

Improving Healthy Work Environments through Specialty Nursing Professional Development

Jennifer Manning, DNS, ACNS-BC, CNE

Associate Dean of Undergraduate Programs, LSUHSC School of Nursing

Nicole Jones, MN, RN-BC, APRN, ACNS-BC, CCNS, CHFN

Supervisor of Designated Programs, EJGH



Problem/Background

- Favorable staff nurse work environments are associated with lower burnout, job dissatisfaction, and intent to leave (McHugh & Chenjuan, 2014)
- Healthy Work Environments enable nurses to engage in work processes and relationships identified by Magnet hospital clinical nurses as standards of quality care to patients (AACN, 2018)



Six standards of a healthy work environment

Skilled
communication

True
collaboration

Effective
decision making

Appropriate
staffing

Meaningful
recognition

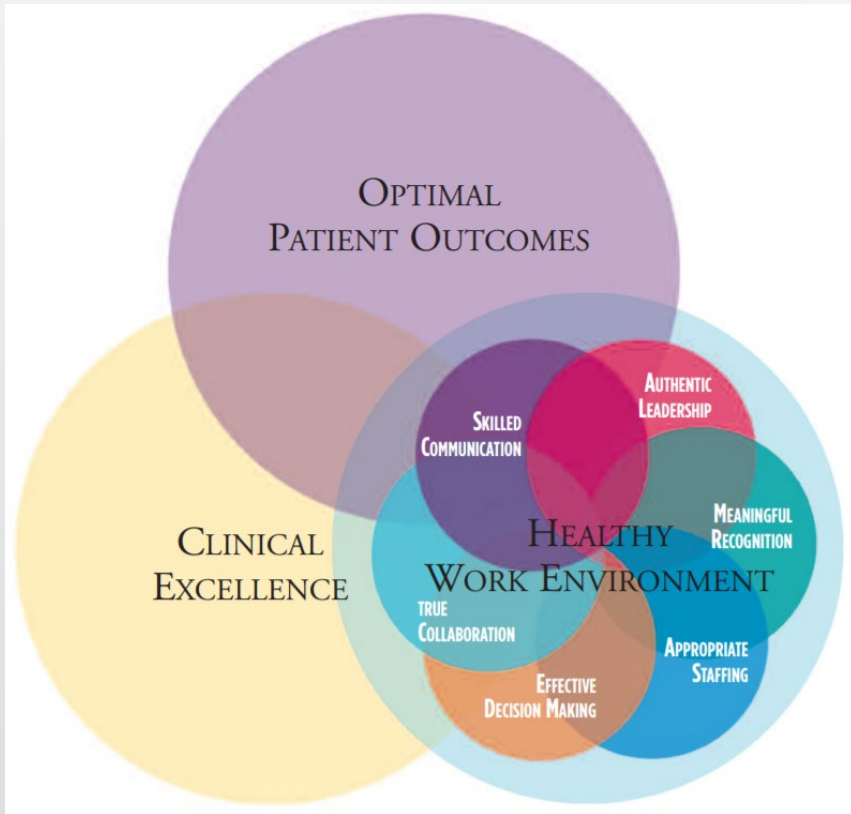
Authentic
leadership



Review of the Literature

- Literature: Institute of Medicine report, American Association of Critical Care Nurses Healthy Work Environment (HWE) Standards, HWE Assessment Tool, Magnet Recognition Program....
- Despite the abundance of evidence confirming a link between healthcare work environments and organizational outcomes, unhealthy work environments remain...

Improving Healthy Work Environments through Specialty Nursing Professional Development



- Nursing study conducted in acute care hospital during 2018
- Previous assessment conducted in 2016
 - Largest opportunity was Appropriate Staffing standard
 - Discussion about Healthy Work Environment in Evidence-Based Practice and Research committee led to further discussion about Healthy Work Environment study collaboration between Southeastern Louisiana School of Nursing and Magnet hospital

Appropriate Staffing

- Staffing must ensure the effective match between patient needs and nurse competencies

| | | Evening | | Night | | Day | |
|--------|-----|---------|-------|-------|-------|-----|-------|
| Census | | RNs | Techs | RNs | Techs | RNs | Techs |
| 1 | ... | 1 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 0 |
| 2 | ... | 1 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 0 |
| 3 | ... | 1 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 0 |
| 4 | ... | 1 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 0 |
| 5 | ... | 1 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 1 |
| 6 | ... | 1 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 1 |
| 7 | ... | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| 8 | ... | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| 9 | ... | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| 10 | ... | 2 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 2 | 1 |



