Supporting Nurses to Speak Up for Patient Safety
Using an Employee Engagement Survey
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Medical error has been identified as the third leading cause of death in the US, ranking just below heart disease and cancer. It is accepted knowledge that teamwork and communication are key elements which impact the occurrence of medical error. One focus of teamwork and communication is the role of speaking up to better patient safety. Industry consensus is that nurses are responsible for speaking up and expressing patient concerns yet this practice has not been consistently realized and studies show barriers remain.

Objective

- Describe 5 factors from the literature review that impact nurse willingness to speaking up.
- Identify 3 topics that strongly correlate with nurse willingness to speak up.

Medical error is the third leading cause of death in the US, ranking just below heart disease and cancer
-Makery & Daniel, 2016

Purpose

The purpose of this research study is to further develop the understanding of factors that relate to nurses speaking up when faced with patient safety concerns.

By identifying questions on a survey that impact nurse willingness to speak up, hospitals can better comprehend the phenomenon, plan ways to increase its frequency, and support its practice.

Method: Mixed Methods Explanatory Sequential Design
- Quantitative Analysis of Employee Engagement survey results (n=321)
  - SPSS
- Interviews of 5 staff/leaders to elaborate on quantitative finding
  - Coding (results not part of this presentation)

Results showed that nurse willingness to speak up was strongly correlated with perceptions regarding:

1) Leadership
2) Process Improvement
3) Quality
4) Safety and
5) Culture

Literature Review: Factors that Impact Speaking Up

- Inhibit Speaking Up
  - Feelings of intimidation
  - Fear of negative consequences
  - Hierarchy
  - Feelings of futility
  - Presence of witnesses
  - Constraints of time
  - Lack of assertiveness
  - Outside ones scope
  - Younger age

- Support Speaking Up
  - Individual Characteristics
    - Self-efficacy
    - Confidence in competency
    - Bravery and Assertiveness
    - Desire to do the right thing
  - Leader Characteristics
    - Leader open to listening
    - Role model speaking up
    - Authentic Leadership
  - Organizational Characteristics
    - Safe environment
    - Safety culture
    - Reward speaking up

Recommendations and Next Steps

- Design initiatives based on strongly correlated topics
- Implement qualitative phase of study to further research topics of process improvement, quality and safety and their influence on speaking up
- Promote this study design as a model for hospitals to identify individualized topics that correlate with speaking up for their staff.

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