

## Abstract #92723

Leadership Connection 2018 (15-18 September)

### Concerted Management Support in New Graduate RNs: What's It All About?

**Megan E. Duffy, MSN, RN-BC, CPN**

*Specialty Resource Unit, Cincinnati Children's Hospital Medical Center, Cincinnati, OH, USA*

One of the main reasons for the nursing shortage today is due to the inability of hospitals to retain new nurses. Challenges for new graduates when they enter the work force are many, and can include an intense work environment, difficulty transitioning from the school to the clinical environment, increased patient acuity, and unfamiliar medical technology. Additionally, new nurses often state they feel unprepared, unwelcomed, and unsupported when they enter the nursing profession. It is key in retaining these new graduate nurses to have a work environment that successfully supports their transition, promotes job satisfaction, and increases their workplace commitment. Their transition, which is already stressful, can be even more overwhelming with an unsupportive workplace. One way to overcome this problem, promote job satisfaction, and retain newly graduated nurses is via a concerted support effort from the nursing management team.

This Doctor of Nursing (DNP) practice project is being conducted at a 629-bed pediatric medical center located in an urban area of the midwestern United States in the float pool unit. The intervention in this project is the use of a concerted management support toolkit over a six-month period by members of the nursing management team with 17 new graduate nurses hired into the float pool between June and August of 2017. The purpose of the toolkit is to provide members of the nursing management team with interventions they can use to support new graduate nurses. Before implementation of the project in early September 2017, a training session around the concerted management support toolkit for the six members of the management team in the float pool occurred. Tools were distributed to the members of the management team for them to use during their individual meetings with each of the new graduate RNs hired between June and August of 2017. These tools included a guide to debriefing/reflecting with the new graduates, a reminder around what is important to ensure a professional practice environment for new graduate nurses, and suggestions of ways to provide for professional development. Additionally, a tool highlighting the important leadership behaviors to support new graduate nurses, including authentic leadership, emotional intelligence, structural empowerment, and transformational leadership was discussed.

The debriefing/reflecting piece of the concerted management support toolkit includes information around the debriefing and reflecting processing. Debriefing occurs during confidential meetings where new graduate nurses reflect on their clinical experiences while sharing their thoughts, and can provide the new graduate with stress management and coping skills, as well as for an emotional outlet. Questions that can be used for debriefing/reflecting around a specific clinical experience can include: were you satisfied with your ability to work through the clinical situation; how could you have handled the situation differently; and how did this experience make you feel? If there is not a specific clinical experience to discuss, potential topics may include self-care, reality shock, effective communication, transitioning to night shift, grief management, and disruptive behaviors in the workplace.

The supportive professional practice environment piece of the concerted management support toolkit involves information around providing for a professional practice environment for new graduate nurses. This includes ensuring that the concept of structural empowerment, which is the degree of access to workplace conditions that provide information, support, resources, and opportunities to learn and grow, exists in the workplace. Employees who have access to these empowerment structures are more likely to be motivated and more committed to and engaged with the organization, are more effective on the job, and are able to accomplish their work in meaningful ways. Also important to providing for a professional

practice environment for new graduate nurses includes staffing and resource adequacy, nursing participation for organizational and unit-based affairs, nurse-physician collaboration, and nurse manager ability, leadership, and support of nurses.

The professional development piece of the toolkit includes information around the use of a personal professional development plan that allows each new graduate RN to set professional developmental goals. Use of the personal professional development plan is driven by the new graduate RN, and is very broad, beyond the care each new graduate provides at the bedside. It focuses on not only development goals for the year, but also long-term goals that they would like to work on. Activities to meet the goals, both short and long-term, are identified, and timelines decided upon. Time is also spent determining how the member of the management team can help with setting up a plan to meet the goals.

The piece of the toolkit around important leadership behaviors of the management team involves ideas focusing on how important it is for leaders to create work environments that promote the retention of new graduate nurses. Specific behaviors leaders should demonstrate include authentic leadership which focuses on relationships, self-awareness, honesty, optimism, transparency, trust, and consistency. Authentic leaders encourage employees to accomplish their work goals, and they demonstrate a sense of genuine caring for employees. Also important is emotional intelligence, which includes self-awareness, the ability to manage relationships, self-management, and social awareness, as well as the ability to motivate, manage conflict, and communicate. Finally, transformational leadership should be present, and includes intellectual stimulation, charisma, inspirational motivation, confidence, optimism, resilience, and having a strong emotional connection. Transformational leadership motivates new graduates by appealing to their higher ideals and moral values, and gives meaning to jobs by energizing them about the importance of their work.

