



# Vitamins for Nurturing the Nursing Soul

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# Disclosures

- Subject matter expert for AHA/HRET: CAUTI, CLABSI, HAPI, Sepsis, Safety culture
- Consultant and speaker bureau:
  - △ Stryker's Sage business
  - △ Kurin
  - △ Vantive
  - △ Atlas Lift Tech

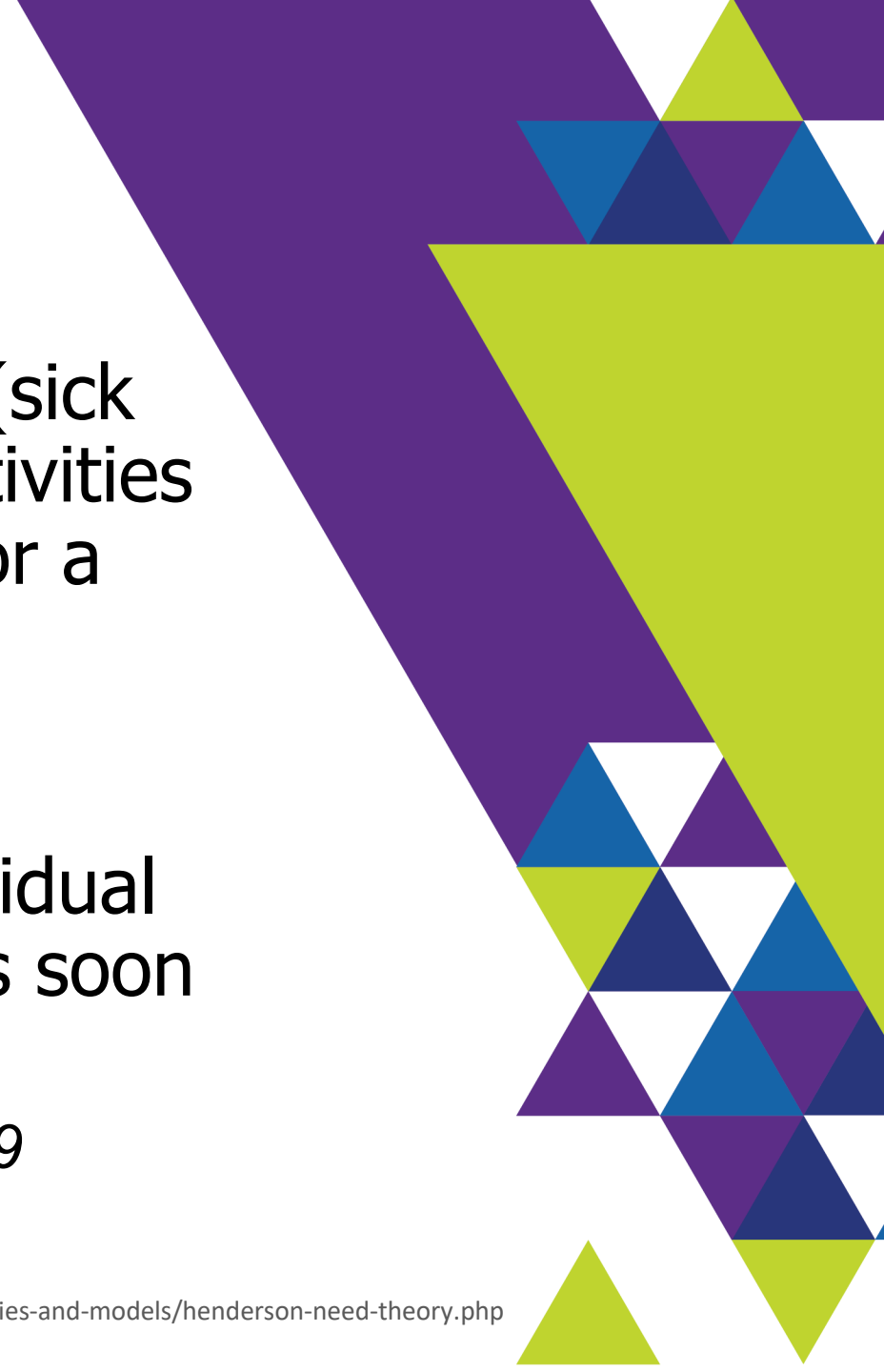
# Objectives

- 🔗 Discuss the challenges to the nursing soul that affect job satisfaction and retention.
- 🔗 Identify the critical vitamins (behaviors and skills) necessary to thrive and excel in both personal and professional lives.
- 🔗 Outline a personal recipe for growth to identify behaviors that will help in making one significant change in the work environment within the next 6 months

