



**NCSBN**  
Leading Regulatory Excellence





## CASE STUDY:

*Karen is a killed emergency department (ED) nurse in a hospital who read a large number of traumatic incidents. In her personal life, she is struggling with issues of grief and loneliness and feels like she is herap because I can't forge for a while. One day she accidentally goes home with a diagnosed opiate. She is an experienced administrator of pain medication for her and has needed relief in her patient's management after she administered the drug. That night she is tired and overloaded, so she thinks there should be no harm in self-administering the morphine just this once to provide relief and someone who needed sleep. She tells herself she will not do it again....*







**Behavioral changes can be physical, including:**

- Subtle changes in appearance that may escalate over time;
- Increasing isolation from colleagues;
- Inappropriate verbal or emotional responses; and
- Diminished alertness, confusion or memory lapses.

When nurses are using drugs and unable to obtain them from a treating health care provider, they may turn to the workplace for access or diversion, often causing narcotic discrepancies, such as:

- Incorrect narcotic counts;
- Large amounts of narcotic wastage;
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*A week later, Karen again finds herself with a narcotic in her possession, and she purposely takes it home to self-inject. Within a short period of time, she is diverting on a regular basis and realizes she will experience with-*

has been treated for an SUD eventually returns to work, it is important that you help to create a supportive environment that encourages continued recovery.

Nurses that educate themselves about the behavior changes, physical signs and signals of drug diversion will help not only their colleagues with SUD, but also protect patients.

## **NC BN D RE O RCE**

Resources available free of charge at [ncsbn.org/sud-nursing](https://ncsbn.org/sud-nursing).

**NCSBN's SUD toolkit** (which includes brochures, posters, a book and two continuing education [CE] courses), was developed to ensure that nurses are armed with knowledge to help identify the warning signs of SUD in patients, nurses and the general public as well as provide guidelines for prevention, education and intervention.

The following online courses are offered **free of charge** at [learningext.com](https://learningext.com):

**“Understanding Substance Use Disorder in Nursing”**



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