

MUCH TO ACCOMPLISH



Patricia Kunz Howard, PhD, RN, CEN, CPEN,
TCRN, NE-BC, FAEN, FAAN

A new year, a new ENA logo, a new national office. The beginning of many “firsts.” There is much to accomplish for our patients, families and each other. Emergency nurses are no strangers to competing priorities in their practice environments. Translating this to our personal lives can be challenging. How do emergency nurses find the time for personal downtime, personal development, or professional involvement? Often we put ourselves last on the to-do list. The time has come to change our thinking in order to be at our best. Practicing positive intent in each interaction will transform how we perceive ourselves and those around us.

Our “best” is the result of taking time to focus on our own positive intent. Simply wanting to get some exercise, obtain an advanced degree, or be involved in a professional organization does not generate results. We, individually, create intentional outcomes in our personal and professional lives. Using positive intent to make desired changes begins with you. It is our personal and professional obligation to start with what we need to be our best to meet the needs of others. Use of positive intent will make our experiences in all situations less challenging.

Our work environment is often chaotic and can be unsafe due to workplace violence. This violence does not always come from patients or families but rather our own

words to each other. Each of us has to be accountable for our actions and words. Emergency nurses are often very direct in their conversations; after all, no one wants us to hem and haw about a patient in cardiac arrest. This directness can at times be a disservice for our overall communication patterns. Patients, families, and our colleagues often interpret our statements or comments very literally. Facilitating trust and positivity will help diminish distrust and negative experiences. We have an obligation to be part of the solution, not the problem. Emergency nurses are empowered to act in the best interest of patients and each other. Incivility in the workplace can be eradicated by employing positive intent and trust. Healthy work environments create a welcoming environment for novice emergency nurses, promote retention of experienced nurses, and foster resilience.¹ Emergency nurses exhibit great compassion to their patients; we should show that same compassion to ourselves. Positive intent changes how we see our world. Oh the places we will go when we hold each other to a standard of positive intent at all times.

Setting a positive tone for our work environments creates an atmosphere of excitement. Working together, we achieve more and attract others interested in influencing the profession of emergency nursing. Each of us should belong to our professional organization; we are more powerful and can have more influence for our profession when we use positive intent together. The time is now to grow our professional organization. Together we make the difference to so many. If every emergency nurse were a member of the Emergency Nurses Association, imagine the impact of positive intent.

REFERENCE

1. Morton PG. Creating and sustaining healthy work environments. *J Prof Nurs.* 2015;31(3):165-167.

Patricia Kunz Howard is President of the Emergency Nurses Association.

For correspondence, write: Patricia Kunz Howard, PhD, RN, CEN, CPEN, TCRN, NE-BC, FAEN, FAAN Enterprise Director, Emergency Services, University of Kentucky, Healthcare A 00.401, 1000 South Limestone Street, Lexington, KY 40536; E-mail: pkhoward@uky.edu.

J Emerg Nurs 2019;45:1.
0099-1767

Copyright © 2018 Emergency Nurses Association. Published by Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved.

<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jen.2018.11.013>