

## Grant Proposal Submitted to Johnson & Johnson Foundation

### Care for the Caregiver Following Traumatic Events: An Educational Self-Help Toolkit

#### CONTACT INFORMATION

**Project Director:**

Cindy Zolnierek, PhD, RN  
Executive Director, Texas Nurses Association/Foundation  
8501 N. MoPac Expy, Suite 400  
Austin, TX 78759  
512-452-0645 x138

**Project co-director:**

Paula Webb, DNP, RN, NEA-BC  
President, Texas Organization of Nurse Executives  
Texas Tech University Health Sciences Center  
Lubbock, TX

**Finance officer:**

Chandra Hinds  
Director of Finance, Texas Nurses Association/Foundation  
8501 N. MoPac Expy, Suite 400  
Austin, TX 78759  
512-452-0645 x126

#### PROJECT SUMMARY

Nurses are likely to be profoundly affected by disasters.

- Nurses respond during disasters: they participate in operationalizing and implementing emergency preparedness plans within their organizations, they work additional hours, they volunteer at shelters for displaced medically fragile persons, and they coordinate medical supplies, blood donations and other vital resources.
- During disaster situations, nurses often find themselves dealing with the challenges and potentially undesirable outcomes of providing care in compromised environments (lack of staff and supplies, loss of utilities such as electricity and water).
- Nurses are compelled by their duty to care for others while trying to balance care for themselves. Nurses are also affected by disasters and are equally concerned about the safety of their own families and homes.
- In addition to mental and physical fatigue, nurses may experience moral distress related to ethical concerns arising from conflicting values and obligations inherent in the disaster work environment.

Resources to assist individuals cope with the trauma of disasters can be effective <sup>[1]</sup>. While resources exist to address the post-traumatic stress encountered by disaster survivors (for example SAMSHA, CDC, NIH) and some are designed for first responders, there is a paucity of resources directed toward nurses. A grounded theory study of humanitarian nursing challenges during a disaster emphasized the importance of pre-deployment training on moral distress <sup>[2]</sup> Further, nurses working in compromised environments may experience compassion fatigue which has been described as secondary traumatic stress. <sup>[3]</sup>

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This grant request proposes the development and implementation of an educational self-help toolkit to address moral distress and promote moral resilience. Nurses would have free access to the toolkit via the Texas Nurses Foundation website.

#### **GRANT NARRATIVE**

This project proposes the development of user friendly, easily accessible, engaging resources tailored to the needs of nurses who have experienced moral distress related trauma, e.g. nurses who have cared for patients in compromised environments, nurses who experienced devastation of personal property. This toolkit of resources will assist nurses in the healing process related to recovery from the traumatic experience. The toolkit will include:

- Online education
- Peer support network
- Informational tip sheets for downloading
- Links to additional resources

#### Online Education

The Texas Nurses Association (TNA) has a learning management system (LMS) and access to instructional designers who are experts in developing engaging, user-friendly educational materials. Grant funding will enable TNA's Foundation to contract with subject matter experts to tailor existing PTSD content to nurses as well as develop new content to achieve the objectives of this grant. Planned content may include (but is not limited to):

- Proactive awareness of signs and symptoms of post-traumatic stress for self, family, and co-workers
- Techniques to mitigate the cumulative effects of stress and compassion fatigue <sup>[3]</sup>
- Symptoms of vicarious victim behavior/feelings and how to translate them into a positive response
- Dealing with the experiences of providing care in compromised environments (moral distress)
- Development of personal and professional resiliency
- Personal impact (e.g. tools and strategies to address fear, anxiety, overprotective behaviors, etc.)

Content delivery may include live or recorded webinars including micro-learning sessions that learners can review in fewer than 20 minutes. A peer review process will be used to ensure content is current, accurate and helpful to the target audience: nurses affected by natural disasters (i.e. hurricanes, floods, tornadoes, and fires). These webinars will be offered on TNA/TNF's website for open access at no cost. Content that is eligible for continuing nursing education (CNE) credit will be submitted for approval for CNE contact hours. Approved CNE will be offered on TNA's LMS for a fee to offset costs (in addition to the free webinar offered without CNE contact hours) for those desiring CNE credit.

#### Peer Support Network

Peer support plays an important role in healing from traumatic events <sup>[3,4]</sup>. To our knowledge there is no peer support program for nurses who experience moral distress related to the trauma of natural disasters. This project proposes the establishment of a virtual peer support network for nurse survivors of trauma related to disasters – particularly the moral distress of balancing care for self/family and patients as well as caring for patients in a compromised environment. The peer support network may take the form of an online chat forum, a blog in which stories can be shared, or other format depending

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on the response from nurses as to what is most desired and effective in facilitating recovery and building moral resilience.

#### Informational Tip Sheets

Information from the online modules and other resources will be distilled into one-page tip sheets and made available on the website for easy downloading and reference.

#### Links to Additional Resources

A number of resources related to coping with trauma exist. Although not tailored specifically to nurses, this information is valuable and may be helpful to nurses. Links to the National Institute for Mental Health, Centers for Disease Control, Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, American Nurses Association, American Psychiatric Nurses Association, etc. will be posted on the website.

#### **GOALS AND OBJECTIVES**

1. Develop resources for nurses to facilitate their healing and recovery from moral distress related to disaster related trauma
  - a. Generate related content
  - b. Format content for use by nurses
2. Implement means for effective delivery of content to nurses
  - a. Launch online, on-demand webinars accessible through the website
  - b. Post information tip sheets and other resources for easy access on website
3. Provide means for peer support connections
  - a. Explore avenues to establish peer support/recovery (e.g. blog, online chat) considering sustainability implications
  - b. Launch a mechanism for peer connections
4. Evaluate effect/usefulness of resources implemented through this project

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**PROPOSED TIMELINE**

<b>January 2018</b>	Identify project coordinator; locate subject matter experts
<b>February 2018</b>	Sign contract and initial meeting with SMEs to map scope of work; finalize assignments and timelines for projects
<b>March 2018</b>	Begin design of website and graphics; develop communications plan SMEs begin work on development of content and materials
<b>April 2018</b>	Content complete – to instructional design and communications for final formatting.
<b>May 2018</b>	Develop evaluation measures
<b>June –July 2018</b>	Finalize materials; upload to website.
<b>August 2018</b>	Final preparations and pilot of website and resources. Ramp up communications/marketing for National Preparedness month in September.
<b>September 2018</b>	Launch website and resources.
<b>October – December 2018</b>	Ongoing monitoring of website utilization; trouble shoot and respond to issues. First quarterly report to be completed in December.
<b>2019</b>	Maintenance of website and evaluation.

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#### REFERENCES

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3. Lombardo, B. & Eyre, C. (2011). Compassion fatigue: A nurse's primer. *Online Journal of Issues in Nursing*, 16(1), Manuscript 3.
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