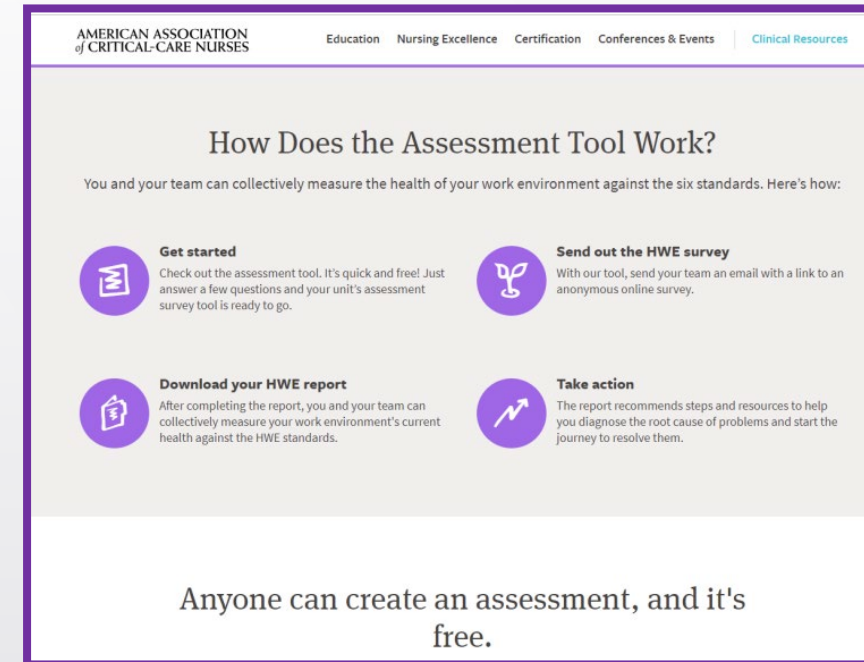
Purpose

- Investigate the impact of an acute care ***specialty professional development*** intervention in three nursing units on staff nurse perception of healthy work environment



Methods

- Pre-post study design, single group
- 3 nursing acute care specialty units
- Institutional Review Board approved, anonymous survey
- Informed consent
- Demographic questions
- AACN Health Work Environment Assessment Survey:
 - 18 questions
 - 3 questions for each standard
 - Valid and Reliable with Cronbach's Alpha 0.80 or better (Connor et al, 2018)



Study Procedures

Pre-test (voluntary, sent via email to staff nurses)

- Demographic questions
- AACN healthy work environment survey

0 – 2
weeks

Intervention: Specialty Nursing Professional Development Intervention (mandatory)

- 4 to 8 hours
- Specialty topic tailored on patient population served on each unit (ex. Cardiac, pulmonary/sepsis, stroke)

2-6
weeks

Post test (voluntary, sent via email)

- Demographic questions
- AACN healthy work environment survey

Specialty Professional Development

- Specific to each unit's patient population(s)
- Focused on advanced specialty knowledge
- Opportunities identified through:
 - Quality metrics, concurrent review, Performance Improvement team projects
 - Educational needs identified by nurses on unit shared governance councils and vetted by supervisors
 - Clinical Nurse Specialist and Educator input



Demographics

| Characteristic | | Pre-Test - % (n =53) | Post-Test - % (n=47) |
|--------------------------------|-----------|----------------------|----------------------|
| Age | 20-29 | 30 | 27 |
| | 30-39 | 15 | 11 |
| | 40-49 | 2 | 2 |
| | >50 | 6 | 7 |
| Gender | Male | 3 | 4 |
| | Female | 50 | 43 |
| Degree | ASN | 12 | 12 |
| | BSN | 41 | 35 |
| Hours Worked Per Week | PT (<24) | 3 | 5 |
| | FT (>24) | 50 | 42 |
| How long on hospital unit | <1 years | 13 | 14 |
| | 1-5 years | 27 | 24 |
| | >5 years | 13 | 9 |
| How long in nursing profession | <1 years | 12 | 12 |
| | 1-5 years | 23 | 19 |
| | >5 years | 18 | 16 |



Results

- Independent t test performed
- All mean scores increased from group 1 (pre) to group 2 (post)!
- 9 of the 18 items were a statistically significant increase ($p < 0.05$)
- Each Healthy Work Environment standard had at least 1 item with a significant increase

Limitations:

