

One Nurse's Journey from substance use to recovery

WISCONSIN PEER ALLIANCE FOR NURSES

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MARCH 2024

**Wisconsin Peer Alliance
for Nurses**

Nurses in Recovery Helping Nurses Recover
wiperalliance.org



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Learning Objectives

Participants will:

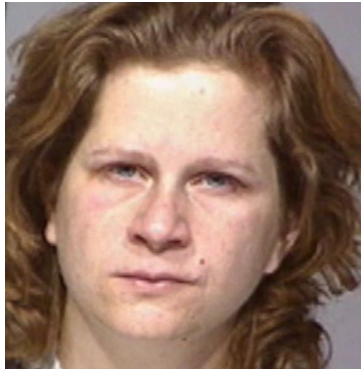
- ▶ Gain an understanding of substance use disorder (SUD) in nursing.
- ▶ Realize a decrease in stigma by listening to one nurse's journey.
- ▶ Learn to recognize the signs of SUD.
- ▶ Identify the resources for nurses with SUD.



Current Events

CURRENT EVENTS:

- Jan 2021 Fox 6 Milwaukee, WI: “State allowed drug-stealing nurse to keep practicing”.
- February 2023 WTPC 11 Georgia: “Chatham Co. nurse practitioner arrested for stealing prescription medication”.
- May 2023 US Attorney’s Office Michigan: “Registered Nurse Sentenced to 4 Years in Prison for Tampering With and Stealing Painkillers from Detroit Hospital”.
- October 2023 Justice.gov: “Iowa Nurse Pleads Guilty to Stealing Pain Medication from at Least 50 New Mothers at Waterloo Hospital”.
- January 2024 Fox 9: “Minnesota nurse pleads guilty to stealing opioid pain medications at hospice clinic.”



▶ Kristin's Story



Current National Statistics and Nurses...

- ▶ 10-15% have some form of substance use disorder and 6-8% are working impaired.

2023	Number of Nurses	10% Nurses with SUD	6% Nurses Working Impaired
United States	5,000,000	500,000	300,000
Wisconsin	100,000	10,000	6,000



- ▶ >90% of diversion incidents involve opioids.
- ▶ 48% of Wisconsin's RN workforce reported that their mental and/or physical health was worse in 2022 as compared to before the COVID-19 pandemic.
- ▶ 2/3 of nurses are suffering mental anguish and are not seeking support.
- ▶ 56% say there is stigma associated with healthcare providers receiving mental health care.



Why Does This Happen?...

- ▶ Relief from stress,
- ▶ Easy access,
- ▶ Self-medicate for things like anxiety and depression,
- ▶ Can follow surgery, injury, or an emotional loss,
- ▶ Denial/Enabling,
- ▶ Genetics.



Stressors in Nursing

- ▶ Length of time spent at work,
- ▶ Rotating shifts,
- ▶ Infrequent breaks,
- ▶ Comforting patients and their families, emotionally taxing conversations,
- ▶ Inability to finish work on time,
- ▶ Backaches from standing for long periods,
- ▶ Staff shortages,
- ▶ Poor communication, conflict, and tension (bullying),
- ▶ Employer demands,
- ▶ Putting others first...

A graphic featuring the word "Burnout" in a large, bold, black serif font. The letters are partially obscured by a circular, glowing orange and yellow fire effect with white smoke rising from the center, set against a dark, smoky background.

Burnout



Stressors lead to or worsen...

- ▶ Anxiety
- ▶ Depression
- ▶ Panic disorders
- ▶ Problematic substance use
- ▶ Suicide



Suicide Risk

- ▶ Nurses who lose a nursing position or leave the profession because of substance use, mental health issues, or chronic pain are at risk for nurse suicide.
- ▶ Of nurses that die by suicide:
 - ▶ 92% were out of work or in the process of losing their position as a nurse
 - ▶ 82% had depression
 - ▶ 65% has substance use disorder or misuse
 - ▶ 43% had a prior suicide attempt





How to recognize a nurse with SUD...

- Typically, high functioning, excellent nurse;
- Increasing work absences (AUD);
- Lots of OT or showing up when not scheduled (OUD);
- Increasing breaks or bathroom visits;
- Volunteers to administer controlled substances to patients;
- Suspicious drug log entries, cancellations, drug discrepancies;
- Altered verbal or phone med orders;
- Heavy "wastage" of drugs;
- Patients report ineffective pain management;
- Underperformance;
- Wearing long sleeves when inappropriate;
- Personality change or mood swings;
- Changes in appearance;
- Falls asleep during down time;
- Shakiness;
- Practice errors.



