

# Moral Distress in Nursing: Call to Action!

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# Moral Distress in Correctional Nursing

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We do not have any financial relationships  
with any commercial interests.

# Moral Distress in Correctional Nursing

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## **Educational Objectives**

1. Define moral distress in nursing.
2. Describe the impact of moral distress on and its implications for correctional nursing and correctional nurse leaders.
3. Discuss practical approaches that correctional nurse leaders may utilize to mitigate the impact of moral distress on correctional nurses and promote moral resilience.

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1. Define moral distress in nursing.
2. Describe the impact of moral distress on correctional nurses, its implications for correctional nursing practice and on correctional nurse leaders.
3. Discuss practical approaches that correctional nurse leaders may utilize to mitigate the impact of moral distress on correctional nurses and promote moral resilience.
4. The experience of moral distress on correctional nursing and its impact on patient outcomes.

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So – what is moral distress?



“[t]he negative experience that may occur when nurses know what the right action is but are unable to take that action because of institutional obstacles”.

Jameton, A. (2017). What moral distress in nursing history could suggest about the future of healthcare. *AMA Journal of Ethics*. 19(6). 617-628

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What “negative experiences” occur in correctional settings that may cause moral distress?



1. The correctional environment
2. The relationship between correctional nurses and custody colleagues.
3. The Jail and Prison culture.
4. Ethical issues and dilemmas unique to correctional settings.

# Moral Distress in Correctional Nursing

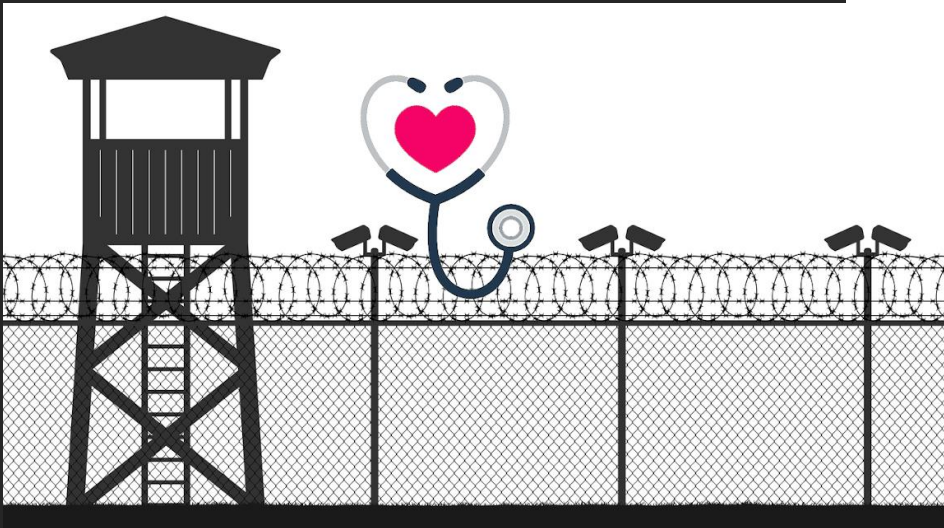
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Is there any upside to all of this?

Yes!



Correctional  
nursing is the  
best kept  
secret in  
nursing!



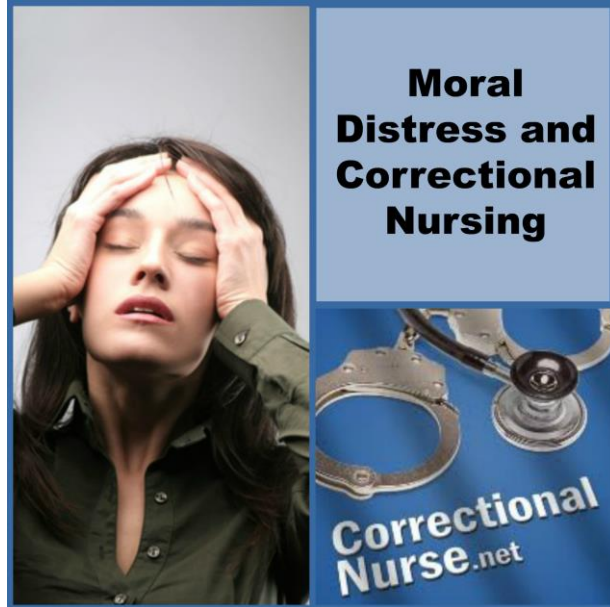
In every study reviewed for this work, correctional nurses asserted that there is great satisfaction in providing nursing care to people who were in great need of healthcare service and where they had the ability to work to the fullest extent of their licensure.



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Why do we need to be concerned about it?



Consequences of inaction:

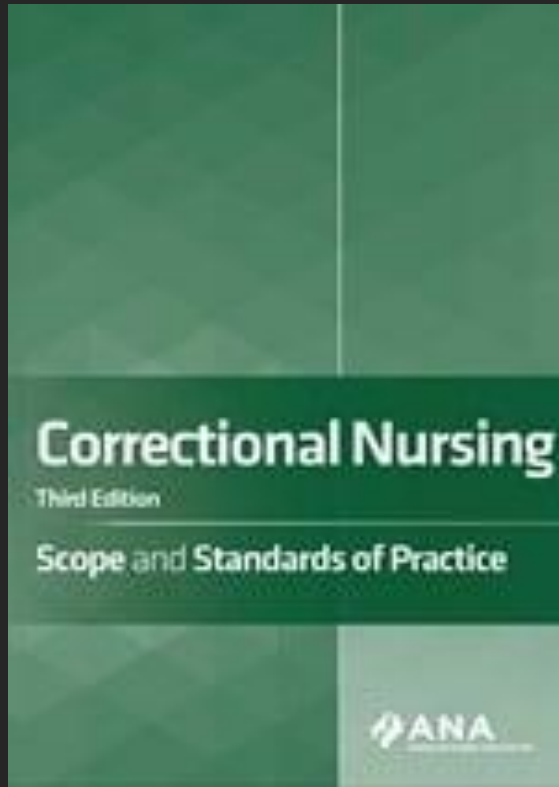
Burnout syndrome.