- Design : Could not match pre and post
- Intervention: Recruitment, Potential bias of those who volunteered to complete the survey

| Healthy Work Environment Standards | Question | t | df | p |
|------------------------------------|--------------|--------|---------|---------|
| Skilled Communication | Question 1 | -2.701 | 94.521 | 0.011** |
| | Question 6 | -2.217 | 97.437 | 0.29 |
| | Questions 14 | -1.188 | 81.913 | 0.238 |
| True Collaboration | Question 2 | -1.221 | 103.830 | 0.225 |
| | Question 10 | -2.521 | 98.755 | 0.005** |
| | Questions 15 | -3.131 | 86.842 | 0.039** |
| Effective Decision Making | Question 7 | -3.836 | 69.444 | 0.02** |
| | Question 11 | -0.278 | 103.855 | 0.073 |
| | Question 16 | -3.024 | 88.915 | 0.078 |
| Appropriate Staffing | Question 3 | -4.099 | 75.445 | 0.00** |
| | Question 8 | -2.462 | 90.092 | 0.016** |
| | Question 12 | -1.950 | 96.306 | 0.054 |
| Meaningful Recognition | Question 4 | -2.982 | 96.842 | 0.004** |
| | Question 9 | -2.269 | 102.235 | 0.025** |
| | Question 17 | -1.814 | 97.893 | 0.073 |
| Authentic Leadership | Question 5 | -0.461 | 99.194 | 0.647 |
| | Question 13 | -1.959 | 80.266 | 0.045** |
| | Question 18 | -1.3 | 99.190 | 0.197 |



Skilled Communication

Administrators, nurse managers, physicians, nurses, and other staff maintain frequent communication to prevent each other from being caught off guard by decisions. ($p=0.011$)

True Collaboration

Nurses and other staff feel able to influence the policies, procedures, and bureaucracy around them. ($p=0.005$)

When administrators, nurse managers, and physicians speak with nurses and other staff, it's not one-way communication or order-giving. Instead, they seek input and use it to shape decisions. ($p=0.039$)



**Effective
Decision-
Making**

Administrators, nurse managers, physicians, nurses, and other staff are consistent in their use of data-driven, logical decision-making processes to make sure their decisions are the highest quality. ($p=0.02$)



**Appropriate
Staffing**

Administrators and nurse managers work with nurses and other staff to make sure there are enough staff to maintain patient safety. ($p=0.00$)

Administrators and nurse managers make sure there is the right mix of nurses and other staff to ensure optimal outcomes. ($p=0.016$)




Meaningful Recognition

3 Questions,
two significant

The formal reward and recognition systems work to make nurses and other staff feel valued.

Administrators, nurse managers, physicians, nurses, and other staff members speak up and let people know when they've done a good job.



Authentic Leadership

3 Questions,
one significant

Nurse leaders (managers, directors, APRNs) demonstrate an understanding of the requirements and dynamics at the point of care, and use this knowledge to work for a healthy work environment.



Conclusions

- This study demonstrated the benefit of a specialty-focused professional development staff nurse intervention in improving staff nurse perception of a Healthy Work Environment.
- Improving nurse work environment can lead to nurse empowerment, nurse satisfaction, and improved patient outcomes.
- This study could serve as a resource for units or hospitals aiming to improve nurse perception of a Healthy Work Environment.



References

- American Association of Critical Care Nurses (AACN). (2016). AACN Standards for Establishing and Sustaining Healthy Work Environments, 2nd Ed. Retrieved online from <https://www.aacn.org/~media/aacn-website/nursing-excellence/standards/hwestandards.pdf>
- AACN Healthy Work Environment Assessment Tool. (20109). Retrieved from: <https://www.aacn.org/nursing-excellence/healthy-work-environments/aacn-healthy-work-environment-assessment-tool>
- Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (AHRQ). (2019). TeamSTEPPS. Retrieved from: <https://www.ahrq.gov/teamstepps/index.html>
- Kutney-Lee, A., McHugh, M., Sloane, D., Cimiotti, J., Flynn, L., Neff, D. & Aiken, L. (2012). Nursing: A Key to Patient Satisfaction. Health Affairs. PMID 19525287.

Thank you to the rest of our Study Team

- Judy Scanlon, BSN, RN, NE-BC, Senior Director Acute Care
- Melissa Daigle, BSN, RN-BC, 2 East Supervisor
- Victoria Johnson, BSN, PCCN, 3 East Supervisor
- Callie Catalanotto, BSN, RN, 5 East Supervisor
- Christina Hoppe, BSN, RN-BC, Telemetry Quality Nurse
- Sydney Dupont, BSN, RN-BC, Telemetry Educator

