Achieving Work-Life Balance in an Ambulatory Surgery Center

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Background

- Considerable research has shown that an adequate work-life balance is necessary for job satisfaction and retention.
- Paid Time Off (PTO) is part of work-life balance.
- The process of requesting PTO can be cumbersome and unreliable, resulting in frustration of nursing staff.
- The purpose of the study was to identify modifiable factors that influence what was important to the staff regarding the current method used to request PTO and identify specific frustrations.

Methodology

Study Approval:
- University of Mount Olive Institutional Review Board
- Duke University Health System Institutional Review Board

Study Design:
- Structured around the Revised Nursing Work Life Model (Manojlovich & Laschinger, 2007).
- Non Experimental, mixed methods.
- Qualitative approach, using ethnographic focus groups.
- 18-item survey developed from themes in focus groups.

Setting:
- Ambulatory Surgical Center located in central North Carolina.
- The surgery center is open Monday – Friday from 6:00 am to 5:00 pm.
- Staff are assigned to work in the OR, Pre-op Unit, or Post-Op Unit.
- There is one nurse manager for the facility.

Sample:
- Registered Nurses, Three Focus Groups consisting of 15 RNS, purposive sampling based on work area and role within the facility.
- Nursing Assistants, Scrub Technicians, and Sterile Processors.
- 18-item survey developed from focus group results; distributed to 42 staff members with a response rate of 92%.

Data Collection

- Analysis and coding of Focus Group Transcripts
- Common themes were used to develop survey.
- Survey was distributed to 42 staff members.

Data Analysis

Four Major Themes developed from Focus Groups:

- Stressfulness of PTO process
- Job Empowerment
- Staffing
- Leadership

Key Findings

- Staff dissatisfied with PTO process.
- Stress that staff is subjected to using the PTO request process.

Staff Preferences:
- Change PTO request process.
- Increased autonomy in scheduling decisions.
- Increased job satisfaction.

Implications for Today’s Nursing Practice

Increased communication between management and staff can foster:
- Improved work life balance.
- Increased job satisfaction work life balance.
- Healthy work environment.
- Increased recruitment and retention of nurses.