# Capturing the Essence of Nursing

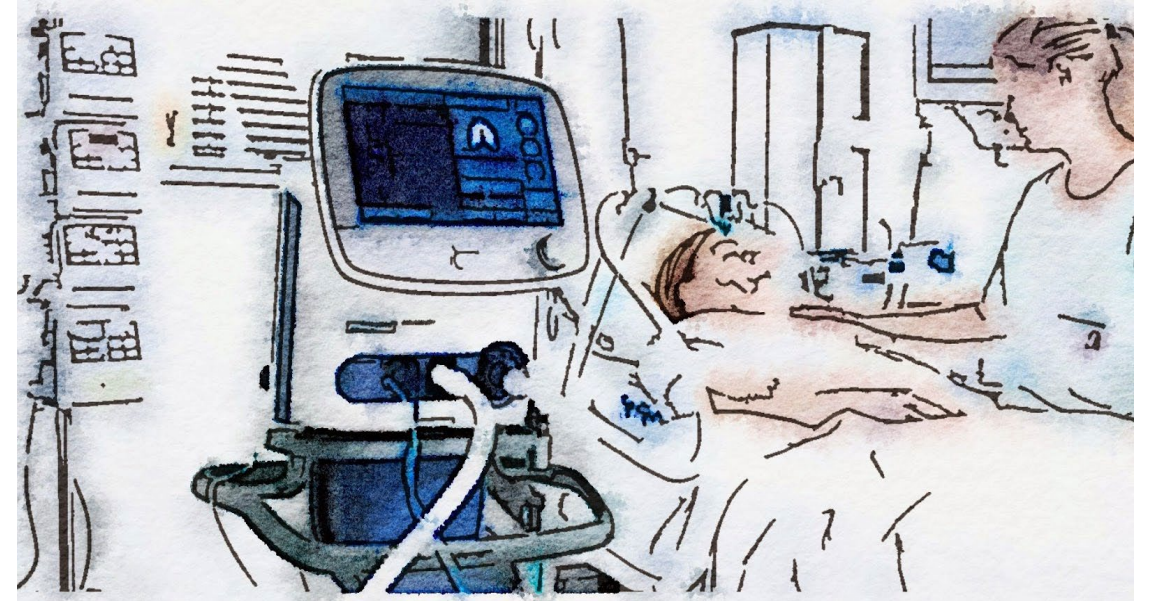
“Nurses primarily assists the individual (sick or well) in the performance of those activities contributing to health, or its recovery (or a peaceful death) that he would perform unaided if he had the strength, will or knowledge. It is likewise the unique contribution of nursing to help the individual to be independent of such assistance as soon as possible.

*Henderson 1969*



# Factors That Can Chip Away at Our Nursing Soul

- ▲ Unhealthy work environment<sup>1</sup>
- ▲ Self Image
- ▲ Inappropriate communication<sup>3</sup>
- ▲ Rising workloads<sup>1,3</sup>
- ▲ Challenging collegial relationships<sup>2</sup>
- ▲ Change fatigue
- ▲ Burnout (15% to 45%)<sup>3</sup>---turnover
- ▲ Disrespect



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1. Bamford M, et al. J of Nursing Management, 2013;21:529-540
2. Dempsey C, et al. Nurs Admin Q. 2018;42(3):278-283
3. Accessed 03 09 2022  
[https://info.hospiq.com/hubfs/HIQ\\_StaffingSurvey\\_Collateral\\_FNL.pdf](https://info.hospiq.com/hubfs/HIQ_StaffingSurvey_Collateral_FNL.pdf)



# Respect = Self Respect



Internal Dialogue

*Savage Chickens*

by Doug Savage



[www.savagechickens.com](http://www.savagechickens.com)

External Dialogue

# Culture of Respect

- ▲ Develop effective methods for responding to episodes of disrespectful behavior
- ▲ Initiating cultural changes needed to prevent the episodes
- ▲ Organization set up a code of conduct and it must be enforced
- ▲ Culture of respect requires building a shared vision

# Factors that Keep Us Nursing



- ▲ Positive practice environment<sup>1,2</sup>
- ▲ Regularly reassessing workplace quality<sup>4</sup>
- ▲ Supportive manager<sup>1,2</sup>
- ▲ Congenial staff<sup>2</sup>
- ▲ Meaningful recognition<sup>1</sup>
- ▲ Addressing the burden of paperwork/EHR
- ▲ Support mental health & reduce stigma<sup>4</sup>
- ▲ Ability to participate versus being told<sup>1,3</sup>
- ▲ Being supported, listen to, consulted with<sup>1</sup>

1. Bamford M, et al. J of Nursing Management, 2013;21:529-540

2. Bournes DA. Nursing Science Quarterly, 2009;22(1):47-56

3. Dempsey C, et al. Nurs Admin Q. 2018;42(3):278-283

4. <https://nam.edu/initiatives/clinician-resilience-and-well-being/national-plan-for-health-workforce-well-being>





Blessed are the  
**CRACKED**  
for they shall let in the light



A

 Attitude

 Advocacy

# Attitude

- 🔗 A confident person control their attitudes, instead of attitudes controlling them
- 🔗 Confidence is impossible without a positive attitude
- 🔗 Confident nurses take the same negativity, but they have learned to say that the garbage that goes in now needs to go out!!!!

