

# New Study

## Transcendental Meditation Reduces Compassion Fatigue and Improves Resilience for Nurses

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Anyone working in the medical profession will admit that it is stressful, and at the same time say that the work that they do is a calling. As professionals, we want to ease suffering, excel in our roles and want to continue learning and growing in our fields. We also need to have work-life balance.

Balance at work means not getting overwhelmed by the fast pace, the chaos of sudden changes in a patient's clinical status, or the long shifts with few or no breaks. In contrast, a balanced life means not being so exhausted at the end of the day, or at the end of a string of 12 hour shifts---that we have little or no energy to do the things that we enjoy outside of work, much less any remaining patience and understanding for our loved ones. We knew that the work could sometimes be difficult and the shifts tiring.

When we signed on to be a nurses, we knew there would be stress. But the statistics are alarming and nurses are suffering:

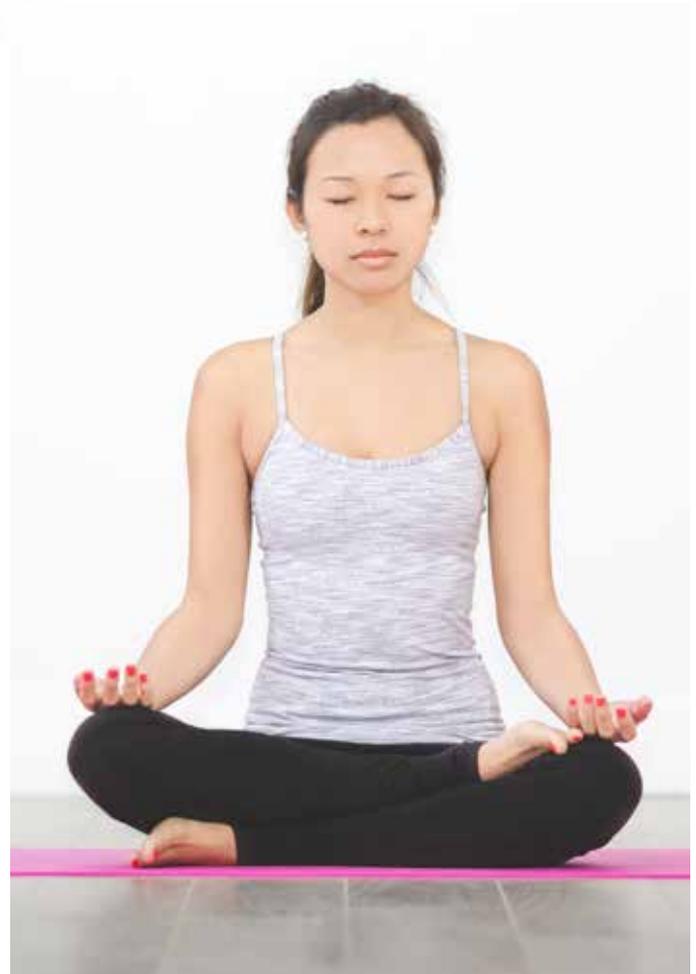
A 2014 in Policy, Politics and Nursing Practice shows that an estimated 17.5% of newly licensed RNs leave within the first year, and 33.5% leave within the second year. (1)

Organizational costs associated with RN turnover can be as much as \$6.4 million for a large acute care hospital. Studies have associated nurse turnover with an increase in pressure ulcers, falls and the use of physical restraints with patients. (1)

Nurses can better deal with professional burnout by practicing the Transcendental Meditation® ([www.tm-women.org/nurses](http://www.tm-women.org/nurses)) technique, according to a new study published in the Journal for Nurses in Professional Development.

Just after four months of learning the TM technique, the standardized assessments found that nurses participating in the study had reductions in compassion fatigue and burnout, and increases in compassion satisfaction and resilience. The study reveals the importance that self-care plays for professional development and longevity in nursing.

