

Precepting in Rehabilitation Nursing: What are Best Practices?



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Purpose

Long term retention of new graduate nurses is challenging for many administrators. Preceptors play a crucial role in educating new nurse graduates and are vital in solidifying the confidence and competence for the future practice of graduates. The goal of this project was to establish an academic-service collaboration to identify best practices for precepting in rehabilitation nursing.

Background

A partnership was formed between two nursing department faculty, two undergraduate nursing students and the nursing director of the acute rehabilitation unit to identify needs for evidence-based practice research. After discussions with the unit director, the need for more specific preceptor guidelines for acute rehabilitation nursing was identified.

The Collaborating Hospital



- Sacred Heart Hospital is part of the Hospital Sisters Health System and is a 390 bed hospital located in Eau Claire, WI.
- The L.E. Phillips Physical Rehabilitation Center is the only CARF-Accredited inpatient rehabilitation program in western Wisconsin.
- The Acute Rehabilitation Unit currently has two certified preceptors and one alternate on the unit.
- The staff includes 16 registered nurses, 8 personal care assistants and 3 ward clerks.

Methods

- Conducted a comprehensive literature review on precepting.
- Met with nursing director, preceptors and new graduate nurses currently going through orientation.
- Summarized the literature on precepting and included research on precepting in general.
- Gained another practical perspective through listening to nursing experiences while shadowing floor nurses, a new graduate nurse and certified preceptors.

Findings

- Literature review showed a need for more research on adequately preparing nurses to be preceptors in acute rehabilitation specifically.
- A new graduate nurse (who did not receive acute rehabilitation training at her school) expressed a need for more exposure to patients that are frequently seen on the rehabilitation floor during orientation.
- Preceptors found preceptor orientation generic and expressed a need for more specific preceptor guidelines for their unit.
- Staff nurses voiced interest in continuing education specific to rehabilitation nursing at the beginning of their role on the unit.



<http://www.panoramio.com/photo/9504099>

Conclusions

Within the field of nursing, there is a call for change in the preparation of new graduate nurses in specific clinical areas to improve nurse competency, retention and patient outcomes. This project demonstrated a critical need for additional research and knowledge related to quality precepting within acute rehabilitation nursing. A rehabilitation-specific preceptor program would identify competencies nurses need immediately and provide incentives for continued education in an accessible way.

Future Plans

- Refine and update the preceptor guidelines for the rehabilitation unit at Sacred Heart Hospital.
- Share the literature review and the need for more research in this area through journal articles and research conferences.

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