“Use a Personal Attitude Interrupt (PAI):  
Intentional physical change on our part to stop the negativity from staying in our mind. It is a private signal from me, to me that I need to protect myself from incoming negativity”

# How to Be Present

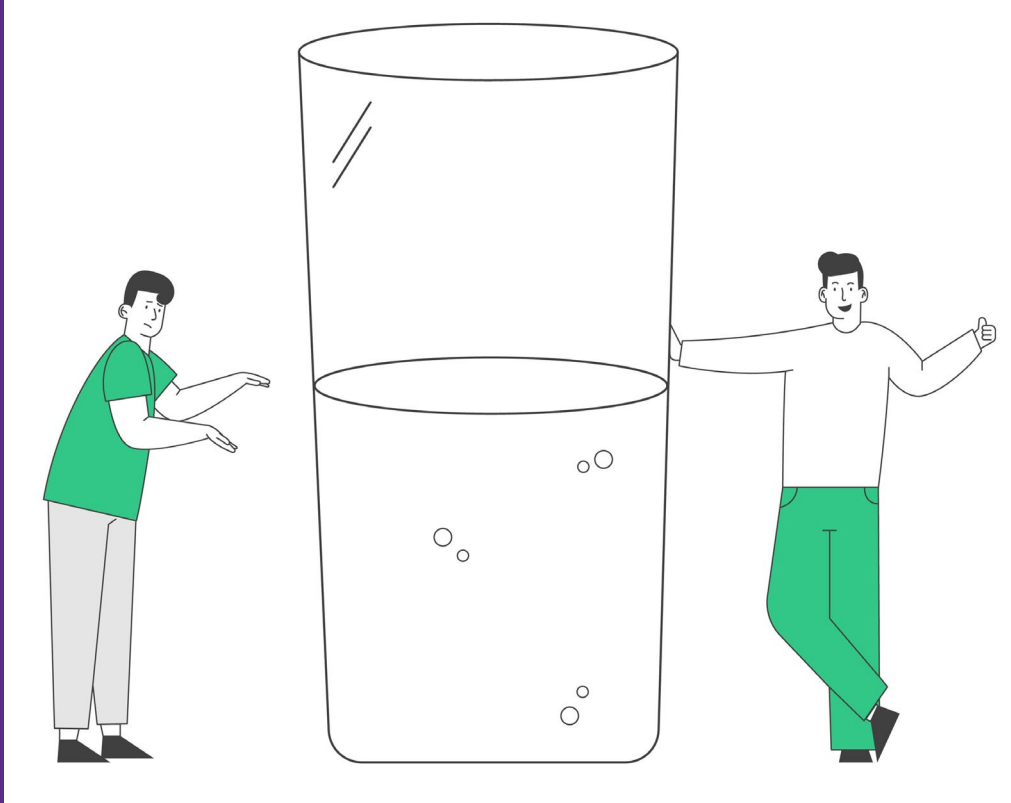
- ▲ S: Stop for a few minutes
- ▲ T: Take a few deep breaths
- ▲ O: Observe where your mind is
- ▲ P: Perceive & move on



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## When We Are Present... We have Choices

# POSITIVE ATTITUDE



IT CHANGES EVERYTHING

# Sustaining a Positive Attitude Over the Length of Your Career



- ▶ The most important of all human freedoms is your attitude
- ▶ We choose how we respond to each moment
- ▶ I can focus on the positive..... what you focus on is what you feel

Physiology Can  
Change Feelings



# Sustaining a Positive Attitude Over the Length of Your Career



- Find someone to help you through
- Set realistic goals
- Be careful what you listen to, it becomes a feedback loop
- Attitude is contagious, make yours positive
- Find the calm within the crisis
- Develop other passions, outside interest, something to help you recharge
- Take breaks and meals, and don't work so much overtime





# Advocacy

🌀 **Advocacy** is the pursuit of influencing outcomes — including policy and resource allocation decisions within systems & institutions — that directly affect people's current lives.



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Advocacy can be seen as a deliberate process of speaking out on issues of concern in order to exert some influence on behalf of ideas or persons



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Advocacy Starts with Us



## Reconnect With Our Professional Purpose



“It may seem a strange principle to enunciate as the very first requirement in a Hospital that it should do the sick no harm.”

Florence Nightingale

Advocacy = Safety



# Patient Advocacy/Safety Related to Clinical Practice



- ▲ Nurses' knowledge of the evidence-based care
- ▲ Ability to deliver the care to the right patient at the right time, every time it is needed
- ▲ The ability to communicate patient concerns in a concise, data driven manner and take appropriate action
- ▲ Understanding that I am the voice of the patient



B

 Behavior

 Balance



## ▶ Behavior

- ▶ Your shadow
- ▶ Leader vs. follower
- ▶ Influence of peers on self and unit culture




Dare to be Different

*“If your actions inspire others to dream more, learn more, do more, and become more, you are a Leader”*

*John Quincy Adams*







*“Setting an Example is Not  
the Main Means of  
Influencing Others....It is  
the Only Means”*