Solutions



1. Boards of Nursing / Alternative to Discipline
2. Peer Support
3. Diversion Prevention



1 - Alternative to Discipline Programs

- Began in the 1980s when state boards of nursing began to see SUD as a disease.
- A non-punitive and sometimes confidential approach to a nurse with substance use issues.
- Enhance a Board of Nursing's ability to assure public protection by:
 - promoting earlier identification
 - requiring immediate removal from the workplace if relapse occurs
- The benefits to the nurse include the opportunity to demonstrate:
 - that they can practice safely and maintain abstinence



WI Professional Assistance Procedure (PAP) and Monitoring

- PAP: CONFIDENTIAL 5-year program for nurses with SUD
- Monitoring: NOT confidential. Same requirements



Alternative To Discipline Program Requirements

Requirements (vary depending on monitoring orders):

- Treatment based assessment,
- Random drug screens,
- 12-step meetings, peer support meetings
- Submit self, therapy and work reports,
- Costs associated with above.

Limitations (vary depending on monitoring orders):

- No access to controlled substances,
- Cannot work nights, weekends, or holidays,
- Cannot work 12-hour shifts or overtime,
- Cannot work for any type of staffing agency,
- All work must be supervised by a licensed professional.



2 - Peer Support

- ▶ Process of giving and receiving non-clinical assistance
- ▶ Sharing lived experience and practical guidance
- ▶ Offers hope
- ▶ 1 : 1 or group support

What peer support is

Witnessing, sitting with suffering, tolerating others' distress

Present-oriented

Identifying how the person is coping with the event

Exploring and processing their feelings and reactions

Normalizing their feelings and reactions

Meeting them where they are and respecting their beliefs

Helping identify needs and connecting to resources

What peer support isn't

Therapy or treatment

Correcting facts about past events

Drilling for details about the event

Knowing or mind-reading

Cheering up, persuading, reassuring

Imposing own beliefs ("Everything happens for a reason")

Advice giving or solving problems



What is WisPAN?

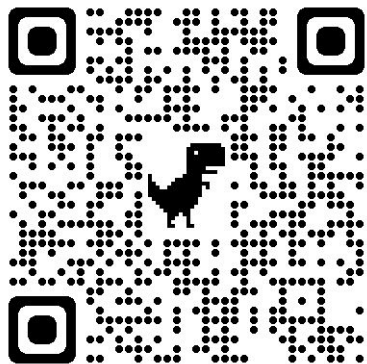
Wisconsin Peer Alliance for Nurses

▶ **PEER Support**

- ▶ A safe space, virtually
- ▶ Peer support groups
- ▶ 1:1 mentoring
- ▶ Advocacy

Education

- ▶ Medical facilities
- ▶ Academic institutions
- ▶ General public



- ▶ Website <https://wiperalliance.org/>
- ▶ Email wispan2021@gmail.com
- ▶ Phone 414-376-7002

WisPAN is a non-profit 501(c)3 organization

Introducing peer support for nurse mental wellness

Peer support connections: nurse to nurse



WEDNESDAYS STARTING
JANUARY 17, 2024
7:00-8:00 PM
VIRTUAL, FREE
CONFIDENTIAL

Open to any nurse who would like to
connect with other nurses. Come to
listen, share, learn, and explore

Contact WisPAN at
wispan2021@gmail.com
for the meeting link
or call 414-376-7002

BROUGHT TO YOU IN PARTNERSHIP WITH:
WLN, WNA, WONL

3 - Diversion Prevention

- ▶ Train staff yearly on SUD, diversion, how to recognize it and what to do if it is suspected.
- ▶ Ensure policies regarding your facilities approved processes are in place, train to them yearly.
- ▶ **Never cosign as a witness if you haven't witnessed it.**
- ▶ Know the resources available and ensure staff know them too.





What WisPAN Means to Nurses...

- ▶ “As a Nurse with a substance abuse disorder, the support I have received from WisPAN has been invaluable to me. Trying to confront substance abuse is a daunting prospect and being a Nurse adds a layer or stigma that makes it even more difficult. Having the peer support WisPAN provides guidance and support on an otherwise extremely lonely and difficult process.”
- ▶ “I find such comfort in knowing that fellow nurses who are empathetic and very supportive are right at my fingertips now! I know that I can call on them anytime I may be feeling vulnerable, and they will guide me out of my darkness with their wisdom, love and compassion”
- ▶ “I have finally found the support I have so desperately been praying for. Nurses supporting and caring for nurses at their darkest hour, has brought tremendous hope and promise to my own recovery.”



Other Resources...

