Using a Gemba Board as an Evidence-Based Strategy to Promote Leadership, Trust, Transparency, and Staff Engagement

Kaylan Branson, MSN, RN, CPN, CNL
Julie Van Orne, MSN, RN, CPN, CNL

Background

Gemba is Japanese for “workplace, the real place where work is done”

Gemba boards are a Lean strategy used to:
- Encourage frontline staff engagement and empower the voice of all team members
- Share clinical outcome data with frontline staff
- Facilitate practice change
- Create a culture of transparency

High performing healthcare institutions must consider the “Quadruple Aim” and work toward improving the work environment and the employees’ experience of providing care

In July 2018 a unit-based employee survey revealed that frontline staff desired to be more involved in decision making and were dissatisfied due to poor follow through on proposed process changes

Intervention

In August 2018, a Gemba board was implemented on an inpatient pediatric nursing unit to create transparency in processes and promote trust in leadership

One-half of the board is used to share clinical outcome data including:
- Hospital acquired infection rates
- Unit readmission data
- Patient and caregiver feedback
- Staff rounding feedback
- Event report data
- Zero Harm updates

“Idea cards” are posted on the other half of the Gemba board

Idea cards are filled out by any staff member to propose a change or suggestion of any significance

Ideas are assigned to an appropriate staff member or leader who pursues the idea and communicates project updates at least weekly by writing updates on the idea card

Results

33 projects completed from August 2018 to May 2019

Process improvement projects include:
- Daily safety huddle
- Weekly staff newsletter to reduce email fatigue
- Standardized identification of patients with restricted extremity
- Baby book worm program
- Caregiver education implemented for central line infection prevention

Staff feedback on the Gemba board:
- “Love it! I really appreciate being kept informed of what improvements are being made to the unit and having the opportunity to post ideas as we come up with them”
- “The Gemba board is such a cool way for us to be involved. It helps us feel heard”

89% of staff now feel satisfied with their ability to contribute to decisions made on the unit