*Albert Einstein*

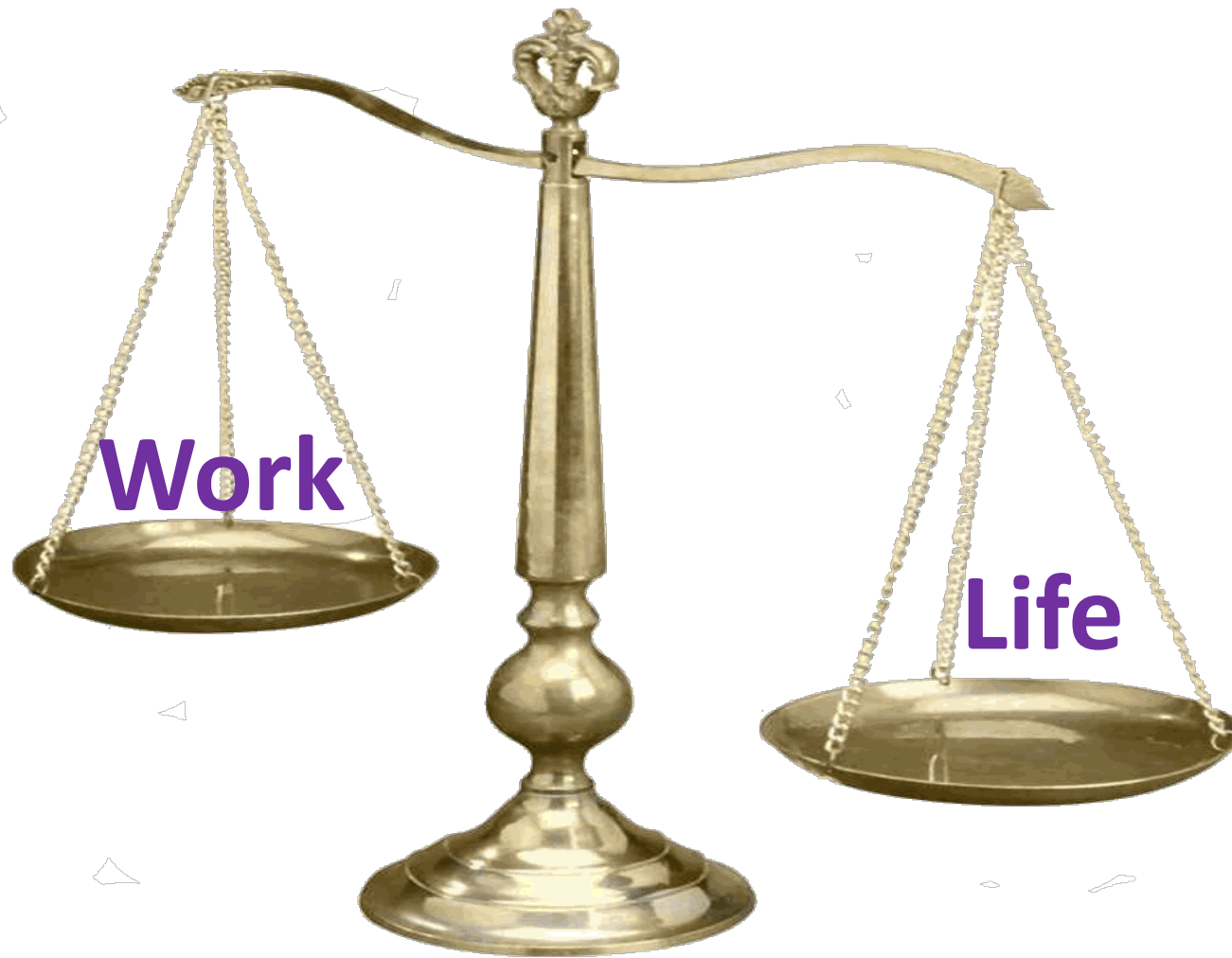


What are your actions inspiring others to become?  
What are your actions inspiring others to do?  
What are your actions inspiring others to learn?

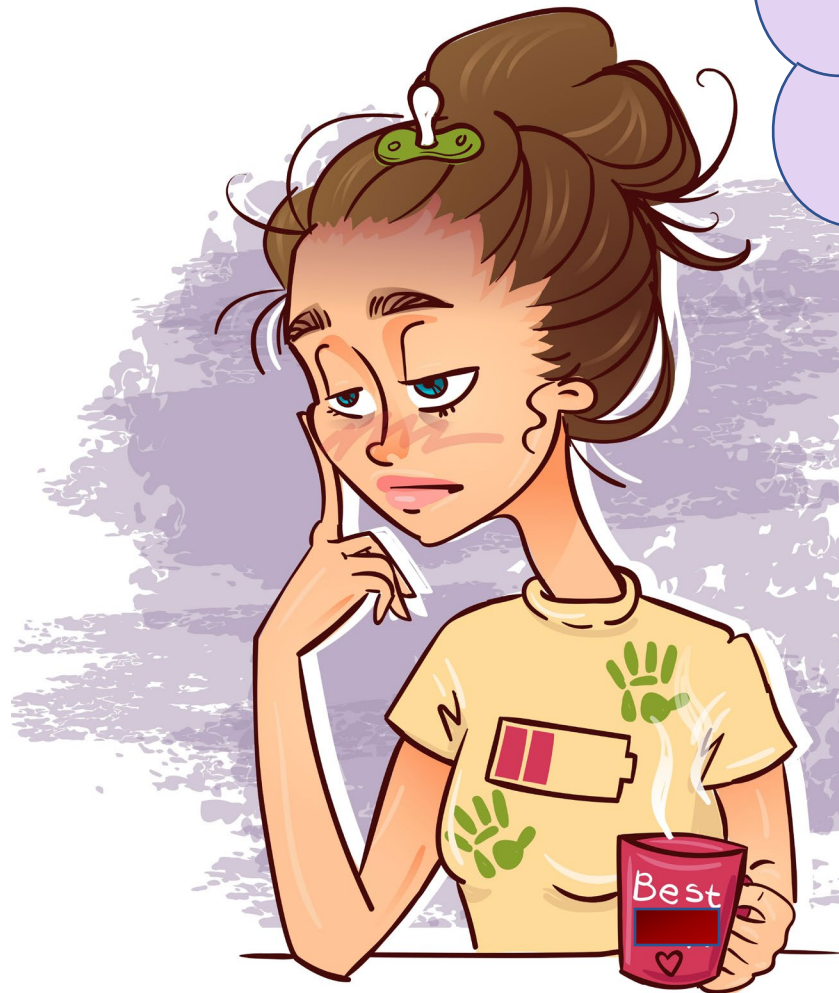
- ▲ Be the best person/nurse you can be
- ▲ Utilize your creativity to enhance the art & science of nursing
- ▲ Stop negativity when it comes your way
- ▲ Demonstrate respectful communication with all disciplines
- ▲ Participate on unit committees that shape your practice
- ▲ Join a professional organization and participate if you can
- ▲ Demonstrate evidence of continued learning
- ▲ Demonstrate as best as possible life balance



# Balance



Mental and Emotional Steadiness



I wake up every morning,  
torn between a desire to  
save the whales, attain  
alignment, visit the Dalai  
Lama or go back to bed.

Makes it kind of hard to  
plan the day

Adapted from E.B White quote

# Strategies for Helping with Life Balance



## Manage time or it will manage you

- △ Set times to respond to e-mails
- △ Turn off the phone.... Take time for yourself
- △ Set clear boundaries

## Manage the environment by examining your habits and attitudes

- △ 51% felt work was a means to an end
- △ 24% found it a source of personal fulfillment
- △ Find enjoyable work that may not pay the bills or unhappy work that pays the bills
- △ Start to discover.. decide what to love...
- △ Habits are comfortable...even habitual unhappy work

## Using Self Care Strategies: mediation, mindfulness, exercise, healthy eating





**We don't stop playing because we grow old...  
We grow old because we stop playing....  
So live life**

**George Bernard Shaw**



C

 Communication/Culture/Courage

 Change/flexibility

 Competency/Continued learning





The single biggest  
problem with  
communication is the  
illusion that it has taken  
place