Blurred professional boundaries.

Challenges to ethical reasoning.

Diminished delivery of quality care.

# Call to Action



## Implications for Correctional Nursing Practice

Impact of the correctional environment

Foundation of strong nursing policy and nursing practice standards

Nursing leadership responsibilities

Nurse orientation programs

# Call to Action



## Correctional Nursing Practice Update: Code of Ethics - Responsibility for Nursing Practice

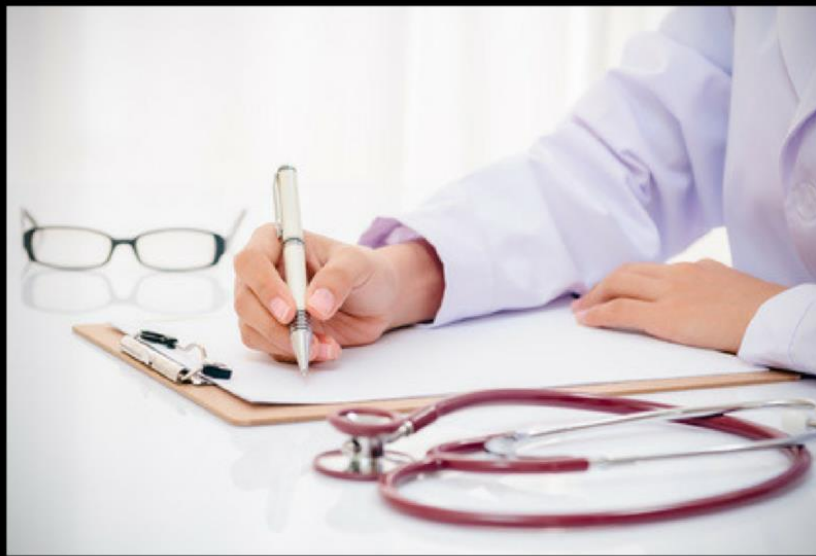
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## Ethical Implications

Table 1. The Nine Provisions Found in the American Nurses Association Code of Ethics for Nurses and Their Application in Correctional Nursing Code of ethics for nurses Scope and standards of correctional nursing practice

Provision 1 The nurse practices with compassion and respect for the inherent dignity, worth, and unique attributes of every person.	CNs understand the moral and legal rights of correctional patients.
Provision 2 The nurse's primary commitment is to the patient, whether individual, family, group, community, or population.	The work of nursing is inherently personal; CNs must recognize and maintain appropriate professional boundaries when functioning in the CN role.
Provision 3 The nurse promotes, advocates for, and strives to protect the health, safety, and rights of the patient.	CNs emphasize the importance and legal implications of maintaining correctional patients' confidentiality of health care information.
Provision 4 The nurse is responsible and accountable for individual nursing practice and determines the appropriate delegation of tasks consistent with the nurse's obligation to provide optimum patient care.	The increased autonomy required of CNs can blur scope-of-practice boundaries. CNs are expected to deliver high quality and ethically sound care.
Provision 5 The nurse owes the same duties to self as to others including the responsibility to promote health and safety, preserve wholeness of character and integrity, maintain competence, and continue personal and professional growth.	The unrelenting harsh and unhappy correctional environment of correctional facilities requires that CNs engage in activities that allow them to maintain ethical and professional balance as a person and as part of the correctional health care team.
Provision 6 The nurse through individual and collective effort establishes, maintains, and improves the ethical environment of the work setting and conditions of employment that are conducive to safe quality health care..	CNs must be able to create, maintain, and contribute to morally good and healthy work environments
Provision 7 The nurse participates in the advancement of the profession through contributions to practice, education, dissemination, and application to practice.	Correctional nursing develops its own specialty scope of practice as specified by state and federal law, by relevant societal values, and by ANA's Code of Ethics for Nurses with Interpretive Statements.
Provision 8 The nurse collaborates with other health professionals and the public to protect human rights, promote health diplomacy, and reduce health disparities.	CNs have a duty to prepare their patients for return to their communities and should collaborate with others to change unjust structures and processes that may affect them after discharge.
Provision 9 The profession of nursing, as represented by associations and their members, is responsible for articulating nursing values, for maintaining the integrity of the profession and its practice, and for shaping social policy.	CNs do not practice in isolation from others in the nursing profession. It is the shared responsibility of professional organizations to speak for nurses in shaping health care

# Call to Action



**Correctional Nursing  
Research Priorities**

*CorrectionalNurse.Net*

## Implications for Correctional Nursing Research

- Critical thinking/clinical judgment.
- Correctional nurse competencies and educational needs.
- The impact of correctional nursing care on patient outcomes.
- The environment of care.

[illegible]

## Correctional nursing research questions

- What is the prevalence of moral distress among correctional nurses?
- How is moral distress identified and mediated, what outcomes are important?
- What is the relationship between a strong foundation in nursing and the nurses' ability to preserve their nursing identity in correctional settings?

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ANA (2015). Code of Ethics for Nurses / ANA (2020) Scope and Standards of Correctional Nursing Practice

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Schoenly, L. (2015). Ethical Principals for Correctional Nurses. In *Essentials for Correctional Nursing*. Knox & Schoenly (eds). Pp.19-38.