

Breaking Down Barriers in Multigenerational Nursing

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Structured Abstract

LOCAL PROBLEM

Nurses from five generations consistently represent the current workforce. The different characteristics of a multigenerational nursing workforce can impact communication and the development of respect. According to the Randstad Workmonitor survey, one of the most common challenges among multiple generations is communication. In a small rural hospital in the southeastern United States, nurses are experiencing a loss of vital information during patient handoffs and transitions, which complicates the existing issues of poor retention rates and incivility. Additionally, there is a lack of professional respect regarding nursing knowledge and clinical judgment among the workforce.

PROJECT PURPOSE

The purpose of this DNP project was to promote communication and professional respect between generations of nurses. While increasing awareness of positive generational aspects, communication barriers among generations could be diminished. The goal was that the multigenerational nursing workforce would find a healthy collaborative environment where safe, consistent, and proficient nursing care is delivered.

METHODOLOGY

For this DNP project, the application of the communication adaptation theory (CAT) provided clarity of the communication process among the multigenerational nursing workforce. The setting was a small rural hospital located in the southeastern United States that housed a nursing workforce represented by five generations. Posters were displayed on all nursing units to increase awareness of generational differences and for personal reflection of content delivered from informational workshops. Additionally, a storyboard was displayed in the cafeteria to promote an understanding of the project's process and the desired outcomes. Six informational workshops provided nurses with objectives focusing on identifying positive attributes from the different generations and ways to promote communication. Two informational workshops provided nurse managers with objectives focusing on identifying positive characteristics from the different generations and the best ways to communicate and lead a multigenerational workforce. Pre and post-tests assisted in evaluating the nurses' understanding of generational differences and ways to improve communication among nurses. Additionally, the managers were assessed for improvements in managing a multigenerational workforce. Post-workshop surveys were sent to attendees to evaluate the self-improvement of communication in a multigenerational workforce and the promotion of professional respect to others. Additionally, nurse managers were requested to assess their efforts to lead a multigenerational workforce. The final evaluation was an exit interview with the quality manager to evaluate the overall impact of the project.

RESULTS

The results of the nurses' pre and post-tests revealed a 50% increase in understanding generational differences and ways to promote communication. The results of the nurse managers' pre and post-tests demonstrated a 63% increase in understanding of generational differences, promotion of communication, and ways to manage a multigenerational workforce. The nurse survey results revealed that 100% experienced an increase in self-awareness of multigenerational characteristics and 89% improved their communication skills. Also, 94% of the nurses reported a personal increase in professional respect for others, while only 72% reported an improvement of professional respect among the workforce. The nurse managers' survey revealed 100% experienced an increase in self-awareness of multigenerational characteristics, an improvement in communication skills, and an improvement in management techniques with a multigenerational workforce. Only 58% of managers reported the growth of professional respect among the workforce. The final evaluation with the quality manager revealed that all methods of the project addressed a current issue by increasing knowledge and awareness of multigenerational characteristics, ways to promote communication, and initiating the recognition of professional respect.

IMPLICATIONS FOR PRACTICE

Improvement in multigenerational communication is a vital building block for the promotion of professional respect. The informational posters and storyboard created a platform for the discussion of multigenerational issues among the nurses. Although there was only a sampling of the facility's nursing population attended the workshops, there was ample time for small group discussion of current multigenerational events. Multigenerational education for nurses and managers provides the beginning steps of improving communication and the promotion of professional respect. Although the results indicated an improvement with communication and professional respect from the view of the individual, suggestions for mandatory attendance of all nurses could impact the development of professional respect across the nursing workforce. Providing ongoing opportunities for nurses and nurse managers to discuss multigenerational issues would assist in promoting and strengthening communication and professional respect among the generations.

Keywords: multigenerational nursing workforce, communication, professional respect.

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