Float Standardization: Creating a Welcoming Environment & Safe Float Experience

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Background
Chief Nursing Officer listening sessions revealed unit, float nurse and Certified Nursing Assistant (CNA) dissatisfaction with floating between inpatient units, Women’s Health, and Emergency Department boarding. Specific improvement interventions included facilitating a welcoming environment, providing tools to provide safe care, and offering a meal break.

Local Problem
RN/CNA Float Experience Pre-Survey – January 2023

- 46% “rarely” or “never” welcomed to the unit by the Charge RN or team.
- 76% “rarely or “never” offered a tour or asked if they know where everything was located.
- 30% “rarely” or “never” provided the tools and resources to provide safe care.
- 51% “rarely or “never” offered a meal break.

Methods
A workgroup of Shared Governance nurse leaders determined two solutions to the problem.

1. Create a standardized Charge RN Guide with exclusion assignment guidelines and set expectations
2. Create unit float guidelines for RN and CNA including unit standards.

Results ~ All Float Experience
A Post-Float Satisfaction survey is sent to every floater within 24 hours of floating and results are sent to each Patient Care Manager weekly for follow up.

Results:
- 73% familiar with or provided the tools/resources to provide safe care for the shift including a physical copy of the Unit Float Guide. (Figure 1)
- 86% welcomed to the unit by the Charge RN or team. (Figure 2)
- 86% familiar with, offered a tour, or asked if they knew where everything was located. (Figure 3)
- 70% offered a meal break. (Figure 4)

RN and CNA satisfaction increased when they were greeted and given a tour of the unit and meal break. Significant increase (30%-73%) was shown when the RN or CNA were provided the tools and resources needed to provide safe care.

The Unit and Charge Nurse floating guides standardized the expectations for both the floater and unit, increasing collaboration and satisfaction.

Discussion
- Standard work reduces variation in practice, and provides a consistent approach to nursing care. The improvement in welcoming floaters and providing meal breaks demonstrates a positive work environment. Additionally, meal breaks have an efficacious effect on teammate well-being.
- Leadership follow-up supports the improvement project and provides the necessary follow-up for non-compliance.
- One limitation of the project was the post survey question answers changed to a yes or no selection with addition of frequently float. Although the questions changed, the quality project illustrates improvement in the floating experience.

Implications for Practice
- Standardized tools, Charge RN expectations, and intentional leadership follow up improved the nurse staff float experience significantly within a 3-month period. Creating a welcoming and safe environment for float staff has potential to improve overall job satisfaction, retention, and patient safety.

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