Title:
Turning Painful Orientation Programs into Pleasant Preceptor Experiences: A Sneak Peek of Upcoming Research

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Session Title:
CLINICAL SESSION: Developing Competent Communication Skills
Slot:
CA 02: Saturday, April 13, 2013: 9:00 AM-10:15 AM
Scheduled Time:
9:40 AM

Keywords:
orientation, personality and preceptor

References:

Abstract Text:

Problem: With 35-65% of new graduate nurses leaving their initial job during their first year as a nurse (Willemsen-McBride, 2010), one problem could be orientation not functioning as it should. This rapid turnover not only presents a considerable expenditure for an institution, but also results in a major source of dissatisfaction for experienced staff. Educators in a 35-bed, Beacon-awarded Pediatric Intensive Care Unit located in a 500-bed, pediatric Magnet hospital engaged in a quality improvement project to determine if the orientation experience could be improved by methodically pairing preceptors and orientees as opposed to random placement.

Method: An extensive literature review demonstrated a paucity of studies looking at the effectiveness of matching nursing preceptors and orientees based on personality characteristics such as communication and learning styles. The Keirsey Temperament Sorter (KTS) is a valid and reliable tool to measure key aspects of personality and provide insight into socialization, learning, decision-making, and communication styles (Keirsey, 1998). KTS results were obtained from preceptors and orientees in the preceding years and were evaluated for themes among both high- and low-functioning teams and matches. Themes were discovered and then used to match future preceptors and orientees based on the KTS results.

Results: In the first 10 months of implementation, mean Length of Orientation has decreased by 1.5 weeks (10%) among our 8 new graduate nurses, and the length is decreasing even more as preceptors become more familiar with the KTS results they receive about their Orientees. Anecdotal results have demonstrated that most teams report a high level of satisfaction with pairing, and there are both fewer orientation complaints to the Educators as well as fewer preceptors asking for an extended break. From both a financial and job satisfaction perspective, there is professional and organizational merit in advancing this project into a formal research study.