while engaging in systemic culture change to create enabling education and practice environments. Investments in fundamental and sustainable change within the healthcare ecosystem are needed alongside an expanded repertoire of resources to meet the challenges and complexity of today's nursing workforce.

The Renewal, Resilience, and Retention (R³) Initiative for Maryland Nurses (Johns Hopkins School of Nursing, n.d.) is a collaborative effort across multiple institutions to comprehensively tackle the underlying causes of burnout and disengagement among nurses, students,

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Figure 1.
R³ Map of Concepts and Modules



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and nursing faculty. This initiative involves eight schools of nursing, five hospitals, and the 44-member Maryland Nurse Residency Collaborative. Guided by a Coordinating Council representing key Maryland stakeholders and a National Advisory Board comprising representatives from prominent nursing and healthcare organizations, the initiative receives strategic feedback and direction.

The diverse program team includes faculty specializing in various fields, such as bioethics, leadership, mindfulness, informatics, simulation, communication, research, and program evaluation. R³ addresses nurse burnout and attrition by instilling resilience strategies early in the education-to-practice pipeline and reinforcing them as new nurses transition into professional roles within resilient work environments.

The R³ initiative accomplishes this by (1) preparing faculty to model and deliver resiliency, wellbeing, and ethical practice content in prelicensure curricula; (2) strengthening connections between nursing education and clinical practice by encouraging NRP educators to integrate resiliency, wellbeing, and ethical practice skills learned during pre-licen-

sure programs; and (3) simultaneously fostering both individual and systemic resilience while acknowledging that cultural change takes time, R³ systematically equips faculty to develop transformative innovations within organizations, aiming to shift the culture of learning and practice among Maryland nurses from one of depletion and disengagement to one that supports resilience, wellbeing, and healthy work environments. The R³ initiative is grounded in a strengths-based approach that amplifies the resilient potential that is already present and expands nurses' capacities to meet the inevitable challenges of healthcare with greater skill, resources, and less negative consequences.

Building capacity within nursing faculty to invest in their wellbeing, role model behaviors and skills, and to integrate them into existing courses is a premise of the R³ Initiative. The R³ curricula for nursing faculty focus on engaging faculty to assess their wellbeing and integrity, offering skills and tools to integrate resilience and ethical practice content into prelicensure programs, and leveraging their autonomy to design course content to integrate new skills

and practices into their courses and educational processes and thereby begin to shift the culture within their nursing programs. Building capacity and confidence to be agents of change within their educational settings creates momentum for lasting impact.

A key component of the R³ program was the development of 38 multi-media educational assets and modules. The content reflects the core areas of the R³ curriculum for faculty and the overall R³ program. As depicted in Figure 1, these include values, integrity, and resilience. Three synergistic concepts: mindfulness, emotional intelligence, and self-stewardship, enable the cultivation of the core concepts. (see <https://nursing.jhu.edu/faculty-research/research/centers/r3/r3-tools-and-modules/>).

Formats for the assets include video, self-guided modules, reflective practices, guided practices, and simulation. They range from 4 minutes to 12 minutes each; many are self-paced. The modules were designed to be integrated into existing courses or curricula in prelicensure or NRP programs. They have been used as course assignments, during scheduled class time, as prep, or as a fol-

low-up to course content with application and discussion of module content. Each asset or module has a short evaluation and access to a certificate of completion that can be downloaded and submitted as evidence of completion. Students are invited to explore the content and its application to their nursing education and return to them as they enter practice. There are resources that can offer specific support especially as students transition into practice. For example, in collaboration with our colleagues in the Maryland Nurse Residency Collaborative, we designed four modules to address common issues for newly graduated nurses. These include 1) Addressing Hard Things, 2) Asking for and Receiving Support and Resources, 3) Receiving Feedback, and 4) Belonging. Beginning these practices in pre-licensure programs and reinforcing them

within the NRP creates a sustainable trajectory of tools and skills. Although students and new nurses were the primary focus of R³, the content applies to nurses at any stage of their career.

Due to the generous support of the Nurse Support Program II funding, we can provide access to these resources across Maryland and nationally. We have a distribution agreement with Vizient and are exploring similar collaborations with other national nursing organizations. We look forward to your feedback about the content and invite you to share how you use it.

The time is now for nursing students, educators, and practicing nurses to stand together to create a vision for the nursing profession that honors our diversity, resilience, and competence to meet the needs of the people we serve. Together, we can leverage our collective

wisdom and tenacity to create a health-care system that is truly driven by the needs of patients and where nurses can make their optimal contribution in healthy, wholesome ways. **DN**

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