

# Code Lavender

**WHAT IS THE CODE LAVENDER PROGRAM?** Code Lavender is a holistic, rapid-response program that helps address the emotional needs of a team member experiencing a real-time stressor in the acute hospital setting. When Code Lavender is initiated, a team of responders comes to the unit and spends 15-30 minutes with the staff member in need.



## BACKGROUND

Nurses care for people at their sickest and most vulnerable. They have front-row seats to life, death, trauma, and happiness. They do it because that's what they signed up for. They do it because it's their calling. Often, they watch with empathy, feeling the emotions as though it is happening to them. And at the end of their shift, they clock out, go home, and get back to their lives, yet still carry the weight of their day with them— many times, alone.

Over the last few years, anxiety, depression, and suicide have increased among healthcare professionals, particularly nurses. In a One Year COVID Impact Assessment by ANA, it was found that nurses feel exhausted, overwhelmed, irritable, and depressed. More alarming is that despite their negative feelings, 52% feel they don't need mental health support, and 36% feel they should be able to manage their stress and well-being on their own.

## HOW DO I START A CODE LAVENDER PROGRAM?

Here are a few simple steps to get you started.

- Create bedside nurse buy-in.
- Develop a Code Lavender workgroup allowing frontline staff to create a program specific to their needs.
- Gather data on the number and types of stressful events that occur or are specific to your unit.
- Does your unit have code blues or traumatic injuries?
- Is your team mostly young mothers navigating the stress of balancing work and raising a family?
- Identify key team members for the Code Lavender team.
- Who are the informal leaders and change-makers? Are they charge nurses, spiritual services such as a chaplain, social workers, or informal nurse leaders on the unit?

- Provide guided meditation training or talk training to the Code Lavender team.
- This should be an easy-to-follow script to help guide the team during a Code Lavender.
- Identify a sacred space for Code Lavender situations.
- Many organizations refurbish a clean supply room, installing soft lights, warm rugs, couches, aromatherapy, and other items supporting a safe, restful space.

## OUTCOMES

Increased staff retention and engagement when nurses feel deserving of breaks and supported to mentally regroup when needed

A growing culture of support when life-altering or tragic events occur, helping nurses and their mental well-being

Improvement of patient outcomes over time, as patient and employee ecosystems are interdependent

A tool that organizations can utilize to help nurses start healing after traumatic and stressful events, aiding those suffering from burnout and moral injury

## SCAN TO LEARN MORE ABOUT CODE LAVENDER

