

Faculty Retention and Resilience for Nurse Educators: Executive Summary

Amy Lane

College of Nursing, East Carolina University

Doctor of Nursing Practice

Dr. Krystle Vinson

July 25, 2025

Faculty Retention and Resilience for Nurse Educators: Executive Summary

Main Points

- Participation in a 12-week mindfulness, yoga, and breathwork program increased faculty engagement in resilience practices from 37% to 57%.
- Faculty reported a 13% improvement in job satisfaction following the intervention.
- Frequent burnout among participants decreased by 18% after the program.
- Intent to remain in academic roles increased slightly by 5%.
- Faculty qualitative feedback highlighted increased self-awareness and self-care habits.
- The asynchronous format facilitated accessibility but contributed to low participation.
- The intervention demonstrated feasibility as a sustainable faculty development strategy.

Background and Purpose

Nurse educators experience significant burnout, stress, and job dissatisfaction, threatening the stability of nursing programs and the foundation of future nurses (Crawford et al., 2023; Watson, 2023). Faculty turnover undermines institutional continuity, increases recruitment costs, and negatively impacts students' learning experiences (American Association of Colleges of Nursing [AACN], 2024).

The purpose of the Doctor of Nursing Practice (DNP) project was to implement and evaluate an evidence-informed wellness intervention to strengthen resilience and support retention among nursing faculty at a public university in the southeastern United States.

Methodology

The project used a quality improvement design guided by the RE-AIM (Reach, Effectiveness, Adoption, Implementation, Maintenance) framework (Glasgow et al., 2019).

Specifically, *Reach* was assessed by tracking the number and percentage of faculty who participated and completed the intervention. *Effectiveness* was measured through pre- and post-intervention surveys evaluating changes in resilience, burnout, job satisfaction, and intent to remain in academia. *Adoption* involved engaging leadership support and incorporating the intervention into the existing learning management system to encourage participation. *Implementation* focused on delivering standardized content through pre-recorded videos. Finally, *Maintenance* was considered by collecting participant feedback on the feasibility and sustainability of offering the program as part of ongoing faculty development initiatives. All nursing faculty (N $\approx$ 178) were invited to participate voluntarily. The intervention included pre-recorded videos uploaded and three modules were created with content on mindfulness meditation, breathwork, and yoga, delivered over 12 weeks on the university's secure learning management system, Canvas.

Data was collected anonymously before and after the intervention using validated survey instruments to assess resilience, burnout, job satisfaction, and intent to remain in academia. Descriptive statistics summarized changes across these indicators. Qualitative feedback was gathered through open-ended survey questions.

