

H O R I Z O N T A L V I O L E N C E



What is Horizontal Violence and What Impact does it have on New Graduate Nurses?

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What is Horizontal Violence?

Horizontal violence is a systematic, interpersonal, abusive behaviour that creates hostility in the workplace between two nurses or a nurse and other health care professional (Bentley et al., 2009). It is a deliberate and ongoing array of subtle or masked negative behaviours and actions that accumulate over time and has the potential to cause severe social, psychological and psychosomatic problems in the target, in this case a new graduate nurse (Ditmer, 2010; King-Jones, 2011). Horizontal Violence is a "persuasive and harmful phenomenon, it is not a one off, accident or event. The perpetrator usually exhibits negative behaviours of harassment, verbal abuse, threats, intimidation, excessive criticism, innuendos, exclusion, and the denial of opportunities and promotions (Ditmer, 2010; Weinand, 2012; Becher & Visovsky, 2012; King-Jones, 2011). Horizontal violence can be broken-down into three forms:

1. Erosion of professional competence and reputation
2. Personal attack and attack through work roles
3. Subtle targeted acts- social exclusion, gossiping innuendo, all undermine ability to work and perform.

Horizontal violence comes in two forms, direct and indirect: Direct violence: Consists of observable behaviors such as verbal abuse, degrading, criticism, shouting and humiliation. Indirect violence: Is much less obvious to others such as impossible deadlines, deliberate work overloading, hiding documents/equipment and withholding important information. (NZRDA, 2008; King-Jones, 2011; Thomas, 2010).

Implications Horizontal Violence has on our New Graduates and Nursing Practice:

Horizontal violence is identified as one of the most concerning forms of aggression experienced by nurses in their new graduate year, leading to low self-esteem, negative emotions, depression, anxiety, stress, fatigue, anorexia, insomnia, impaired performance and substance abuse (Bentley et al., 2009). New graduates like students fear making mistakes, when subjected to horizontal violence in clinical practice their self-esteem plummets, this and the effects of horizontal violence are correlated with late administration of medications and the number of nursing tasks not completed each shift (Hockings, 2010; Thomas, 2010).

"Nurses eat their young" (Ditmer, 2010, p.10) a common phrase used in literature showing horizontal violence today perpetrated as part of the socialization of the nursing professional. Horizontal violence creates a hostile environment, where verbal abuse and intimidating behaviours make teamwork ineffective. Teamwork is a critical element for achievement of positive patient outcomes. The importance of collegial support on the effective functioning of a nursing team is foundational to the operation of healthcare (Ditmer, 2010; Croft & Crash, 2012; Becher & Visovsky, 2012). A nursing team will be more effective and more productive when each member feels valued, supported, and worthwhile.

How New Graduates can prevent and cope with Horizontal Violence:

There is underreporting of the prevalence of horizontal violence "despite emotional pain and psychological stress caused by horizontal violence, 50-80% of events go unreported simply due to fear of retaliation and wanting to fit in." (Ditmer, 2010, p. 10; Bentley, et al., 2009). New graduate nurses need to be aware and be able to identify behaviours that are exhibited in horizontal violence and also be able to act accordingly when targeted as there is a tendency for nurses to adopt more passive strategies, like suppressing feelings. In order for new graduates to be proactive, horizontal violence needs to be addressed in the nursing curriculum to improve students' knowledge of behaviours. Clinical settings and professionals need the correct information, knowledge and commitment to making changes so horizontal violence can be eliminated. Programmes and resources that provide opportunities for education, professional development, posters, pamphlets and corrective plans are tools required to decrease horizontal violence. (Bentley et al., 2009).

Key Points:

- Primary prevention such as; education, policies and awareness will create and maintain environments that reduce horizontal violence in all nursing areas. Continuing education in practice is crucial for newly registered nurses and all health team members.
- Responding immediately and documenting all incidents of horizontal violence is vital.
- Record dates, time, places, witnesses and details of the behaviour and what was said, detailed accounts of bullying incidents become crucial if there is an incident report.
- New graduates need to be more proactive, stopping the cycle and refusing to be victims and advocating for themselves as they would a patient.

(Schneider, Whitehead, LoBiondo-Wood & Haber, 2013).

PECOT Category:	Information relating to question:	Explanation
Population:	New Graduate Nurses- First year out of nursing.	In the literature I have read, I have found that New Graduates are more at risk of exposure and experiencing horizontal violence. In the literature it has put this down to their lack of experience in a certain clinical area and that often new graduates do not possess the confidence and RN may possess after having had the job for many years. They are in quite a vulnerable position in a hospital making them an easy target for bullies.
Exposure:	New graduates exposed to Horizontal Violence.	Articles have generally been specific to new graduates in a clinical nursing environment. The articles I have found are more likely to involve horizontal violence in a clinical setting such as hospitals as there is a hierarchal structure .
Comparison/Control:	The different experience you have when nursing if you are exposed to horizontal violence in practice.	I am interested to see how different the nursing experience is for a new graduate nurse affected by horizontal violence in practice, and the effect this has on them as opposed to if they did not experience horizontal violence in practice.
Outcome:	What are the effects of Horizontal Violence on New Graduate Nurses.	What I was interested in finding out was; what was the outcome for the recipient of horizontal violence in a nursing environment and does it affect their practice and health?
Time:	How long should horizontal violence be tolerated?	How long should a new graduate wait before they address the issue of horizontal violence?

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