

Implementation of a Formalized Nurse Manager Competency Program using AONE

Competencies

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Structured Abstract

Local Problem

The DNP project was conducted in two separate hospitals in two areas: The Southeast and Midwest. The DNP students met with the Chief Nursing Officers (CNOs) of each facility about the project, and the CNOs supported the plan. The CNOs each reported managers working in their facilities had not received any formal manager training and felt providing managers with a competency packet would provide the managers with essential education and training. The CNO from the facility located in the Southeast was especially supportive. She reported she recently took on the role of the CNO and was in the process of re-organizing the management structure of the nursing units. Currently, the units have few formal nurse manager positions and day-to-day issues are handled by the house supervisor. The CNO from the Midwest has been in the position for several years and has nurse managers in place on each unit. However, she reported she is not aware of the managers having any formal management training. Current managers have obtained skills through trial and error and using seasoned managers as a resource when issues arise.

Project Purpose

The purpose of the DNP project was to create and implement a training plan based on the competencies identified by the American Association of Nurse Executives (AONE) for nurse leaders to be successful in executive practice.

Methodology

Benner's novice to expert theory guided the implementation of the project. A nurse manager competency packet was provided to facilities. Competencies fell under the broad categories of: (a) Financial management, (b) Human resources management and leadership skills, (c) Performance improvement, (d) Technology, (e) Relationship management and influencing behaviors, (f) Career planning, (g) Reflective practice, and (h) Personal journey disciplines. The first step in the competency training program required nurse managers to complete a self-needs assessment to identify priority learning needs. After completion of the competency training program, managers completed a post-needs assessment. At the completion of the implementation of the project, the authors reviewed evaluations of the program to determine if the program was successful.

Results

The authors provided a post-implementation evaluation to all participating nurse managers. The evaluation used a Likert Scale rating of 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). Results were compiled between the facilities in the Southeast and Midwest, and a combined score was calculated to show results. Participating managers reported:

- 4.82: program was efficient and easy to use
- 4.73: program improved nurse manager orientation and anticipated continued use for future nurse managers
- 4.55: program improved unit and patient outcomes
- 4.09: program decreased turnover and improved satisfaction (patient, staff, physician)
- 4.82: received adequate education and improved ability to recruit nurse managers

Implications for Practice

The nurse managers and chief nursing officers identified that formal nurse manager training was needed to improve competency. The managers enthusiastically embraced the competency packet, and felt the competencies were relevant to daily practice. However, the managers noted oversight was needed to ensure the competency packet was completed and not overlooked in the daily “busyness” of the unit. The DNP project impacted nursing practice and patients in several ways. During meetings with the managers, the managers reported communication was more effective, they had a better understanding of human resource issues and budgeting, and felt more equipped to handle difficult staff situations. In addition, the managers reported they had more confidence in the manager role and were identifying staff on the units for succession planning. The Chief Nurse Officers reported plans to continue the competency program in the future with all new nurse manager hires.

Keywords: nurse manager orientation, nurse manager competencies, and nurse manager competency

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