

Narrative Medicine and Nurses' Professional Well-Being: Effects of a Read-Aloud Narrative Intervention on Burnout

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Citation: Francavilla F, Sponcichetti L, Perdonò P, Machese M, Paglialonga M. "Narrative Medicine and Nurses' Professional Well-Being: Effects of a Read-Aloud Narrative Intervention on Burnout" (2026) *International Journal of Health Supplements* 1(Suppl. 1):50. Supp. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.82051/ijhs-2026-1>

Introduction. Burnout is a widespread condition among healthcare professionals, particularly nurses, due to high emotional demands and complex care environments. Narrative medicine has been proposed as an educational strategy to enhance reflection, empathy, and professional well-being. This study aimed to evaluate the impact of a narrative-based educational intervention on burnout and empathy.

Methods. A longitudinal pre-post observational study was conducted with 90 nurses. Participants attended narrative workshops based on reading aloud authentic illness stories, reflective writing, and group discussion. Burnout and empathy were assessed before and after the intervention using the Maslach Burnout Inventory – Human Services Survey (MBI-HSS) and the Jefferson Scale of Empathy (JSE-HP).

Results. Findings showed a significant reduction in emotional exhaustion and depersonalization, together with a significant increase in personal accomplishment. Empathy scores remained stable, likely due to already high baseline levels. Greater improvements were observed among nurses with longer work experience.

Discussion. Narrative practices such as reading aloud and reflective storytelling may represent an effective educational strategy to promote professional well-being and mitigate burnout among healthcare professionals. These results support the integration of narrative medicine approaches into continuing education programs in nursing and healthcare settings.

Keywords: Narrative Medicine, Burnout, Empathy, Nursing Education

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Funding: This research received no external funding. **Conflict of Interest:** The authors declare no conflict of interest.