Team Building Activities: Increasing Staff Engagement.

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Rapid turnover of staff on units
Need for improved teamwork between staff members
High rate of internal transfers
Nurses “eating their young”
   – Newer staff members feeling unwelcomed on units

Organized social activities are essential for newcomers to adjust to unit (Bae, 2011).
A weekend retreat including team building exercises led to a 25% increase in job satisfaction (Lambert & Steward, 2007).
Support from fellow nurses and management is essential to create unity, and may lead to lower turnover rates (Lapointe, Bandengerhe, & Bourias, 2014).
A conducive “work environment” is a major determinant of staff satisfaction, commitment and retention. Regular fun events are activities that improve/enhances the work environment (Brunges and Foley-Brinza, 2014).

Do unit based activities promote engagement for nurse residents on floors that engage in unit based activities as compared to floors that do not engage in unit based activities?

P: Nurse Residents
I: Clinical unit based activities
C: Clinical units that do not engage in activities that promote engagement on the clinical unit.
O: Nurse residents perception of engagement on the clinical unit and relationship building

Two part survey
   – Part one: sent to Nurse Residents
   – Part two: sent to unit directors

Comparing how unit directors view staff unity vs. how new nurses view staff unity

Sample questions for nurse residents include:
   – What activities do you offer?
   – What is the attendance rate?
   – What do you feel would lead to greater bonding?
   – Do you plan on leaving your unit? Does lack of bonding contribute to you wanting to leave?

Similar questions were asked of directors, including attendance rates, activities offered, and their opinion on whether the activities increase bonding.

25 out of 65 unit directors and 23 out of 41 nurse residents replied to the survey questions.

100% of Nurse Residents and unit directors surveyed reported having some form of team bonding activity held every few months as shown below.

Team Building Activities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Team Bonding Activities</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Welcome lunch</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Birthday/anniversary celebrations</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Day/off unit events</td>
<td>40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

82% of respondents reported that team-bonding events provide stress relief in a fast paced and highly stressful healthcare environment.
Nurse residents report that unit based activities improve team morale.

For new nurse residents, the laid back atmosphere of these events serves as an added opportunity to connect and reach out to mentors to discuss current needs and difficulties faced.
Challenges limiting units from holding such activities include:
   – current staff shortage, day/night shift scheduling, unwillingness of some staff to attend such events on their days off, acuity of patients
43% of Nurse residents reported that a lack of team building activities is not a central reason behind new nurse resident’s decision to quit/leave their unit or the nursing profession as exemplified in the graph below.

It is imperative that nurse managers/unit directors, the leadership team and/or preceptors, adopt structured activities aimed at welcoming new graduate nurses/new nurses to the floor e.g. introduction to the interdisciplinary team by nurse managers/preceptors.
Organized activities outside of the hospital would be beneficial to increase staff bonding and maximize relaxation.
Research that explores and outlines the central reasons so many nurse residents in their first year of nursing (42% in this study) want to leave their current unit is warranted.
Creating a desirable unit culture by scheduling activities such as potluck lunches, football celebrations, summer barbecues, and holiday celebrations can produce unit cultures that maintain nurses.

REFERENCES