

The Unseen Side of Being a Nurse: Carrying Their Stories

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Sometimes when people think of nurses, they picture them as someone who only gives medicine, checks blood pressure, or helps a patient walk, but being a nurse is more than just that. Some people dislike nurses because they think they have bad habits, are impatient, and have poor judgment. But behind all of the stories, there is a side that other people don't see, that includes carrying the emotional stories of their patients. Nurses don't just take care for the physical body of their patients, they also witness the pain, joy, fear, and love. They are not only brave, there is also a sensitive part of them. These experiences stay with them long after their shift is over (Abdurasul, R.T., Samilo, P.J.E., Cabiles, N.V.A., et al., 2025)

Every patient a nurse meets has a story. Some are fighting for their lives, some are saying goodbye to loved ones, and others are trying to heal from emotional wounds. Nurses take a time to listen to these stories, they become silent witnesses and listeners to people's struggles. According to Perry et al. (2011), nurses form deep emotional connections with their patients, especially during moments of vulnerability and difficulty that can affect them in both positive and negative ways.

One of the most difficult and potentially traumatic experiences a nurse can have is watching their patients suffer or die. We may not see nurses cry in front of others, but they carry that sadness inside, they hide the pain and over time, these memories form. They remember names, faces, stories and last words. A study by Yoder (2010) showed that nurses often experience "compassion fatigue," a profound emotional exhaustion caused by constant exposure to suffering.

But not all stories are sad. Nurses also bring stories of hope. They remember the baby who survived in everything, they remember the baby's cry that meant he was alive, or the old man who smiled and said "thank you" before passing away. These small, powerful moments keep them going. These emotional connections with their patients or patients' loved ones give nurses a sense of purpose and strength, which motivates them to work despite hardships (Carpio LB, Covarrubias S, Nollado S, et al., 2025). But others often overlook the emotional baggage that nurses carry. Although they cry, fight, and hurt secretly, people see them as brave, powerful, and calm.

For this reason, they are also exhausted and stressed, nurses also need emotional support. Listening to advice, talking or venting their feelings, participating in support groups, or connecting with colleagues or others that can help them build coping skills and strength. Inoferio HV, Espartero MM, Asiri MS, et al., (2024) encourages hospitals to provide mental health tools that can help nurses with mental or emotional health problems, especially those working in high-stress settings such as emergency or cancer care. This also reduces the burden on nurses.

Nurses become storytellers in many ways, even though they don't always speak. They carry stories, memories, lessons, experiences, and emotions with them from every patient they touch or care for. Sometimes, when they go home they think about a child who reminds them of themselves then and now, lonely patient without a family. They are not just nurses who care, they give a part of themselves to others every day.

The invisible part of being a nurse for most is filled with emotional weight. They carry it all, they carry the stories of the people they care for, stories of pain, suffering, sadness, healing, love, and goodbyes. These stories give them motivation, experience, and shape them to be more than just healthcare workers. They are often despised by many, but they are silent heroes who heal, not just with their hands, but with their open hearts.

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