

Everyday Battle Between One's Health and One's Passion For its Profession

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Background about the organization:

ABC hospital is a hospital network in GTA. It has more than two branches operating in different parts of GTA. They provide care services for every age group such as elderly, young adults and pediatrics. They have multiple units to provide different level of care for patients: Pediatric, Intensive care unit, Critical care, Emergency, Diagnostic imaging systems, Medicine unit etc.. There are hundreds of employees which includes, healthcare workers, administrative, and logistics/finance.

Every unit has different cycle of work shifts depending on their roles and positions. Nurses have 12 hours of straight shifts for four days/nights and then 5 days off, but it is not the same for other departments. Each nurse is supposed to have 4-5 patients in general and might vary for different units. Each department has their own manager that they report to. Along with dealing with patients regularly, their logistics/finance and administrative side are also vast and perform different main tasks.

Description of the incident:

Falasha is one of the nurses working at ABC hospital for several years now. She has worked in some other hospitals before, but here she worked the longest so far. She is in her mid 30s, smart and passionate about her profession. As a health care worker, she works hard, and has been diagnosed with arthritis recently. Most of her job is all about lifting patients, pushing, and pulling, mobilizing them, standing all day/night long for twelve hours. After working for some years, she gradually started having back and joints pain until Covid-19 hit.

Falasha's pain and arthritis got worse during the pandemic. We are all aware of the challenges of Covid-19, and that front line workers were the ones that suffered a lot. Shortage of staff would make nurses jobs harder as they had to handle more patients than they should. Last year she had to undergo a surgery for torn meniscus in one of her knees. For that reason, she had to take leave for few months. Shortage of nurses have affected her unit manager and colleagues as well.

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When she joined back, she was suggested by her doctor to work only for few hours a day and no heavy job. She was not able to perform major nursing jobs, so one more nurse was assigned with her to perform the heavy tasks. However, they accommodate her only for few weeks. After few weeks, she started working for 12 hours shift, and would call-in sick the next day most of the times as long day standing and heavy job would trigger her knee pain. She recalls the time when she would even not go to bathroom to save her time for patients as her performance got so slow after the surgery.

The management team appreciates her hard work, and honesty towards her job duties, but her frequent sick-calls and low speed work concerns them as well. They are wondering how to ask and accommodate Falasha which would be appropriate for her and for the organization. There are some questions that they want to ask, and they are follows:

Discussion Questions:

1. What could be done to let this not happen with any other employee? Healthcare workers in this case?
2. What extent of accommodating employees are enough accommodation to be fair.
3. How to approach Falasha about her disability without hurting her emotions, but keep her motivated.
4. Would extra accommodation make her feel lesser than the others?
5. Is Falasha harming herself even more by going beyond her capacity?