

# Message from the Editor-in-Chief

## “Am I fine?”

There is an interesting exercise: Today, count how many times someone asks you “How are you”, “How have you been” or “How is everything today?” Chances are you’ll probably answer each of these questions with the same answer: “Great” or “Just Fine”. But are we really fine or great? With these simple generic answers we in the nursing field are glossing over the daily difficulties that we face. Today, more than ever, it seems that nurses are trying to forget about the troubles and pressures that are facing them on the job. Although this might give us some temporary relief, in the end, not addressing these problems or worries will add to the real silent killer in our lives: Stress.

Most of us in the medical field live in a constant state of elevated stress. A few recent studies have found that the stress levels of nurses in their first 5 years of work are dangerously high. Although these levels subside in later years it still is worth our attention. To know that people are operating on an unnatural amount of duress to their body can decrease their job performance and might endanger patients. The contributors to this influx of stress can range from conflicts with physicians to problems with a supervisor or even dealing with death, as it is a part of our job. All of these things contribute to the levels of stress that we all succumb to. While stress increases so do levels of anxiety and depression, thus creating a downward spiral for anyone not equipped to cope with situation.

So what can we do to equip ourselves? It takes a lot self confidence and understanding to acknowledge how stressed out we might be. Once we can understand our level of stress then we can start to take action to address it. For those who are chronically stressed out some change in either behaviour, thinking or social techniques will be needed. This could entail getting a full 8 hours of sleep every night or learning simply to say “no” to projects or tasks that we are incapable of handling. For the less stressed it could be as simple as finding a way to unwind and relax after work be it through a brisk walk in the evening with a loved one or by enjoying a little Astro with your family. By coping with stress we can better manage the trials and tribulations that life hands us. It will help us to reinvigorate our lives, restore our passion in our field and find a balance in our everyday life. So next time someone asks you “How are you doing” really think about it and if need be after work, light a few scented candles have a nice hot shower and let your stress melt away.

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