Chain of Command: Teaching the Next Generation How to Deal with Disruptive Behavior

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Background

- Low scores on Assessment Technologies Institute (ATI) Leadership exams particularly in the areas of teamwork and collaboration (specifically in conflict management).
- Low scores on clinical reason/critical thinking in nursing questions on ATI exams.
- Debriefing of students regarding exam question revealed 82% of the students chose either avoidance or “passing the buck” options when dealing with conflict, especially with providers.

Methods

The purpose of this pilot study was to equip last semester senior nursing students with strategies to address disruptive behavior, teach chain of command, and tackle negative emotions resulting from incivility. The one hour just-in-time educational intervention occurred in high-fidelity simulation. Nursing students are caring for unstable ICU patient who develops crushing chest pain with ST elevation in three leads. The cardiologist fails to respond appropriately to the nurse’s call. The sample population consisted of 70 senior nursing students in their last semester. The high-fidelity simulation occurred the week prior to the students entering their capstone clinical course. Data was collected using pre- and post-intervention surveys and via debriefing comments. A five point Likert scale was used that measured student confidence ranging from 1 – Strongly Disagree to 5 – Strongly Agree. 97.2% opted to complete the surveys.

Review of Literature

Incivility continues to plague healthcare and negatively influences interprofessional collaboration and patient outcomes globally (Terpanier, Fernet, & Boudrias, 2016). The impact of incivility on patient outcomes is alarming and still understudied (Laschinger, 2014; Samson-Moajes, 2017). However, research supports the fact that incivility tends to escalate when dealing with patients with high acuity (Oja, 2017). Incivility in the workplace causes nurse to question their career choice (Brewer, Kowper, Oberdad, & Budin, 2013) and often damages self-confidence especially when dealing with disruptive behaviors. Simulation can be used to address incivility (Clark, Atten, & Macy, 2013).

Theoretical Framework

Bandura’s self-efficacy learning theory was used as the conceptual framework.

Results

Confidence in Dealing with Conflict Management in Patient Care Area

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Confidence in Dealing with Conflict Management in Patient Care Area</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Confidence in my ability to communicate effectively</td>
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<tr>
<td>Confidence in my ability to communicate when it may not agree with my patient's needs or wishes</td>
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<tr>
<td>Confidence in my ability to resolve conflicts with nurses</td>
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<tr>
<td>Confidence in my ability to resolve conflicts with providers</td>
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<td>Confidence in my current understanding of how to follow chain of command in patient care area</td>
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Confidence scores improved from 69% to 97% via ATI assessment.

Conclusions

Students’ Pre-Brief Comments
- More than 45% of the students witnessed “bullying” among healthcare workers; 12.8% witnessed disruptive behavior between RN and provider.
- Students feared conflict in the workplace, especially with providers as verbalized by one subject “I’m terrified that this will be me someday soon.”
- None of the students could describe how to deal with a disruptive provider.
- 45.7% felt ill-prepared and were not aware of available resources.
- 75.7% lacked confidence to deal with disruptive behavior.
- Less than 1% of students knew hospital policy addressing chain of command.

Students’ Post-Brief Comments
- “Usually I avoid conflict but I see I need to resolve it for the patient’s sake.”
- “Role-modeling the right way was extremely helpful but I need more practice.”
- “This was so realistic and scary but I’ll be more prepared now.”
- “This helps me understand how to use my resources (policy & supervisors)”

DATA ANALYSIS
- 97.1% of the students found the educational intervention to be helpful.
- 68.6% reported increased confidence in dealing with disruptive providers.
- 57.1% reported increased knowledge of available resources to assist in conflict management.

Recommendations

- Replicate the study and incorporate multiple sites.
- Expand the study beyond accelerated 2nd degree nursing students.
- Seek evidence-based teaching strategies to facilitate conflict management among interprofessional healthcare providers.
- Develop interdisciplinary simulations dealing with conflict with other colleges within the university setting.
- Explore a relationship between low self-reflection and avoidance behaviors.

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References


