

New Graduate Registered Nurse Well-Being Program to Improve Patient Outcomes

Carrie Flora, DNP(c) and Heather Richardson, DNP(c)

PROBLEM/BACKGROUND

Patient safety, which is linked to patient quality outcomes, has declined since the start of the pandemic in 2020 (Stockings et al., 2021). The patient safety quality indicator of fall rates has been identified as a significant problem within a rural hospital in Hot Springs, Arkansas. The rural hospital has seen an increase in fall rates to above the national median. Over the past 2 years this has been related back to an increase in nurse-to-patient ratios and holding inpatients in areas such as the emergency department (ED) and post-anesthesia care unit (PACU). The nurse-to-patient ratios have increased on both day and night shifts due to a shortage of staffing influenced by high nurse turnover rates. Turnover for new graduate nurses (NGNs) in the first year has reached a high of 30% and continues to be a problem in healthcare facilities across the nation (Davis, 2021). Not retaining new graduate nurses results in increased short staffing, directly impacting patient safety quality indicators including patient fall rates.

PROJECT PURPOSE

The purpose of this evidence-based practice project is to develop, implement, and evaluate a well-being program for new graduate registered nurses supporting nurse retention and patient safety.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The project is best supported using Neuman's Nursing Systems Model, which demonstrates the support that nurses provide for patients who are going through pain, tragedies, traumas, and other physical and personal losses. The Neuman Systems Model focuses on stress factors that can impair the health and well-being of a person. Not only does Neuman discuss the stress factors on patients, but on nurses as well. Nurses working in a clinical setting can experience personal job satisfaction and joy in their career, but bedside nursing in a clinical setting can also lead to exhaustion and burnout.

METHODOLOGY

The evidence supports providing registered nurse well-being programs for new graduate nurses. The evidence-based practice project is an online DNP-student developed Caring for the Caregiver program, supporting registered nurse well-being and self-care habits. Voluntary participation was offered to the Summer 2022 Nurse Residency Program (NRP) participants during Spring Term 2023.

IMPLEMENTATION

Caring for the Caregiver, a self-care educational program, was offered over a 4-week period. This program was offered to 38 nurse residents who began at a rural hospital in Hot Springs in Summer 2022. Of those 38 nurse residents, 16 agreed to participate. Of those 16 participants, five started the program and two completed the program. The program began by participants performing an online self-assessment for job satisfaction, self-care habits and intent to stay. Participants were given a short introductory video to the self-care program, weekly educational

check-in videos, along with individual links to online journaling and self-care tracking to complete throughout the 4 weeks.

EVALUATION

Project effectiveness was evaluated through pre- and post-program self-assessment of job satisfaction, self-care habits, and intent to stay. Participants had their identity protected by being assigned a number for their pre- and post-program surveys. Evaluation of self-assessments, nursing retention, and patient fall rates were indicators for program impact and outcomes.

RESULTS

The 4-week program started with five participants completing the pre-program survey on intent to stay, job satisfaction, and self-care habits. Of those five participants, 60% reported they plan to stay at their current job for at least the next 2 years, and 60% reported they do not participate in self-care habits. After the 4-week program, two participants completed the post-program survey. Of those two participants, one plans to stay at their current job for at least 2 years, and one reported not participating in self-care habits.

IMPLICATIONS FOR PRACTICE

Although the literature supports RN well-being as having a positive influence on job satisfaction, the results of this project are limited due to low participation rates. In the future, decreasing the length of the program and utilizing more healthcare facilities could potentially increase participation among graduate nurses. The implications for practice are that self-care programs could be beneficial, but can be challenging to implement. To measure impact on patient safety, it would be valuable to compare patient fall rates, nurse retention rates, and job satisfaction over a longer period following program completion. It could also be beneficial to begin self-care teaching at the beginning of a nursing program, to facilitate these practices before entering a hospital or bedside role as transitioning to practice can be a stressful event.

REFERENCES

- Davis, C. (2021, June 28). New nurse turnover is common. A nurse leader at Indiana university health is working to change that. *Healthleaders*.
<https://www.healthleadersmedia.com/nursing/new-nurse-turnover-common-nurse-leader-indiana-university-health-working-change>
- Stocking, J. C., Sandrock, C., Fitall, E., Hall, K. K., & Gale, B. (2021, March 30). *AHRQ PSNet annual perspective: Impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on patient safety*. PSNet.
<https://psnet.ahrq.gov/perspective/ahrq-psnet-annual-perspective-impact-covid-19-pandemic-patient-safety>

Keywords: self-care, well-being, nurse retention

Team Leader: Dr. Lisa Gurley

Team Member: Teresa Lambert (Assistant Chief Nursing Officer)