Health & Wellbeing of the Nurse

Advocate Good Shepherd Hospital

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Background

- Nursing system & site strategic goal includes promoting health & well being of the nursing workforce
- Nurses at Good Shepherd Central Shared Governance identified interrupted and/or skipped meal breaks as negatively impact nursing health and well-being.
- A survey found interrupted or skipped meal breaks were common on the inpatient units.
PICOT Question

(P) For acute care nurses, (I) would taking an uninterrupted break, (C) compared to taking an interrupted break (O) reduce stress (T) over 1 year?
Literature Review

- 82% of nurses report a “significant level of risk for workplace stress” compared to 36% other professions (ANA Health Risk Appraisal, 2013-2016)
- Mental and physical relaxation reduce stress (Ruotsalainen et al, 2015)
- Well designed rest breaks influence nurse’ occupational well being and behavior positively (Wenshe et al, 2017)
- Promoting breaks and high quality break areas can positively influence job satisfaction, retention & performance while decreasing job related health concerns (Nejati, Rodiek & Shepley, 2016)
- Breaks reduce stress and improve productivity (Randolph, 2016)
Purpose

• Our goal was to promote and support uninterrupted, restorative breaks to reduce stress for nurses and ensure adequate break areas were available on all units.
Implementation Plan

• After the literature was reviewed and project support was obtained from nursing leadership, nurses were surveyed on break frequency & stress levels.

• “Zen Dens” were designated on each unit with items selected by Shared Governance members. This included nature pictures, salt lamps, coloring books, & reclining chairs with massage chair overlays.
Implementation Plan

- Acute care nurses were educated on the importance of taking uninterrupted & restorative breaks.
- Phone forwarding instructions were posted on units.
- Break rules were established and shared.
- Nurses were asked to identify a “break buddy” at the beginning of their shift.
- Charge nurses were asked to identify nurses that hadn’t had a break and assist as needed.
Implementation Plan

• An awareness campaign utilizing a travel theme & slogan “Take a Mental Vacation” was launched & included boarding passes to take breaks, “flight” snacks & balloons to garner excitement. Nurses were encouraged to forward their phones to another nurse to cover patient care & reduce interruptions.
Outcomes

• Post-intervention surveys demonstrated a modest improvement in the percentage of nurses reporting stress reduction with breaks over time.
• Nurses reported stress reduction with breaks at a baseline level of 35%.
• Post survey results showed 57% of nurses reporting stress reduction with breaks.
• It was also found that night shift reported more stress reduction with breaks than the day shift.
Conclusions

- There was some resistance encountered with handing off patients or forwarding phones as nurses had a difficult time relinquishing control and did not want to burden other nurses that may already be very busy.
- Continued focus is needed to encourage nurses to take uninterrupted breaks.
- Night shift reported they were more likely to take an uninterrupted break and report stress reduction.
- Objective measurements may be helpful in future EBP projects exploring this topic.
Implications for Practice

- Literature & practice demonstrated the need to focus on nursing health & well-being.
- Interrupted or skipped breaks are common amongst nurses & may negatively impact stress levels. Promotion of uninterrupted, restorative breaks demonstrated that nursing stress levels may be subjectively improved.
- Day shift may require different strategies to promote stress reduction.
References


