

Title: Hearing Their Stories: An Exploration of Newly Graduated Nurses' Experiences of Empowerment

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High levels of structural and psychological empowerment are associated with increased organizational commitment and decreased burnout in nurses. Typically, empowerment is fostered through mentoring and peer support. However, in the current nursing workforce crisis, newly graduated nurses (NGNs) enter the workforce and are forced to endure staffing shortages, potentially leading to feelings of disempowerment. To date, no researchers have qualitatively explored NGNs' experiences of empowerment, nor examined how empowerment evolves after entering the workforce. The aim of the proposed study is to gain a rich understanding of Canadian NGNs' experiences of structural and psychological empowerment, over the course of one year. This study will amplify participants' previously unheard voices to provide a novel perspective of NGNs' experiences of empowerment as well as a preliminary understanding of how NGNs' empowerment may evolve within the first year of clinical practice. This qualitative study will be guided by a constructivist lens, the narrative inquiry methodology, and the theory of structural empowerment. Data will be collected in semi-structured interviews over the course of one year. Iterative data analysis will be conducted using the restorying technique with NVivo software. This study may substantially impact nursing practice, as a rich understanding of NGNs' experiences of empowerment over time will enable healthcare organizations to implement supports that address NGNs' self-identified empowerment-related needs. By doing so, empowerment may be fostered, potentially leading to decreased burnout and increased intention to stay, both of which are federal priorities in the current nursing workforce crisis.