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How do nursing professionals utilize personal and employer-sponsored strategies to support their mental health and wellbeing?



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Purpose & Problem

Nurses comprise the largest segment of the healthcare workforce and are the primary source of direct patient care. By 2030, a shortfall of over 63,000 nurses is predicted to strain and challenge the delivery of care across the country. To ensure an adequate supply of nursing professionals to meet increasingly complex healthcare needs in the U.S., protecting and supporting the mental health and wellbeing of the nursing workforce will be critical. The purpose of this project was to investigate the various personal and employer-offered strategies nursing professionals use to support and improve their mental health and wellbeing.

Background & Significance

Nurses are known to experience intense physical and emotional exhaustion, compassion fatigue, physical and verbal violence from patients and visitors, and a wide range of psychological symptoms. Nurses who experience these outcomes are more likely to leave their jobs, and to leave the nursing profession altogether. Additionally, nurses experiencing work-related burnout are at a higher risk for depression, anxiety, alcohol and substance use disorders, and suicide. Thus, it is imperative to better understand the strategies and services nurses use and find success with to ultimately improve the way mental health and wellbeing interventions and services are developed and offered to this workforce.

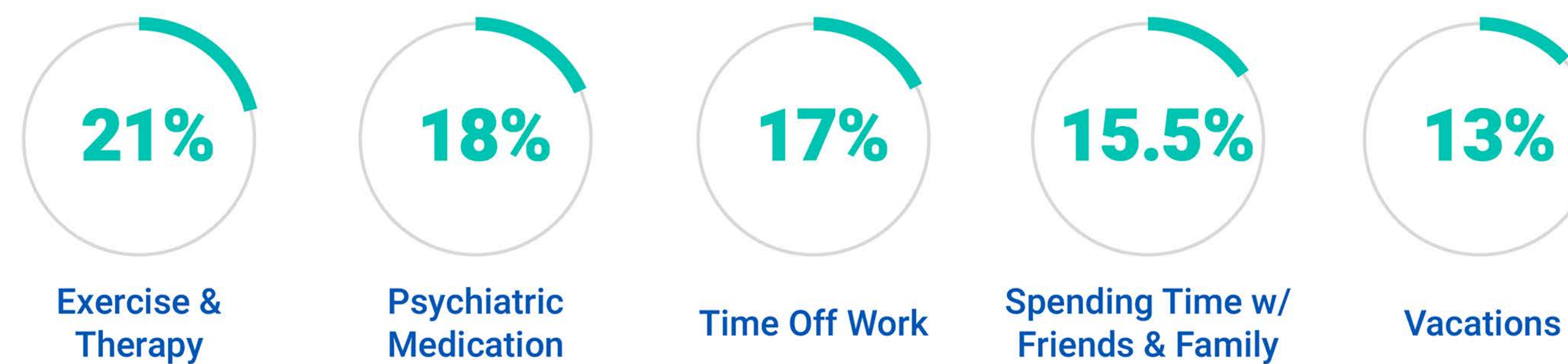
Literature Review

In light of this urgent challenge, healthcare organizations have endeavored to offer creative and multifaceted services and interventions to improve nurse mental health and wellbeing. These include programs such as computer-based resilience training, peer-to-peer support groups, and personalized online interventions. However, it is unknown how widely these services are offered or utilized by nurses, and how these services can complement and enrich strategies nurses may already use to improve their wellbeing.

Evaluation & Implementation

Prolink surveyed 267 travel nurse clinicians on the self-care strategies they use to maintain or improve their mental health. These strategies were evaluated in relation to the services Prolink offers employees, including an employee assistance plan (EAP) providing free financial, legal and personal assistance, free video counseling with licensed therapists, psychologists, and psychiatrists, and self-paced online courses and coaching for anxiety, stress, sleep issues, and more. The most highly utilized self-care strategies included exercise and therapy (21% of the sample), psychiatric medication (18%), and time off work (17%). These findings demonstrate the opportunity for synergy between nurse self-care strategies supported by employer-sponsored offerings.

