

# Ever find yourself saying, “No one gets it?”

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Taking care of others is what likely drew you to the nursing profession. But sometimes, even nurses are in need of a little care – a compassionate listener who understands the work, life and family challenges you face – and has walked in your shoes.

## **Your nurse peer coach can be a confidential and knowledgeable sounding board for discussing concerns, such as:**

- Compassion fatigue and increased mental burden
- Decreased resilience
- Heightened workload-related stress and burnout
- Balancing the demands of family and work responsibilities

Call **800.383.1908** to access your confidential resources today.

- **Press 1** for in-the-moment counseling support, available 24/7
- **Press 3** to access your one-on-one telephonic Nurse Peer Coaching resource

For more information about other resources from your VITAL WorkLife EAP, call **800.383.1908** or visit **VITALWorkLife.com**





### Nurse Peer Coach Biographies

#### **Julie Boertje, RN, MS, LMFT, QMRP**

Julie Boertje is Licensed Marriage and Family Therapist, a Registered Nurse and has certification in childbirth education and parish nursing. She has over 25 years experience in nursing both bedside and leadership.

Julie is most passionate about building teams, finding collaborative solutions and inspiring people to do and be their best both professionally and personally. Nursing is a complex profession with many facets where resolving competing priorities can be overwhelming. Her role as a nurse peer coach is to provide a safe reflective environment to explore and remove obstacles to find clarity to generate viable options for action.

#### **Pam Bowers, RN**

Pam Bowers has over 30 years nursing experience, having received her LPN in 1975 and then her RN degree in 1991. Working as an LPN and RN, Pam has had many experiences with conflict resolution, surrounding issues of different levels of education and roles.

Nursing, in many aspects of caring for people, as well as assistant manager of a dialysis unit has offered opportunities to use skills for mentoring, such as: teaching, collaborating with co-workers, patients, families, ancillary staff and communication. Most recently, she is has been providing bedside nursing at a local Children's Hospital.

#### **Susan Nelson, RN, MSW, LICSW**

Susan Nelson is a Licensed Independent Clinical Social Worker, and a Registered Nurse. She also holds a teaching license and is a member of the National Association of Social Workers. She has over 20 years of experience in counseling and 10+ years in nursing.

Susan's Registered Nurse experience include the following, 13 years community health nursing, 8 years of psychiatric nursing, work with corrections, substance abuse and detox nursing, medical/surgical nursing, rehabilitation, labor and delivery, and health clinic nursing.

*Nurse Peer Coaches are consultants of VITAL WorkLife, a national behavioral consulting practice with consultants in every major city and a wide-ranging expertise in every aspect of behavioral health. For over 30 years, we have offered industry leading Employee Assistance Programs, specialized support, training and consulting for a wide variety of industries. We also have deep experience in healthcare, assisting physicians and providers in dealing with the challenges facing their profession. This approach of helping employees and their families, while also guiding teams, builds healthy sustainable behaviors and productive organizations.*



## How Peer Coaching Can Transform Your Career – and Your Outlook!

Nurse Peer Coaching is free to you as part of your Employee Assistance Program (EAP) benefit. It allows you to talk about any issue you might want to explore – with a peer who has *walked in your shoes* and who understands the work and personal issues nurse's experience.

"We have nurse peer coaches who are experienced in practicing in clinic and hospital settings," says Liz Ferron, MSW, LICSW, Senior Consultant for VITAL WorkLife. "Our goal is to connect you with someone who knows the challenges you face on a day-to-day basis," continues Ferron. "Our hope is once you've engaged with a peer coach; you'll continue to draw on this resource whenever you have a question or concern."



### 15 Questions

Here are 15 questions related to work or work/life balance, nurses have called to discuss with one of our peer coaches:

1. I want to take on a more active role in leadership. How do I signal my desire? What skills do I need to develop?
2. I'm not handling challenges at work as well as I used to. Why is work such a struggle?
3. I can't seem to get everything done. Is there something wrong with the way I manage my time?
4. By the time I get through with work and my family's to-do list, I don't have time for myself. How can I achieve a reasonable balance?
5. I'm feeling incredibly burned out. What are my options?
6. How am I supposed to manage more work with fewer resources?
7. I've tried a lot of different stress relief methods with little success. Is there a better way to build my resiliency?
8. How do I deal with a difficult coworker?
9. What skills do I need to be a good mentor to younger nurses?
10. When it comes to self-care, what's the single most important thing I should be doing?
11. I think I need to have a difficult conversation with my supervisor.. How do I know if I *should* and how can I do it without negatively impacting my career or creating unnecessary tension?
12. I'm something of workaholic myself, so how do I help my staff find balance?
13. Why do I have so much trouble asking for help?
14. I don't enjoy going to work anymore, what can I do to rebuild my passion?
15. Is it time for me to retire?

## Nurse Peer Coaching in Practice

The following real-world examples demonstrate how one-on-one peer coaching and mentoring has helped other nurses better manage the stress of work and home.

### Case Study 1: Nurse frustrated with coworkers

A nurse from a large healthcare organization was experiencing stress and frustration with team members that didn't seem to be as dedicated or hard working as she.

She called VITAL WorkLife and was referred to a peer coach who provided empathetic listening. The coach also provided a different perspective by addressing work style as well as generation differences that may have been impacting the situation. She also engaged in role playing with the nurse to bring her concerns to coworkers in a non judgmental fashion. The nurse reported feeling more optimistic and less angry after the call.

### Case Study 2: Work and life balance

A nurse raised to always put others needs before his own called to say that he was beginning to feel as though he had nothing left. He said he had become irritable at work and home and simply wasn't happy anymore.

He wanted to learn how to manage his stress and become more resilient. A peer coach worked with him to consider where he could be setting more boundaries with his time and energy, how he could get more help at work and home, and by assisting him in developing a self care plan. The coach helped him stay accountable to his plan by talking with him regularly.

## How Might Nurse Peer Coaching Work For You?

Nurse peer coaching is frequently done over the phone to allow nurses to work with coaches in geographies distant enough where they're not likely to encounter each other on a regular basis. On your first call, you'll speak to a VITAL WorkLife senior consultant who can answer questions and assist in facilitating your first coaching session. Your peer coach can serve in many roles:

- a sympathetic listener
- a sounding board for ideas
- a coach for difficult conversations
- a referral source for additional services
- a mentor who can help you brainstorm possible solutions and hold you accountable

We take confidentiality very seriously. It's up to you whether to follow through on any suggestions your coach might make – this is a resource to enhance your life and practice, not add another level of stress.

## Your EAP Benefit

Your EAP benefit, offered to you by your employer through VITAL WorkLife, includes **unlimited** telephone consultation. Your benefit also includes free, face-to-face counseling with master's and doctorate level professionals, for you and your family members. Peer coaching is available to the nurse covered by the benefit.

Call VITAL WorkLife at 877.731.3949, anytime – day or night, for the support you and your family need.