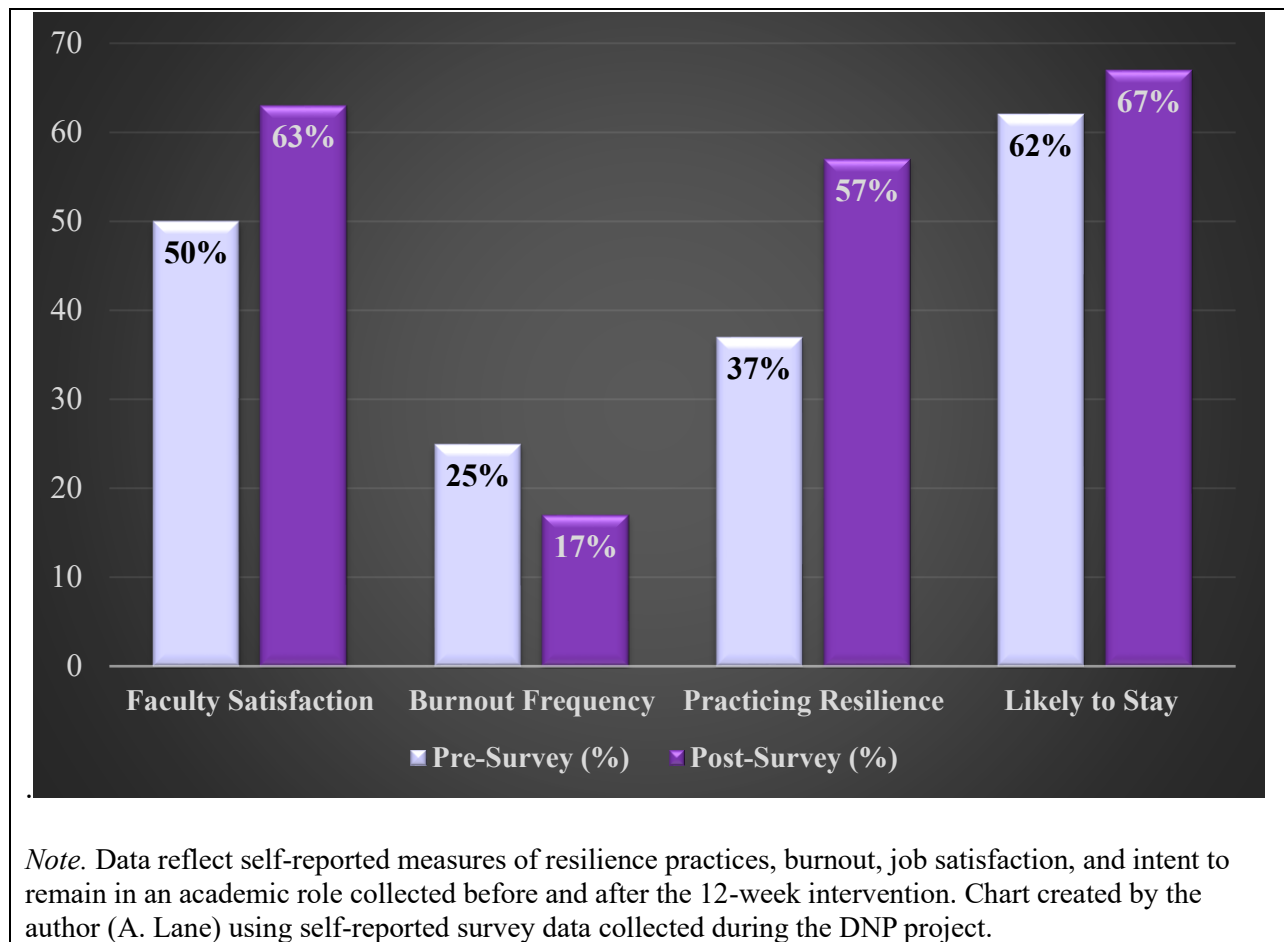
Results

Following the 12-week intervention, participants demonstrated improvements across several key indicators of well-being. Engagement in resilience practices increased by 20%, and reported burnout decreased by 18%. Overall job satisfaction rose by 13%, while the intent to remain in an academic nursing role improved slightly by 5%. Qualitative feedback further highlighted that faculty valued integrating mindfulness and self-care strategies into their daily

work, reporting a heightened awareness of personal well-being and a renewed commitment to sustaining resilience practices.

Figure 1

Faculty Resilience Outcomes: Pre- vs. Post-Interventions (n=6)



Strengths and Limitations

The project had several notable strengths. The asynchronous format respected faculty autonomy by enabling participants to engage with the content at their own pace and on their own schedules. Utilizing existing university resources, including the Canvas platform and pre-recorded videos, demonstrated both cost-effectiveness and scalability. Even with a small cohort,

the intervention showed that structured wellness programming can be integrated into faculty development initiatives with minimal disruption to existing workflows.

Limitations

Despite these strengths, the project also faced limitations. Low voluntary participation may limit the generalizability of the findings and introduce self-selection bias, as those who chose to participate were likely already interested in wellness practices. To protect anonymity, no demographic information was collected, preventing analysis of how factors such as age, years in academia, or prior experience with mindfulness might have influenced results. Additionally, without a comparison group, it is not possible to attribute improvements solely to the intervention, since external factors such as workload fluctuations or personal stressors could have contributed to the observed changes.

Implications

Implications for Practice

This project underscores the practical value of integrating structured, evidence-informed wellness interventions into nursing faculty development. The observed reductions in burnout and increases in resilience and satisfaction suggest that even small-scale, low-cost programs can yield meaningful improvements in faculty well-being. Embedding mindfulness, breathwork, and yoga resources within faculty development curricula may enhance retention, foster a culture of self-care, and indirectly improve student learning outcomes by modeling healthy coping strategies.

Implications for Policy

At an institutional level, these results can inform policies that prioritize faculty wellness as a strategic objective linked to program stability and accreditation readiness (AACN, 2024).

Supporting resilience initiatives align with national benchmarks, such as the Quadruple Aim (Institute for Healthcare Improvement, n.d.) and Healthy People 2030, positioning nursing programs as proactive leaders in workforce sustainability (Office of Disease Prevention and Health Promotion, n.d.). Policies that allocate protected time and resources for participation may further enhance uptake and impact.

Implications for Further Research

Given the project's limited scope and sample size, further research is warranted to explore the long-term effects of resilience interventions on faculty retention and job satisfaction. Larger studies incorporating control groups and collecting demographic data could help identify which faculty populations benefit most and refine approaches to maximize engagement. Additionally, examining hybrid models that combine virtual and in-person components could inform scalable best practices for resilience programming in academic settings.

Conclusion

This project showed that a structured wellness intervention combining mindfulness, yoga, and breathwork can be feasibly implemented in a nursing college and linked to improvements in resilience, reduced burnout, and higher job satisfaction. Although the sample size was small, positive trends suggest such programs have the potential to enhance faculty well-being and retention. These results emphasize the value of proactively supporting mental health through low-cost, accessible wellness initiatives as part of sustainable nursing education. Continued evaluation and expansion of these efforts will be important for maintaining a healthy faculty workforce and preparing future nurses.

References

- American Association of Colleges of Nursing. (2024). Fact sheet: Nursing faculty shortage.
<https://www.aacnnursing.org/Portals/0/PDFs/Fact-Sheets/Faculty-Shortage-Factsheet.pdf>
- Crawford, R., Barbé, T., & Troyan, P. (2023). A national qualitative study of work-life balance in prelicensure nursing faculty. *Nursing Education Perspectives*, 44(1), 30–35.
<https://doi.org/10.1097/01.NEP.0000000000001046>
- Glasgow, R. E., Harden, S. M., Gaglio, B., Rabin, B., Smith, M. L., Porter, G. C., Ory, M. G., & Estabrooks, P. A. (2019). RE-AIM planning and evaluation framework: Adapting to new science and practice with a 20-year review. *Frontiers in Public Health*, 7, 64.
<https://doi.org/10.3389/fpubh.2019.00064>
- Institute for Healthcare Improvement. (n.d.). Improvement Area: Triple Aim and population health. <https://www.ihl.org/improvement-areas/improvement-area-triple-aim-and-population-health>
- Office of Disease Prevention and Health Promotion. (n.d.). Workforce: Healthy People 2030. U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.
<https://health.gov/healthypeople/objectives-and-data/browse-objectives/workforce>
- Watson, M. F. (2023). The relationship between psychological distress of nursing faculty with burnout. *SAGE Open Nursing*, 9, <https://doi.org/10.1177/23779608231181203>