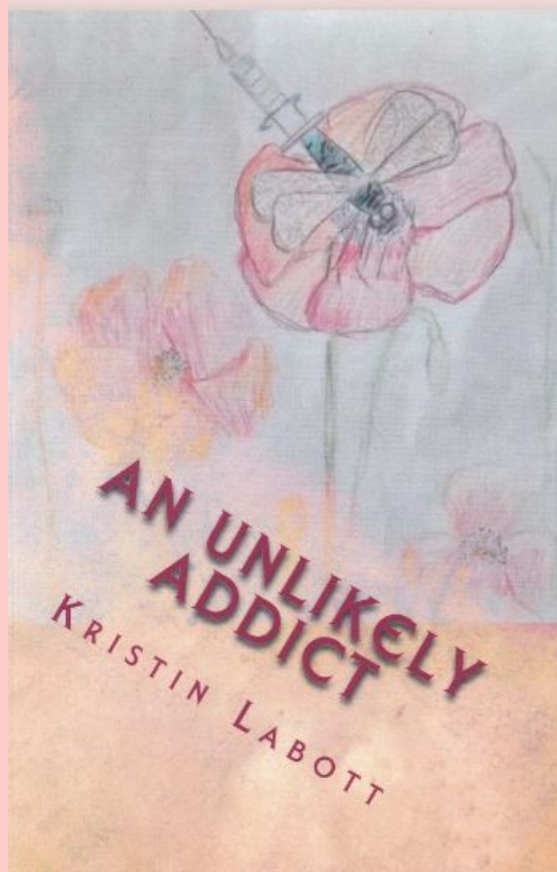


- ▶ National Suicide Prevention Lifeline: **988**
- ▶ NCSBN
<https://www.ncsbn.org/nursing-regulation/practice/substance-use-disorder/substance-use-in-nursing.page>
- ▶ www.aa.org (Alcoholics Anonymous), www.na.org (Narcotics Anonymous)
- ▶ SMART Recovery
<https://www.smartrecovery.org/community/forums/31-Medical-amp-Mental-Health-Professionals-in-Recovery>
- ▶ Parkdale Center (Illinois)
<https://parkdalecenter.com/what-is-a-professional/nurses>
- ▶ Others in recovery like me...Kristin 414-376-7002
- ▶ So many more!

Next steps...call to action!

- ▶ Start using compassionate language
 - ▶ Use instead of abuse
 - ▶ Recovery instead of sobriety/clean/sober
 - ▶ Person with a SUD instead of addict/drug abuser/alcoholic/junkie/drunk
 - ▶ Positive/negative test instead of clean or dirty drug screen
- ▶ Sign up for the WisPAN newsletter on our website (wipeeralliance.org)
- ▶ Follow us on Facebook <https://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=100087468355622>
- ▶ Support your colleagues and yourself by:
 - ▶ Adhering to the proper wasting procedure and encourage your colleagues to do the same
 - ▶ Attend a WisPAN meeting, especially our new Nurse Mental Wellness peer support group
 - ▶ Attend our Fundraising Gala in May 2024 [WisPAN Benefit Gala Link to Tickets](#)

An Unlikely Addict



www.unlikelyaddict.com

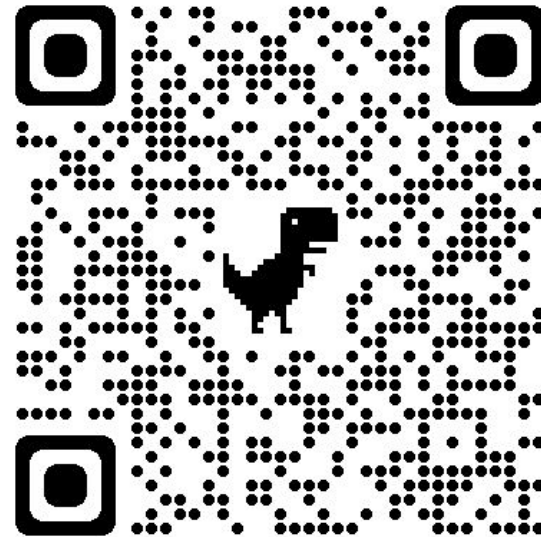
Substance Use Disorder in Healthcare Professionals

Substance Use Disorder in Healthcare Professionals

When Caregivers Need Care and Treatment

Kristin Waite-Labott

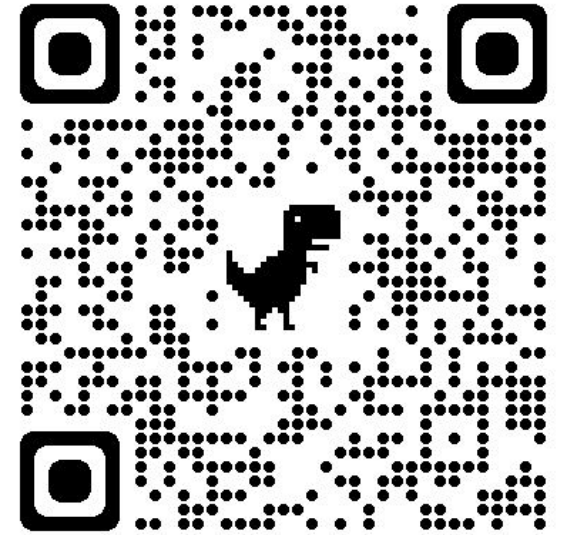
 Springer



▶ QUESTIONS?



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Needed!!!!



Please give feedback on this presentation (only takes a couple minutes 😊):

- email us wispan2021@gmail.com OR
- scan the QR code OR
- complete this google form... <https://forms.gle/BPmNgLEpxpM6edNK9>

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