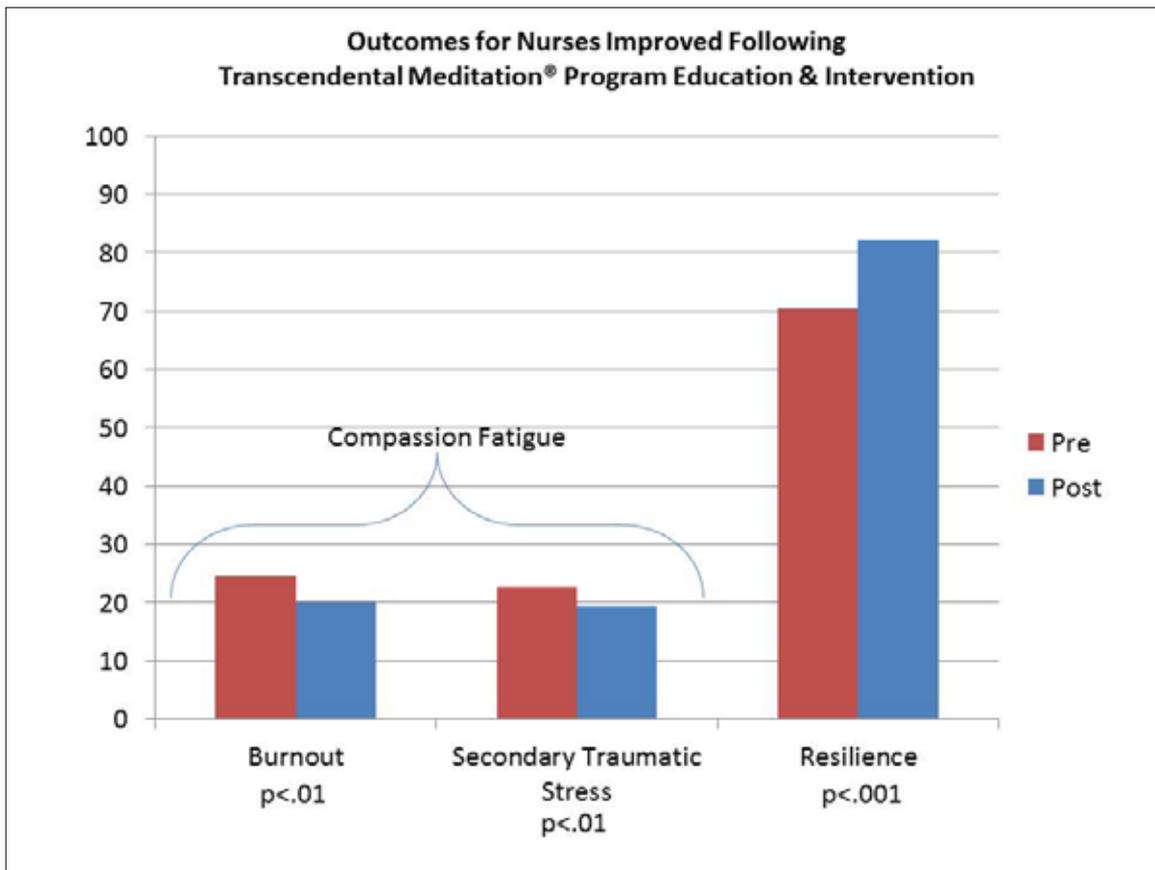
We increasingly see the necessity of helping nurses by being proactive about the use of self-care techniques to build resilience. There IS an evidence- based self- care practice,



verified by more than 400 peer reviewed studies, that nurses will look forward to doing every day!

Lead author, Jennifer Bonamer, PhD, RN-BC, Nursing Professional Development Specialist at Sarasota Memorial Health Care System, Sarasota, Florida, reported:

"For years I watched nurses struggle to care for their patients and themselves.... Working with people who are suffering trauma eventually takes a toll and produces what's come to be called "compassion fatigue." (2)



The results of the study were statistically significant, showing that the nurses experienced a 9.2% increase in compassion satisfaction, an 18% reduction in burnout and a 16.9% increase in resilience.

The validated survey tools "...demonstrated quantitatively what the nurses reported: "they felt better and enjoyed their work more." (2) according to Dr. Bonamer.

"We need to invest in our nursing staff and ensure that they have rewarding careers while also providing the best possible care for their patients," Dr. Bonamer said. "The Transcendental Meditation technique is one step that we could take. A variety of studies have shown its effectiveness in reducing stress and promoting health and well-being." (2)

The 15-minute video, *Nourishing the Caregiver from Within* ([www.tm-women.org/nurses](http://www.tm-women.org/nurses)), features Sarasota Memorial Hospital nurses as they describe the benefits they are receiving from the TM Program.

Health professionals who have learned the TM technique report greater resilience as well as increased capacity for executive judgement, decision making under stress, situational awareness, efficiency, moral reasoning, and compassion.

In the first TM elective course offered at a major medical school in the United States, Chicago's Stritch Loyola School of Medicine students learn about the science and methodology behind the Transcendental Meditation technique (3)

The Transcendental Meditation technique is not a religion, philosophy, or lifestyle and is very easy to learn. It involves no concentration, control of the mind or breath, contemplation, or monitoring of thoughts. The practice allows the active thinking mind to settle down to a state of inner calm while the metabolism drops allowing for deep relaxation.

Nurses can earn 23 CE contact hours when they take the TM course. For more information, email: [educationdirector@tm-women.org](mailto:educationdirector@tm-women.org) and visit <http://www.tm-women.org/nurses>.

1. Kovner, Brewer, Fatehi. What does nurse turnover rate mean and what is the rate? *Policy, Politics and Nursing Practice*, 2014. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1527154414547953>

2. Bonamer J, Aquino-Russell C. Self-Care Strategies for Professional Development: Transcendental Meditation Reduces Compassion Fatigue and Improves Resilience for Nurses *Journal for Nurses in Professional Development*, March/April 2019 - Volume 35 - Issue 2 - p 93-97 doi: 10.1097/NND.0000000000000522

3. Brown C, Gruener G., Physician Heal Thyself Stritch School of Medicine students give new meaning to the adage, *Chicago Medicine*, January 2016, 22-27.