Travel Clinician Self Care Survey Results

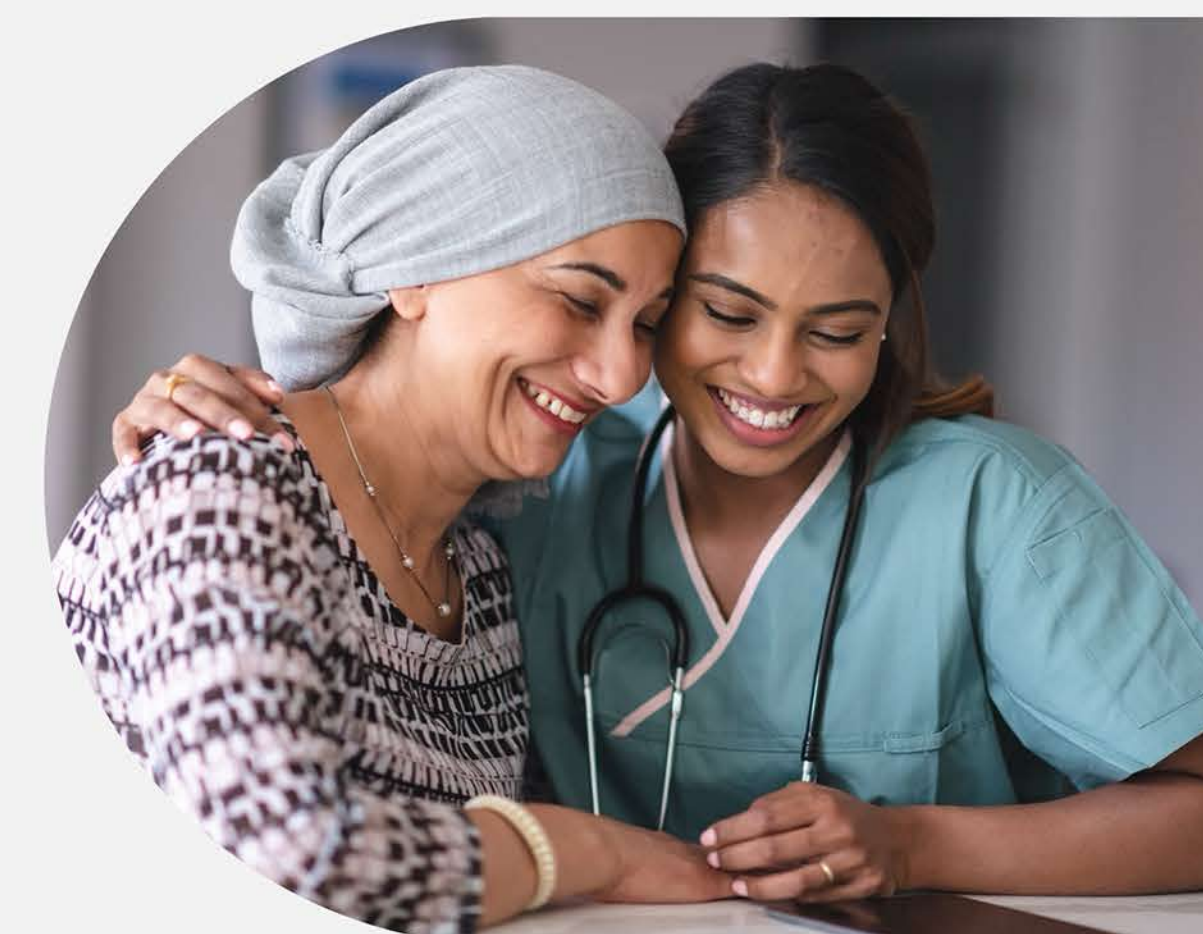


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Putting Care in Motion

Prolink clinicians also offered additional suggestions on strategies that organizations could use to intervene on and improve the mental health and well-being of the healthcare workforce:

- Telehealth and therapy visits
- Gym memberships
- Paid time off for mental health days
- Coupons for spa or massage services
- A designated mental health advocate on staff



Mental Health Resources Provided by Prolink

MetLife LifeWorks Employee Assistance Program (EAP)

Anthem Live Health Online & Emotional Well-being Resources
 Unlimited Free Mental Health Visits for employees and dependents enrolled in one of Prolink's Medical Plan Options!

Dial 988 Suicide and Crisis Hotline

Inspiring a More Compassionate Future

Frontline caregivers offer their patients empathy, concern, compassion, and emotional support, in addition to the physical care they provide. At Prolink, it is a deeply held belief that the healthcare workforce deserves this same support. There is still much work to be done to amplify the importance of monitoring and intervening on the mental health of frontline workers and increase offerings of evidence-based strategies to improve well-being. By continuously working to improve its services and offerings, Prolink is proud to play a role in improving the well-being and work lives of healthcare workers across the nation.

Practice Implications

Nurses commonly utilize self-care strategies that can be supported and enriched by employer-sponsored mental health and wellbeing services. Through deeper understanding of nurse' needs and preferences related to interventions to promote mental health and wellbeing and reduce stress and burnout, organizations can tailor their offerings to better support this critical workforce.

Future Recommendations

Further work should closely investigate the reasons nurses do and do not utilize employer-sponsored mental health and wellbeing services and supports. By continuously working to improve these offerings, Prolink is proud to play a role in improving the wellbeing and work lives of healthcare professionals across the nation.

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