

## **About the Transcendental Meditation® Program for Nurses**

The Transcendental Meditation for Nurses program is designed to help nurses improve their ability to manage the stress in their work and personal environment. It is often the case that we are unable to change the stress around us, but we can certainly change the way that we react to the stress. Stress is now widely recognized as a significant cause of nurse burnout and the decision to leave the profession. Stress has been shown to have a seriously debilitating influence on efficiency and effectiveness in meeting every day demands. By learning how to successfully manage stress, nurses can revitalize their ability to perform effectively with renewed energy, creativity and orderliness.

This course differs substantially from other "stress management" courses in that participants will learn the evidence-based Transcendental Meditation (TM ) technique as the practical basis for personal change and improvement. The TM practice is easy to learn and enjoyable to practice, requiring no effort, concentration, belief or change in lifestyle. The nurse learns the Transcendental Meditation technique within the context of the course and then has 2-3 months of follow up classes to ensure effortless of practice and benefits in daily life.

Research shows that during the TM technique a unique state of "restful alertness" is experienced. This is characterized by the body resting very deeply, while the mind is awake and alert. This unique state of mind and body differs from waking, dreaming or sleeping. The state of restful alertness increases blood flow to the brains prefrontal cortex, strengthening communication between the prefrontal cortex and other areas of the brain; thus developing total brain functioning. As a result, the TM practitioner displays stronger executive functions, with more purposeful thinking and farsighted decision making. When the brain's CEO (the prefrontal cortex) is fully "online", the emotional response to the world is more blanced and appropriate. Improved brain fuctioning, along with release of stress and fatigue due to deep rest, results in better, healthier decisions... which result in reduced illness, improved overall health and a longer and happier life.

Another example of improved physiological functioning involves the three major stress hormones: cortisol, adrenaline, and noradrenaline. Chronically elevated levels of these hormones cause insomnia, acid reflux, migraines, depression, chronic fatigue, exhaustion, immune system failure, and aging. Studies published in the Journal of Neural Transmission (Bujatti & Riederer, 1976), Physiology & Behavior (Walton, et al., 1995), and Journal of Alternative and Complementary Medicine (J.R. Infante, et al., 2001) found that individuals practicing the Transcendental Meditation technique have 30%-40% lower levels of all three major stress hormones.

Scientific research on the Transcendental Meditation program has shown that the daily experience of this state of restful alertness leads to increased creativity, improved learning ability, higher IQ, better moral reasoning, improved critical thinking and problem solving,

more efficient brain functioning and a wide array of health benefits--ranging from normalized blood pressure to reduced need for doctor visits.

Over five million people worldwide have learned the Transcendental Meditation technique--1.5 million in the U.S. alone--including people from all backgrounds, culture, races and religions.

More than 600 scientific research studies confirming the benefits of the TM technique for mind, body, behaviour and society have been conducted in 33 countries, and at 250 independent research institutions and universities including Harvard, Stanford, Yale and UCLA Medical School. Over 340 of these studies have been published in leading peer reviewed scientific journals.

In 2013 the American Heart Association published a scientific statement reporting the finding that the Transcendental Meditation technique lowers blood pressure and is recommended in clinical practice.

Brook RD et al., Beyond Medications and Diet: Alternative Approaches to Lowering Blood Pressure. A Scientific Statement from the American Heart Association. *Hypertension*, 61:00, 2013.

### **Holistic Nursing Care and the TM® Technique**

The vision of AHNA is " a world in which nursing nurtures wholeness and inspires peace and healing." As the first holistic nurse, Florence Nightingale recognized the wholeness of the individual, and from her enlightened vision, AHNA defines a holistic nurse as "an instrument of healing and a facilitator in the healing process." Further, AHNA defines the practice of holistic nursings as " all nursing practice that has healing the whole person as its goal." (American Holistic Nurses' Association, 1998, Description of Holistic Nursing)

To be an effective, compassionate caregiver and an "instrument of healing", a nurse needs to nurture herself from within. The profession of nursing is difficult. It requires long hours, large patient assignments, and clear, critical decision making under stress. How can a nurse be present, connect with, and provide a healing environment for her patients when she is tired and stressed? How can a nurse make the right decisions when her mind and physiology are not functioning at their fullest? What role does stress play in affecting the nurse's natural ability to be resilient and to remain healthy in body and mind?

Without a tool to release stress and fatigue on a daily basis, nurses become exhausted, depleted, less compassionate, and make poor decisions in their professional and personal lives. When this happens, she is unable to fulfill her purpose as a caregiver, effective, critical decision maker, and healthy individual. Patient care becomes automated and task driven. Patient and family care suffers and in far too many instances, a good nurse becomes overwhelmed, making the decision to leave the profession that she loves.

In 2014, the American Nurses Association released a position paper titled: "Addressing Nurse Fatigue to Promote Safety and Health: Joint Responsibilities of Registered Nurses and Employers to Reduce Risks". This paper outlines the American Nurses Association's (ANA) position with regard to the responsibilities of registered nurses and employers to decrease the risks from nurse fatigue and to create and sustain a culture of safety, a healthy work environment, and a work-life balance. Among the recommendations for Registered Nurses are: "Registered nurses are responsible for implementing evidence-based fatigue countermeasures and personal strategies to reduce the risks of fatigue.....(and to) improve overall personal health and wellness through stress management, nutrition, and frequent exercise."

The twice daily practice of the TM technique is a tool that allows a nurse to be an effective, compassionate, holistic caregiver. By providing deep rest to the nervous system, stress and fatigue are eliminated in each 20 minute practice of TM. After meditation, the mind is clear and the body is refreshed. Transcendental Meditation is a simple, effortless technique that dissolves stress and fatigue naturally, and allows an individual to be clear, focused and vital in mind, body and relationships.

Nurses are constantly multitasking and being pulled in many directions. At the same time, the interpersonal encounter with the patient must be one of a connection and of undivided attention to the person's needs and concerns. The nurse must be an active and genuine listener and healing presence. The ability to be present develops naturally through the regular practice of the TM technique. It is not something that we have to intellectually practice before a patient encounter...by focusing or centering oneself. As the mind and physiology begin to be more balanced, rested, and calm, the ability to improve every interaction increases. This is documented by studies showing benefits for relationships and society as a whole.

[www.tm-women.org/nurses](http://www.tm-women.org/nurses)