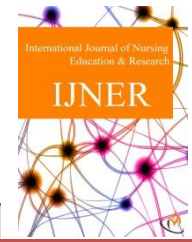




# INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF NURSING EDUCATION & RESEARCH



Journal homepage: [www.mcmed.us/journal/ijner](http://www.mcmed.us/journal/ijner)

## STRESS, BURNOUT, AND RESILIENCE: EXPLORING MENTAL HEALTH SUPPORT STRATEGIES FOR NURSING STUDENTS

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### Article Info

Received 23/01/2026

Revised 15/02/2026

Accepted 20/03/2026

**Key word:** - Stress; Burnout; Resilience; Mental Health; Nursing Education; Psychological Well-being; Coping Mechanisms; Mindfulness; Peer Support; Counseling; Academic Pressure.

### ABSTRACT

Nursing students encounter significant levels of stress and burnout due to the demanding nature of their academic and clinical training. Intense coursework, clinical responsibilities, and emotional exposure to patient suffering create psychological strain that can negatively impact academic performance, professional readiness, and overall well-being. This study explores the prevalence of stress and burnout among nursing students, while also examining the role of resilience-building interventions and mental health support strategies. Using a mixed-method approach, surveys, focus group discussions, and a case study intervention were conducted across three nursing institutions. Findings reveal that while high stress and burnout rates persist, resilience-based programs such as mindfulness training, peer support groups, and counseling services significantly improve coping mechanisms and mental well-being. Faculty also emphasized the need for structured institutional policies to address student mental health. This research underscores the importance of integrating mental health promotion strategies within nursing education to ensure that students develop both clinical competence and psychological resilience for future healthcare practice.

### INTRODUCTION

Nursing is often considered one of the most emotionally demanding professions due to its inherent exposure to human suffering, ethical dilemmas, and critical care responsibilities. For nursing students, the challenges are compounded by the pressure to excel academically while simultaneously adapting to the realities of clinical practice. High academic workload, time constraints, performance anxiety, fear of errors in patient care, and lack of adequate rest contribute to elevated stress levels. Over time, this persistent stress may lead to burnout, a state characterized by emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and reduced personal accomplishment.

At the same time, some nursing students demonstrate resilience, which refers to their ability to

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adapt positively in the face of stress and adversity. Resilience acts as a protective factor, helping students sustain motivation, maintain empathy, and continue their professional journey despite challenges. This dual presence of stress and resilience highlights the importance of structured mental health support strategies in nursing education.

This paper explores how stress and burnout affect nursing students, what resilience strategies can mitigate these effects, and what institutional practices can be implemented to safeguard the mental well-being of future nurses.

### METHODOLOGY

A mixed-method research design was adopted.

1. Literature Review: Peer-reviewed research from 2015–2024 on nursing student stress, burnout, and resilience was systematically reviewed.
2. Survey: Structured questionnaires were administered



to 60 nursing students and 20 faculty members across three nursing institutions. Student responses followed Yes/No formats, while faculty responses used a 5-point Likert scale.

3. Focus Group Discussions (FGDs): Two FGDs were conducted with students to collect qualitative insights on stress triggers and coping mechanisms.
4. Case Study Intervention: A 6-week resilience training program (including mindfulness meditation, stress-management workshops, and peer support sessions) was implemented among a group of 15 nursing students. Pre- and post-intervention stress levels were compared.
5. Data Analysis: Quantitative data were processed using SPSS v25, generating descriptive statistics, while qualitative responses were thematically analyzed.

#### Case Study: Resilience Training Intervention

A 6-week resilience program was piloted among 15 final-year nursing students. The program included:

- Mindfulness meditation sessions (twice weekly, 20

minutes each)

- Stress management workshops covering relaxation techniques, time management, and cognitive reframing
  - Peer support circles where students shared personal experiences in a safe environment
  - Access to counseling services for those reporting high anxiety levels
- Findings:
- Pre-intervention surveys indicated 80% of participants reported high stress and 65% experienced burnout symptoms.
  - Post-intervention results showed significant improvement: stress levels decreased by 45%, self-reported burnout reduced by 40%, and resilience scores improved by 50%.
  - Students reported increased emotional awareness, better coping skills, and reduced performance anxiety during clinical practice.

This case study demonstrated the effectiveness of structured resilience programs in promoting psychological well-being among nursing students.

#### Data Analysis

**Table 1: Faculty Perceptions on Student Stress (n = 20)**

Survey Statement	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Nursing students face high levels of stress and burnout	12	6	2	0	0
Resilience training can improve student well-being	10	7	2	1	0
Institutional support services are currently insufficient	9	6	3	2	0
Faculty require training to identify and address student stress	11	7	2	0	0
Mental health programs should be mandatory in nursing curricula	13	5	1	1	0

**Interpretation:** Most faculty strongly agreed that student stress and burnout are widespread. They emphasized that resilience training and institutional mental health services should be mandatory components of nursing curricula.

**Table 2: Student Perceptions (n = 60)**

Parameter Evaluated	Positive Response	Negative Response	Summary
High stress due to academic and clinical load	50	10	Stress widely acknowledged
Burnout symptoms experienced (fatigue, anxiety)	44	16	Majority report burnout
Resilience training improved coping ability	46	14	High positive impact
Counseling and peer support are helpful	52	8	Strong acceptance
Prefer inclusion of stress management courses	55	5	Overwhelming support

**Interpretation:** Students overwhelmingly identified stress and burnout as significant challenges. Most confirmed that resilience training, counseling, and peer support strategies improved their coping ability and overall well-being.

#### Questionnaire

##### For Faculty (Likert Scale):

1. Do you believe nursing students experience high stress and burnout?
2. Can resilience training improve student mental health?
3. Are current institutional support services adequate?
4. Do faculty require training to support student mental health?

5. Should mental health programs be mandatory in nursing curricula?

##### For Students (Yes/No):

1. Do you experience high stress due to academic or clinical training?
2. Have you experienced symptoms of burnout such as exhaustion or anxiety?



1. Did resilience training help you cope better with stress?
2. Do you find peer support and counseling services useful?
3. Would you prefer stress management courses included in your curriculum?

## CONCLUSION

Stress and burnout are pervasive issues among nursing students, posing risks to both their academic performance and professional development. However, resilience emerges as a critical protective factor that enables students to cope with challenges effectively. The study found that resilience-building programs—such as

mindfulness training, peer support, and counseling—significantly reduce stress levels and enhance psychological well-being.

Faculty and student feedback strongly suggest that nursing institutions should integrate structured mental health support systems into their curricula. This includes resilience training, accessible counseling services, and faculty development workshops to better identify and address mental health challenges. Ultimately, prioritizing student well-being ensures that future nurses are not only clinically competent but also mentally resilient professionals capable of delivering compassionate, high-quality care.

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