George Bernard Shaw

# Why Effective Communication May Be Challenging for Nursing



# The Silent Treatment: April 2011



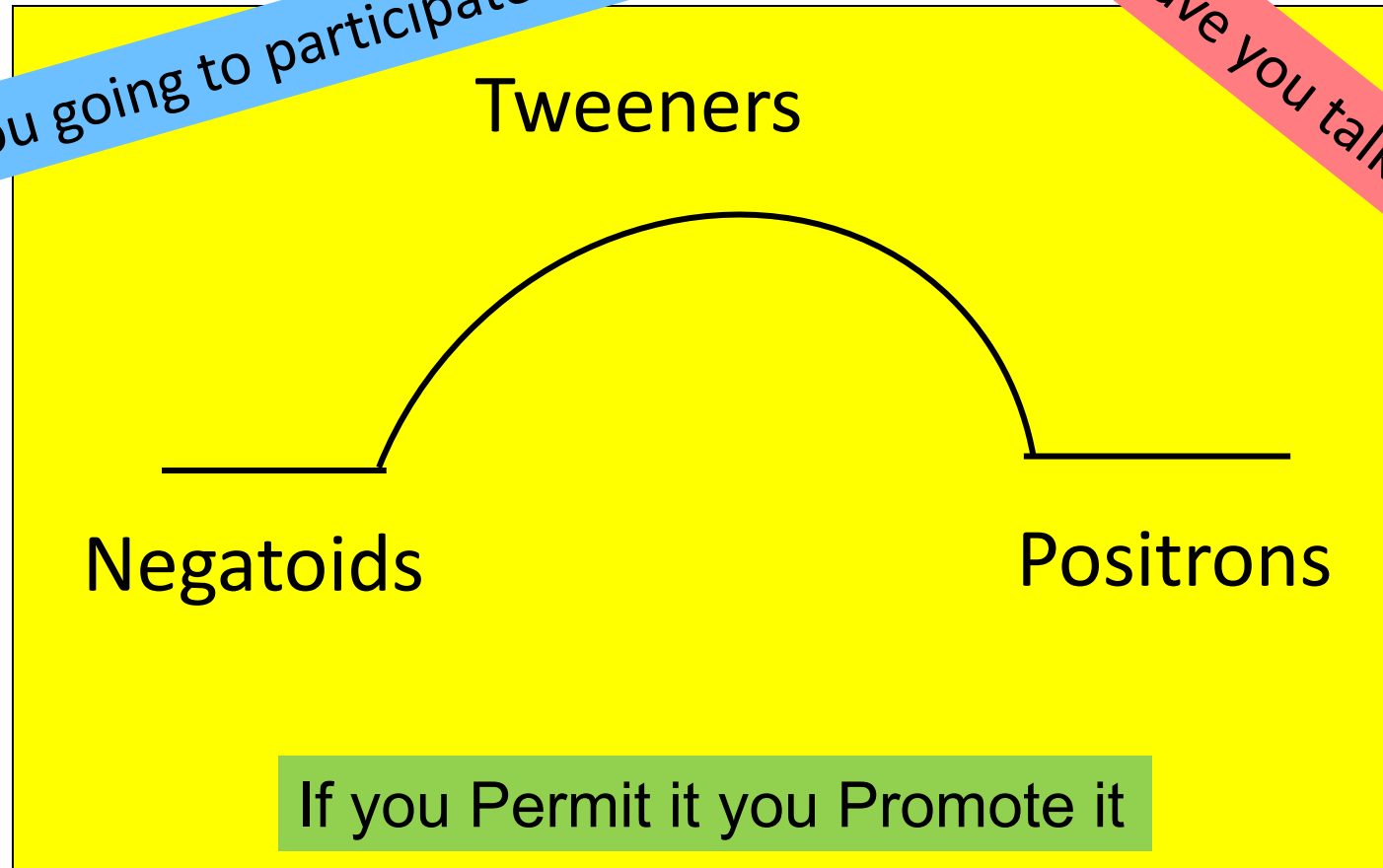
- 🔗 85% of workers reported a safety tool warned them of a problem that may have been otherwise missed & could harm a patient
- 🔗 Safety tools include handoff protocols, checklists, COPE, automated medication dispensing machines.
- 🔗 58% said they got the warning, but failed to effectively speak up & solve the problem
- 🔗 3 “undiscussable” issues: dangerous short cuts, incompetence & disrespect (4/5 nurses)
  - △ 1/2 say shortcuts lead to near misses
  - △ 1/3 say incompetence leads to near misses
  - △ 1/2 say disrespect prevented them from getting others to listen or respect their opinion
- 🔗 Only 16% confronted the disrespectful behavior




# Understanding Your Culture & Communication Strategies

How are you going to participate in fixing it?

Have you talked to.....



A blue scroll with a white border, tilted at an angle. The text is written in white, sans-serif font. The scroll has a small circular detail at the top left and bottom left, suggesting it is unrolled.

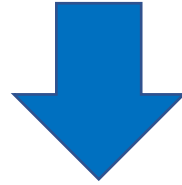
A good word is an easy  
obligation; but not to speak  
ill requires only our silence;  
which costs us nothing.

John Tillotson



# Workplace Violence

Any physical assault, threatening behavior or verbal abuse occurring in the workplace”



23% not reporting

Approximately 1 in 7 NHS staff experienced physical violence from patients, their relatives, or the public in 2024  
While nearly 1 in 4 experienced bullying, harassment, or verbal abuse

