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Enhance staff morale and job satisfaction through positive practice environment in acute geriatric ward

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Introduction: Due to a rapidly ageing population and a complexity of health care environment, the occupancy in acute geriatric ward remains high, average over 110% during last winter surge in United Christian Hospital (UCH) in Hong Kong. Unlimited workload due to a prolonged over-crowded working environment leads to stress and burnout amongst nursing staff in ward. Therefore, a pilot program was launched since 2Q2017 to promote a Positive Practice Environment (PPE) for health care staff that places their safety, health, and well-being.

Objectives: The objectives of this work are as follows: promote a safety and healthy working environment; reduce unnecessary workload and facilitate workflow and enhance staff morale and job satisfaction.

Methodology: The methodology followed involved open communication with staff engagement. Quarterly staff meetings were held among managerial, senior and junior levels in ward to provide an open communication platform to share the needs and feelings from each other to compromise a strategy plan to achieve PPE. The Transformational Care at the Bedside (TCAB): user-orientated nursing Kardex trolleys and mini nurse stations were re-designed with commonly-used equipment and documents supplied. The materials needed were refilled regularly, and this auto-refill system allowed more valued time for team leaders to care and communicate with patients; optimizing routine workflow: revised and restructured staff daily routine workflow, reduced unnecessary workload through Lean management. A fair workload and stress were optimized; flexible duty and leave arrangement: a much flexible duty and leave request system was launched in accordance with manpower situation in ward. The rules of leave request system were revised with ward staff engagement and; auto-refill buffet station: a buffet station with “staff-favorite” snacks and drinks were rolled out at staff lounge. Supplies of the station were regularly refilled by the managerial level in ward. Staffs could enjoy the “good will” at break time.

Results: A survey showed that all nursing staff strongly agreed the new workflow and TCAB not only can reduce their motion but also facilitate care delivery and work process. In addition, more than 90% of them were satisfied with their work life and became much engaged in their job. The total sick leave in 2017 reduced at 41% compared that in 2016.

Conclusions: A PPE can facilitate the health, safety and personal well-being of staff, support quality patient care and improve the motivation, productivity and performance of the ward.

Notes: