Hope—We Are Seeing a Light at the End of the Tunnel

I am writing my second message as the president of the Emergency Nurses Association. At the time of my writing, we are at the close of 2020. A year that seemed like a lifetime—2020. A year that cast many shadows on our lives and left many of us with feelings of uncertainty and fear. Fortunately, we are experiencing some hope now that the first coronavirus disease vaccine has been administered to frontline health care workers around the world. At the time of your reading this message, I am hopeful that we are getting close to or actually vaccinating the general public. As nurses, we are instrumental in educating the public in the science and evidence of the vaccine. We have to step up and dispel rumors and misinformation. Nursing has been considered the most trusted profession for the last 19 years,1 and we need to use that trust to help get the public vaccinated and put an end to this pandemic for all of us.

This pandemic has taken a toll on all of us mentally and physically. We have to make sure we practice self-care and look out for each other. Only our fellow colleagues truly know what we have gone through… the only people that really get us is us. We face burnout and moral injury. Burnout is defined as a state of emotional, mental, and often physical exhaustion brought on by prolonged or repeated stress.2

Moral injury is defined as “…the challenge of simultaneously knowing what care patients need but being unable to provide it due to constraints that are beyond our control.”3 Both of these need our attention to help ourselves heal from the toll of the pandemic. We shall not subscribe to the negative stigma around mental health and the belief of some that those who reach out for help are weak. On the contrary, I believe those who seek out help and assistance in a time of need are the strongest.

In my message in the January issue of Journal of Emergency Nursing, I introduced the theme Elevate for 2021. Elevate yourself, your colleagues, our specialty of emergency nursing, our profession, and our communities around us. I challenged each of us to do something to elevate ourselves and our profession. What was your accomplishment? For the next issue, what will you be able to report back to yourself and others around you? Keep in mind the question: “What will I elevate and who will I elevate?”

As we are wrapping up the first quarter of 2021, we are certainly not done with the pandemic, but we are getting closer. We will still continue this fight. We are tired, but we will not give up. Remember the quote from Winston Churchill, “Never give in. Never give in. Never, never, never—in nothing, great or small, large or petty—never give in....”

Stay positive, stay focused, and be the good! ELEVATE

REFERENCES

