Creating Healthy Work Environments in Academia

Gina DeGennaro, DNP, CNS, RN, AOCN, CNL
Rebecca Harmon, PhD, RN
Meg Norling, BA, BSN, RN

UVA Nursing
MISSION

A cornerstone of the UVA SON Strategic Plan is the Healthy Work Environment (HWE) initiative, which identified statements of exactly what a HWE meant to faculty and staff. Our “compiled wisdom” was organized into five areas—Respect & Appreciation, Communication, Workload, Physical Environment, and Interpersonal Relationships—and became our working statement.
Statement on a Healthy Work Environment for the University of Virginia School of Nursing 2013

- **Respect & Appreciation**
  - The School of Nursing welcomes and embraces differences in ethnicity, race, culture, gender, sexual orientation, age, religion, occupation, socioeconomic status and perspective (from the SON Mission Statement). Mutual respect and appreciation characterize all relationships within the community, regardless of role or any other descriptors.
  - On a daily basis, we demonstrate appreciation and respect (i.e., basic manners) to all individuals at all levels.
  - We recognize when our co-workers put forth extra effort and when they complete a job well done.
  - We value the importance and contributions of everyone associated with the School of Nursing community and we acknowledge everyone's achievements.
  - We are considerate and understanding of each other's personal and professional lives.
  - We actively and respectfully listen to each voice. While we may sometimes disagree, we remain respectful of differences in opinion and viewpoint.
  - We acknowledge when someone is on the telephone or meeting with someone, and we do not interrupt unless absolutely necessary to do so.
  - We are accountable and reliable, and we strive to earn the trust of colleagues by providing the best service possible.
  - We are respectful of our colleagues and their rights to privacy. We avoid passing along gossip, and we maintain trust by keeping confidences.

- **Communication**
  - We are committed to open, honest, positive, and consistent communication throughout the organization.
  - We always conduct ourselves professionally, and we use proper language, tone, and non-verbal cues to express ourselves to others.
  - We disseminate information (e.g., events, changes, new positions) to our colleagues in a timely manner.
  - We appreciate knowing the rationale behind decisions that affect us.
  - We are active listeners and respond thoughtfully to questions.

- **Workload**
  - In a healthy work environment, work responsibilities are engaging, manageable within the work day, transparent, and well-supported with resources. Employees are cross-trained (when appropriate) and
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Proposed Standard</th>
<th>AACN Established HWE Standard</th>
<th>Proposed Adaptation: Academic Setting Standards</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>#1</strong> SKILLED COMMUNICATION</td>
<td>Nurses must be as proficient in communication skills as they are in clinical skills.</td>
<td>Faculty and staff are as proficient in communication skills as they are in their respective academic duties and skills.</td>
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<td><strong>#2</strong> TRUE COLLABORATION</td>
<td>Nurses must be relentless in pursuing and fostering true collaboration.</td>
<td>Faculty and staff are relentless in pursuing and fostering collaboration within and beyond the university.</td>
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<td><strong>#3</strong> EFFECTIVE DECISION-MAKING</td>
<td>Nurses must be valued and committed partners in making policy, directing and evaluating clinical care, and leading organizational operations.</td>
<td>Faculty and staff are valued and committed partners in implementing shared governance within the school and university setting.</td>
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<td><strong>#4</strong> APPROPRIATE STAFFING</td>
<td>Staffing must ensure the effective match between patient needs and nurse competencies.</td>
<td>Faculty and staff ensure the effective match between the mission of the school and designated employee competencies.</td>
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<td><strong>#5</strong> MEANINGFUL RECOGNITION</td>
<td>Nurses must be recognized and must recognize others for the value each brings to the work of the organization.</td>
<td>Faculty and staff are recognized and recognize others for the value each brings to the work of the organization.</td>
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<td><strong>#6</strong> AUTHENTIC LEADERSHIP</td>
<td>Nurse leaders must fully embrace the imperative of a Healthy Work Environment, authentically live it, and engage others in its achievement.</td>
<td>Faculty and staff leaders fully embrace the imperative of a healthy work environment, authentically live it, and engage others in its achievement.</td>
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<td><strong>Proposed Standard #7 SELF-CARE</strong></td>
<td>Nurses and nurse leaders must embrace self-care as foundational to the creation of a healthy work environment where patients and clinical partners can thrive.</td>
<td>Faculty and staff engage and are supported in developing self-care as foundational to the creation of a healthy work and learning environment where all members of the academic community can thrive.</td>
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Nursing, nationally

3,764,491 licensed registered nurses, US
2 to 3 1/2 times more likely
Healthy Work and Learning Environments

Effective Decision Making
Authentic Leadership
True Collaboration
Self-care

1. Patient's family is demanding extensive, invasive testing when you know it's medically not indicated.
2. Attending physician is demanding you to give expensive new drug/procedure you know patient's insurance won't cover and no existing pocket money.
3. Colleague verbally attacks you for something you did or didn't do.

Purposeful Pauses

When?
- Underestimated, NOT here what to do or say
- Emotionally overwhelmed, mentally fragile
- Emotionally absent
- Emotionally distant
- Emotionally disconnected
- Emotionally numb
- Emotionally drained

STOP

Stop doing or saying anything.
- Take a few deep breaths. Don't forget to breathe.
- Remember you're more than your job.
- Open new channels of communication.
- Practice self-awareness.
- Practice self-care.
- Remember you're more than your job.
- Remember you're more than your job.

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UVA
How can we get better?
100 square feet of space
Interprofessional. Compassionate. Innovative.
The UVA Way.
“We live in a time when science is validating what humans have known throughout the ages: that compassion is not a luxury; it is a necessity for our well-being, resilience, and survival.”

- Roshi Joan Halifax
What do people see when they see you?
We cultivate kindness and empathy.
Thank You!

Photo by Larry Bouterie