FIGHTING COVID-19 ON THE FRONTLINE

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Challenges for Nursing on the Frontline

- Uncertainty in:
  - how to care for COVID-19 patients
  - provider safety
- End-of-life care to those with no family present; nurse becomes the family
- Social stigma of COVID-19 frontline nurses and public perception we are “contaminated”
- Working with limited and reduced resources; crisis standards of care
Impact on Well-Being of Frontline Nurses

- Physically, mentally, spiritually exhausting
- Unrelenting stress
- Nervous exhaustion
- Most significant impact: Mental health
Nurse Preparation For Pandemic Response: Are New Nurses Prepared?

- Students often have little experience in nursing school for caring for critically ill patients
- No experience working in crisis standards of care, used to having all supplies needed, plus some
- No experience with rapid adaptation
Key Lessons Learned To Better Prepare Nurses For Pandemic Response

• Skills for EBP are essential for all nurses to stay abreast of the constant new information during an unfolding pandemic
• Many nurses do not have a strong foundation in basic pandemic response
• Providing “crisis standards” of care is stressful for healthcare workers
• Culture does influence the "why, how and what” of care for specific groups
  – Pandemic response includes attention to the body, mind and the spirit
• Cross assignment to other specialties with supported rapid cross training works
Advice For Healthcare Systems To Prepare All Healthcare Workers

• PLAN:
  – Plan to care for the caretakers: Assure mental health support for nurses and the rest of the healthcare team
  – Plan for surge needs of nursing who can provide culturally appropriate care
  – Acknowledge the enduring contribution of nurses in pandemic response
  – Support administrative-frontline communication with staff, including active listening, especially during pandemic uncertainty
  – Prepare nurses to be ready and confident for cross assignment with rapid cross training
  – Reinforce the integration of family into nursing care across all settings
MESSAGE TO MY FELLOW NURSES
THANK YOU