Formal evaluation of the project will take place six months after implementation of the concerted management support toolkit, in March of 2018. Retention rates will be measured at that point to determine how many of the new graduate nurses who started between June and August of 2017 and were recipients of the concerted management support toolkit, remain in the department. In order to evaluate the effect of the concerted management support toolkit, retention rates of new graduate nurses hired into the float pool between June and August of 2016 (who did not receive the concerted management support intervention) will be gathered and compared against the retention rates of the new graduates in the float pool hired between June and August of 2017 who had the concerted management support intervention.

One of the three strongest predictors of job satisfaction in newly graduated nurses is support from their supervisor. Support in general, and especially from the management team, positively impacts the confidence and competence, as well as the professional development of new graduate nurses. One way to retain new graduate nurses is via a concerted support effort from the nursing management team. As the literature and this DNP project has demonstrated thus far, the use of concerted management support strategies increase retention and commitment to stay, as well as decrease turnover in new graduate nurses. Overall, having nursing management that provides support is a valuable retention strategy. Supportive nursing managers and educators are key, as well as the crucial piece, in the transition, acclimation, and retention of newly graduated nurses.

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**Title:**

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**Keywords:**

Management support, New graduate nurse and Retention

**References:**

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**Abstract Summary:**

One of the main reasons for the nursing shortage today is due to the inability of hospitals to retain new nurses. By attending this session, participants can expect to learn about one method to improve new graduate nurse retention rates, via a concerted support effort from the nursing management team.

**Content Outline:**

I. Introduction/Background

A. Current state of the nursing shortage in the United States

B. Reasons for the nursing shortage in the United States

1. Inability of hospitals to retain new nurses

2. Challenges for new graduate nurses

C. One way to support new graduate transition into practice is via a concerted support effort from the nursing management team

## II. New graduate RN support as a retention strategy

A. Management and peer support has a significant and positive effect on job satisfaction

B. Support is the key and the most significant aspect in the transition of new graduates

C. Discussion of specific concerted management support strategies

1. Concerted management support strategy: Supportive practice environment

a) Supportive practice environments can help new graduates to feel as though they belong and protect them from negative work place factors such as burnout, stress, and anxiety

2. Concerted management support strategy: Leadership behaviors of managers

a) Authentic leadership, emotional intelligence, and transformational leadership can all guide and help to determine the support new graduates need

3. Concerted management support strategy: Professional development for new graduates

a) Enhancement of professional goals can increase the desire for new graduate nurses to stay in the profession

4. Concerted management support strategy: Debriefing/reflection with new graduates

a) Time for reflecting and debriefing can assist in transition to a new graduate's role

5. Concerted management support strategy: Scheduled meetings with the nursing management team

a) Provide for an environment for new graduates to discuss their progress

## III. Discussion of DNP quality improvement project

A. Currently being conducted at a 629-bed pediatric medical center in an urban area of the midwestern United States in the float pool

B. Intervention includes the use of a concerted management support toolkit with 17 new graduate nurses hired into the float pool between June and August of 2017

1. Toolkit includes guides/tools to:

a) Enhance the professional practice environment for new graduate nurses

b) Highlight important leadership behaviors to support new graduate nurses

- c) Provide for professional development for new graduate nurses
- d) Debrief/reflect with new graduate nurses
- e) Provide for an environment for new graduate nurses to discuss their progress

C. Retention rates were measured prior to implementation in September, 2017 and will be measured at the conclusion of the project in March, 2018

D. Retention rates of new graduates hired between June and August of 2017 will be compared against retention rates of new graduates hired between June and August of 2016 to determine if the toolkit was effective

#### IV. Conclusion

A. One of the strongest predictors of job satisfaction in newly graduated nurses is support from their supervisor

B. This presentation will examine the results of a DNP quality improvement project focusing on the use of a concerted management support toolkit and its effect on new graduate nurse retention rates

First Primary Presenting Author

#### ***Primary Presenting Author***

Megan E. Duffy, MSN, RN-BC, CPN  
Cincinnati Children's Hospital Medical Center  
Specialty Resource Unit  
Education Specialist II  
Cincinnati OH  
USA

**Professional Experience:** 2011-current--Education Specialist for the float pool at Cincinnati Children's Hospital Medical Center 2003-2011--Float pool nurse at Cincinnati Children's Hospital Medical Center Numerous presentations at conferences involving pediatrics, staff development, and nursing leadership Certified in pediatric nursing (CPN), as well as Staff Development (RN-BC) Currently enrolled in a DNP program at Mount St. Joseph University, graduating in May of 2018

**Author Summary:** Megan Duffy brings 15 years of experience working in pediatrics at Cincinnati Children's Medical Center, and seven years as an educator for the nurses in the float pool. She is certified in pediatric nursing as well as staff development. She recently obtained her Doctor of Nursing Practice from Mount St. Joseph University in May of 2018.