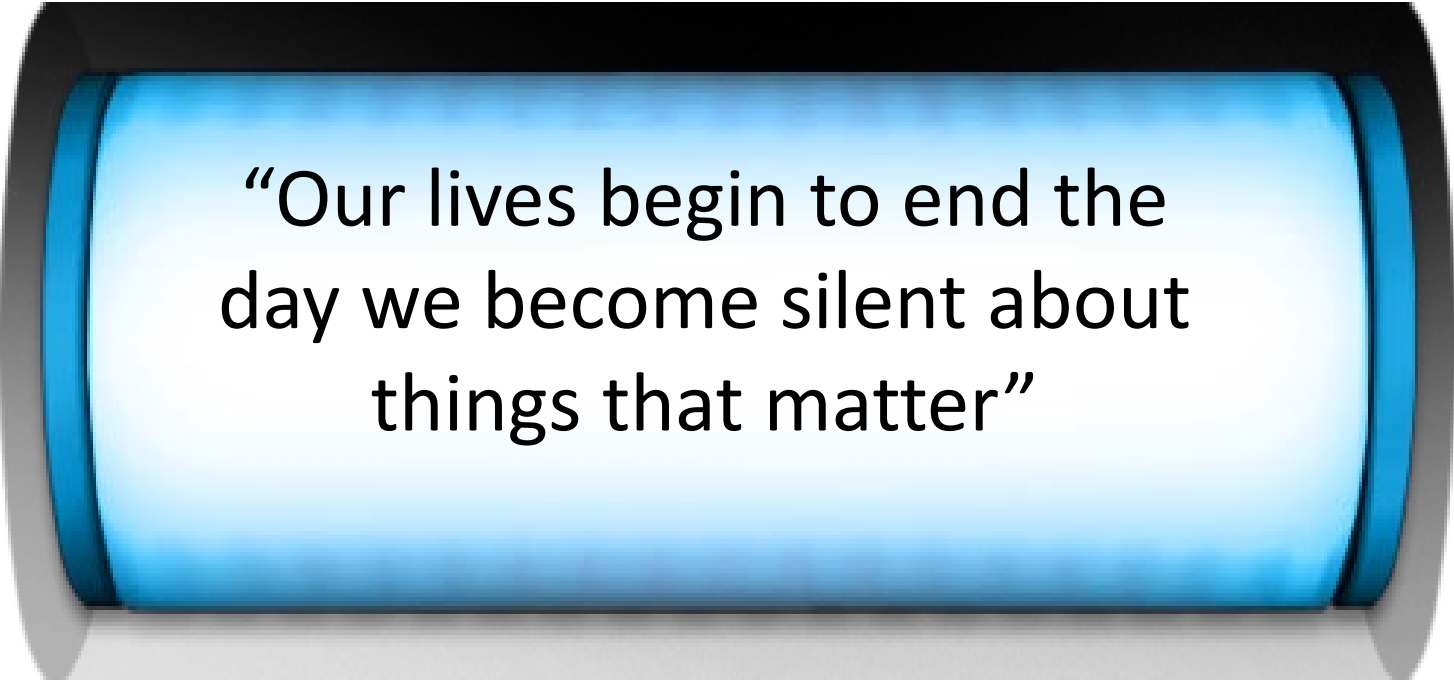
43% not reporting

<https://www.medpagetoday.com/special-reports/features/100679#>

Byon HD, et al. Workplace Health Saf. 2022;70(9):412-420

<https://www.ljmu.ac.uk/-/media/phi-reports/pdf/2025-01-workbased-violence-harassment-and-abuse-towards-nhs-staff.pdf>

<https://www.england.nhs.uk/2025/03/frontline-nhs-staff-facing-rise-in-physical-violence>.



“Our lives begin to end the  
day we become silent about  
things that matter”

Martin Luther King Jr.



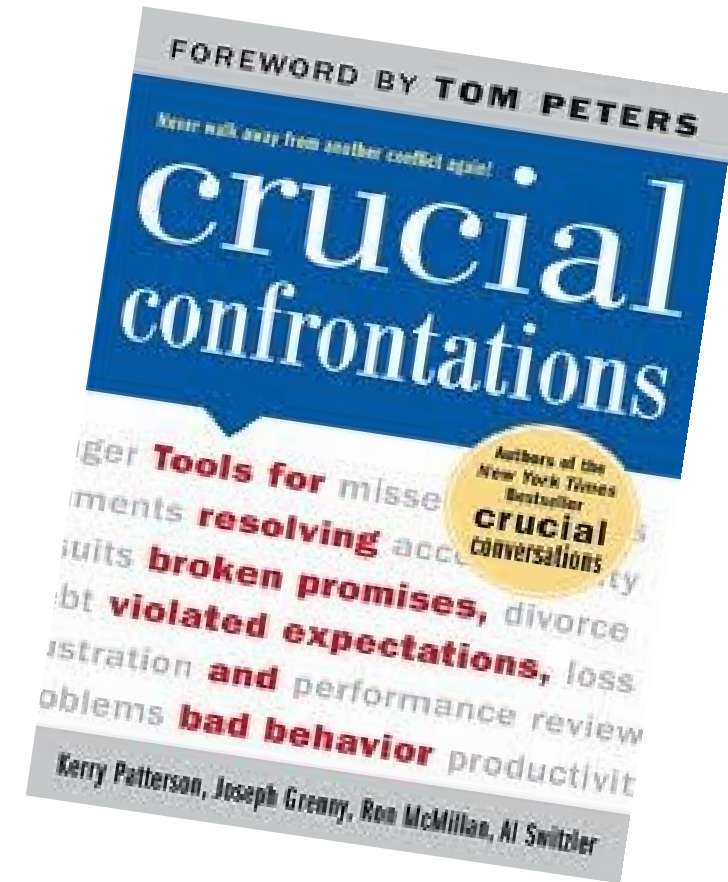
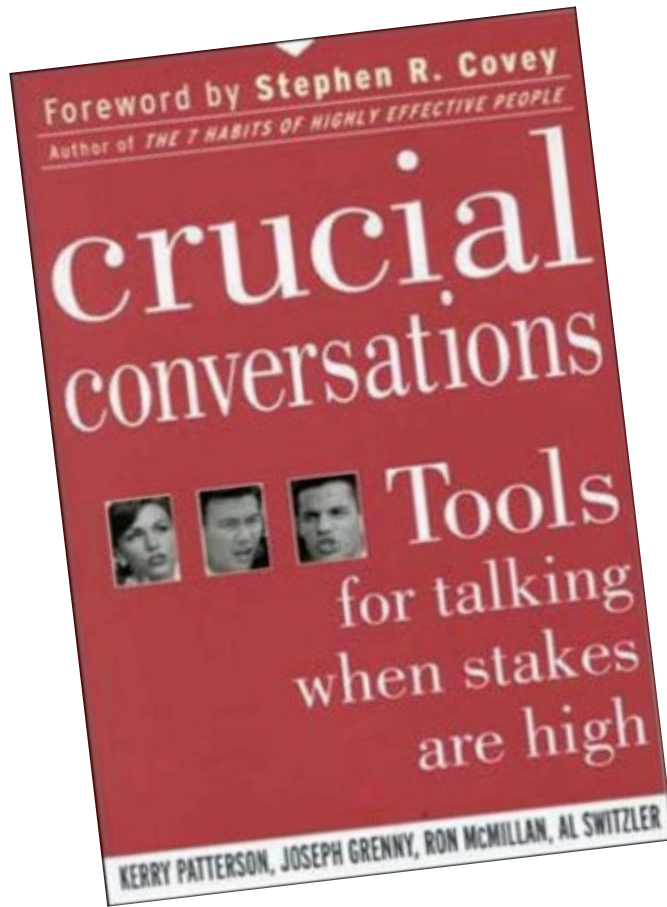


