Joy and Chaos
Understanding the Lived Experience of Pediatric Nurses during COVID-19

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BACKGROUND
Rationale
• Few studies have examined pediatric nurse experiences and responses to this pandemic
Purpose
• Document an in-depth meaning of experiences within the context
• Give pediatric nurses a collective voice to express their perceptions, identify issues important to nurses, and inform future disaster responses

METHODS
Longitudinal social science case study design
• Two Semi-Structured Interviews – Spaced one-month apart (Oct. 2020-Mar. 2021)
• Organizational Correspondence – Nursing practice (Mar. 2020-Mar. 2021)
• Local and National Events (Jan. 2020-Mar. 2021)
• State COVID Rates (Mar. 2020-Mar. 2021)
• Forms of Creative Expression (Collected and discussed at participants’ 2nd interview)

DEMOGRAPHICS

| Job Titles                          | Clinical Nurses: 19 (63.3%)
|                                   | Nurse Leaders: 7 (23.3%)
|                                   | Non-Direct Patient Care Nurses: 4 (13.3%)

| Gender Identity                    |
|                                   | Female: 29 (96.7%)
|                                   | Male: 1 (3.3%)

| Age (yrs)                          |
|                                   | Min: 22, Max: 60
|                                   | M = 38.47, SD = 12.38

| Nursing Experience (yrs)           |
|                                   | Min: 1, Max: 35
|                                   | M = 14.18, SD = 11.65

| Highest Nursing Degree             |
|                                   | BSN: 22 (73.3%)
|                                   | MSN: 8 (26.7%)

The complexity of the pandemic created discourse with respect to nursing core values and reshaped the identity of the nurse. However, through these hardships nurses engaged in creative use of self to provide patient care, reengaged with the identity of the professional nurse, and demonstrated ownership of professional nursing practice.

RESULTS
- The Ontology Of Nursing
- COVID Response Created Barriers to Nursing Practice
- Nursing Practice Environment Operations
- See My Humanity

Creative Use of Self
PPE Created Physical & Emotional Barriers
Organizational Communication & Support in a Complex Work Environment
The Pandemic as a Catalyst to Professional Reflection

Advocacy
Changed Work Functions that Unintentionally Assaulted Nursing Core Values
Future Disaster Management Recommendations
Nurses Beyond Their Workplace – The Individual Experience

Professional Commitment, Obligation, & Compassion
The Politization of the Virus and Division Within the Sociopolitical Environment
The Individual Experience
Narrative & Art as a Modality for Reflection & Healing

Professional Crisis
The Individual Experience
Nursing Roles in the Pandemic
Unintended Consequences of Long-Term Emergency Responses

DISCUSSIONS
- Emergency responses constrained nursing workflow, furthering the operational demands on nurses and hindering the ability to provide high standards of care. This resulted in a perceived violation of values and moral injury.
- Creative use of self demonstrated nurses’ commitment, agility, and strength as a profession. Nurses exhibited creative solutions and brought elements of humanity to their care.
- Nurses with a voice in practice felt that their work aligned with a sense of purpose and their identity as a nurse, contributing to their sense of value.
- Pediatric nurses factor in patients’ developmental stages in understanding PPE, visitation policies, play time in light of social distancing, and meeting medical and psychosocial needs of the child and caregiver, often in complex family dynamics.
- Long-term emergency response created a new work environment norm of instability associated with work-life imbalance, exhaustion, information overload, and loss of nursing identity.
- Participants in this study noted a cathartic experience in professionally reflecting in a safe environment through narrative and art. The study created a platform for voice in practice and a means to advocate to inform future practice (nursing praxis).

CONCLUSIONS
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IMPLICATIONS
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DISCLOSURE
- This study was funded by an anonymous donor through Children’s Hospital Colorado Foundation. Disclaimer: Any social and/or political views expressed by any of its team members does not necessarily represent the viewpoint or opinion of the affiliated institutions.