

Dueling Burnout: The Dual Role Nurse

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Abstract : Moral distress and compassion fatigue plague nurses in the Cardiothoracic Intensive Care Unit (CTICU) and cause an unnecessary level of turnover. Dueling Burnout describes an initiative that was implemented in the CTICU to reduce the level of burnout the nurses endure by encouraging dual roles with collaborating departments. Purpose: Critical care nurses are plagued by burnout, moral distress, and compassion fatigue due to the intensity of care provided. The purpose of the dual role program was to decrease these issues by providing relief from the intensity of the critical care environment while maintaining full-time employment. Relevance/Significance: Burnout, moral distress, and compassion fatigue are leading causes of Cardiothoracic Critical Care (CTCU) turnover. A contributing factor to burnout is the workload related to serving as a preceptor for a constant influx of new nurses (RN). As a result of these factors, the CTICU averages 17% nursing turnover/year. The cost, unit disruption, and, most importantly, distress of the clinical nurses required an innovative approach to create an improved work environment and experience. Strategies/Implementation/Methods: In May 2018, a dual role pilot was initiated for nurses. The dual role constitutes .6 full-time equivalent hours (FTE) worked in CTICU in combination with .3 FTE worked in the Emergency Department (ED). ED nurses who expressed an interest in cross-training to CTICU were also offered the dual role opportunity. The initial hypothesis was that full-time employees would benefit from a change in clinical setting leading to increased engagement and job satisfaction. The dual role also presents an opportunity for professional development through the expansion of clinical skills in another specialty. Success of the pilot led to extending the dual role to areas beyond the ED. Evaluation/Outcomes/Results: The number of dual role clinical nurses has grown to 22. From the dual role cohort, only one has transferred out of CTICU. This is a 5% turnover rate for this group of nurses as compared to the average turnover rate of 17%. A role satisfaction survey conducted with the dual role cohort found that because of working in a dual role, 76.5% decreased their intent to leave, 100% decreased their level of burnout, and 100% reported an increase in overall job satisfaction. Nurses reported the ability to develop skills that are transferable between departments. Respondents emphasized the appreciation gained from working in multiple environments; the dual role served to transform their care. Conclusions/Implications: Dual role is an effective strategy to retain experienced nurses, decrease burnout and turnover, improve collaboration, and provide flexibility to meet staffing needs. The dual role offers RNs an expansion of skills, relief from high acuity and orientee demands, while improving job satisfaction.

Keywords : nursing retention, burnout, pandemic, strategic staffing, leadership

Conference Title : ICTNLRM 2022 : International Conference on Team Nursing, Leadership Roles and Management

Conference Location : Los Angeles, United States

Conference Dates : October 27-28, 2022