# What to Do Individually?

- ⚡ Prevent from occurring through training on effective communication
- ⚡ Deal in real time to prevent staff or patient harm
- ⚡ Initiate post event reviews, action and follow-up
- ⚡ Make it as transparent as possible
- ⚡ Zero-tolerance policy and procedure
- ⚡ Intervention strategy: code white



# Communication Training



# Healthy Work Culture Standards

- 🔗 Skilled communication
- 🔗 True collaboration
- 🔗 Effective shared decision making
- 🔗 Appropriate staffing
- 🔗 Meaningful recognition
- 🔗 Authentic leadership

A healthy culture begins with each person & is enhanced by self work, healthy relationships & system supports

# Change/Flexibility

- ▲ Change is constant, and it's impacting everyone. While you may not be able to change the circumstances around you, what you can change is yourself/your reaction and sometimes that changes everything.
- ▲ To manage change.....you need to develop new and improved attitudes and habits. When those new attitudes and habits meet the skills and knowledge you already possess, anything is possible.





Blessed Are The Flexible  
For They Shall Never  
Be Bent Out of Shape



# Comfort Zone



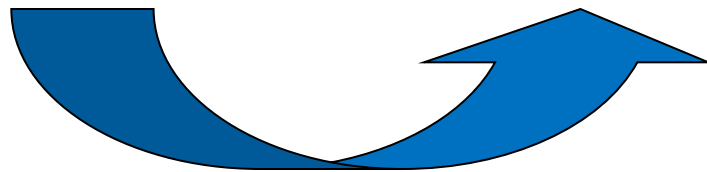
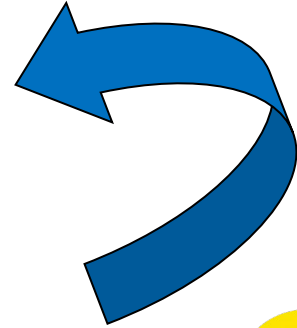
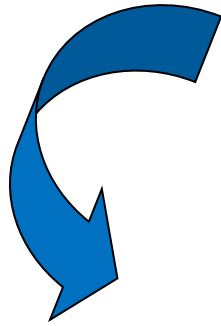
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# Opportunities for Growth

Challenges

Change





*The greatest difficulty in the world is not for  
people to accept new ideas but to get them to  
forget the old ones*

*John Maynard Keynes*



# Competency/Continued Learning/Certification



- ▲ Competency is multifaceted and evidence of your actions
- ▲ Clinically competent peers are the number one attribute of a satisfying unit culture in which nurses gave the highest quality care
- ▲ It is the highest attribute of the eight essentials of magnetism
- ▲ How is competent performance demonstrated?
  - △ Adequacy with standards of practice
  - △ Having sufficient knowledge, judgment and skill
- ▲ Certification validates clinical knowledge, skills and abilities



*One's mind, once stretched by a new idea,  
never regains its original dimensions*

*Oliver Wendell Holmes*





*“Your Future  
Depends on  
Many Things,  
but Mostly  
Yourself.”*

*Frank Tyger*

<https://nam.edu/initiatives/clinician-resilience-and-well-being/>  
<https://engage.healthnursehealthnation.org/home>



Leap!....  
And the Net  
will Appear

# The Front Line

We as tattered nurses stand on the front line, taking care of others dealing with the body and mind. Attempting to heal patient's wounds and help them go on with life..lending an ear when in need, listening to their pain & strife. Teaching some to deal with illness, telling them what the future holds...good, bad, indifferent we nurses help patients be bold. We're always on the front line dealing with a never-ending fight....

## The Front Line (cont'd)

health, healing and wellness...sometimes we nurses need to take flight. For we need time to heal emotionally within ourselves...outlets to cope and learn we can't always put our feelings on the shelf. Somewhere there must be a middle ground where we can all go and rest, and soon we'll return to the front line whereas nurses we can be our best.



**YOU ARE THE CAPTAIN  
OF YOUR SOUL**





**Kathleen Vollman**

ADVANCING NURSING THROUGH KNOWLEDGE & INNOVATION



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