FoNS

The impact of team culture on patient and relative experience on an elderly care ward

IMPROVEMENT INSIGHTS

Project background

Morale on the ward at Basingstoke and North Hampshire Hospitals was low, with multiple vacancies and poor team culture. This was reflected in:

- Complaints regarding care and communication
- Poor staff retention and recruitment rates
- Increased serious patient safety incidents
- Negative reputation in the trust

Aims and objectives

The aim of this project was to improve staff morale and patient and relative experience. To achieve this, the objectives identified were to:

- Work with the team to improve teamworking
- Actively engage staff in decision making
- Develop a shared vision for the ward

Implications for practice

- Away days for nursing teams can be hugely beneficial
- It's vital to involve and empower the team to have ideas and do something with them
- It's important to meet patients and relatives regularly to receive feedback and pick up problems early, and junior staff should be encouraged to see patients as allies rather than potential complainants

Online

Further information about the project can be accessed from: fons.org/library/report-details?nstid=74365

Reference
Pritchard, E. and Dewing, J. (2000) A multiple method evaluation of an independent dementia care service and its approach. *Aging and Mental Health.* Vol. 5. No. 1. pp 63-72. https://doi.org/10.1080/13607860020020663.

Key activities and outcomes

• Questionnaire

Questionnaires were distributed to the nursing staff and patients/relatives to identify areas for improvement. The findings were shared at meetings to see how staff felt and to recruit volunteers for a steering group to look at the issues and potential solutions.

• Team culture tool

A team culture tool (Pritchard and Dewing, 2000) was completed by each nursing staff member to gauge the feeling among the team and as a measurement for the project. Responses were averaged out; initial results were mainly 1/5 or 2/5, suggesting a lack of team cohesion and spirit (see red scores in table, below).

• Awaydays

The main project team and steering group were invited to an awayday to discuss and analyse the findings from the questionnaires and culture tool, with a view to identifying contributing elements to the problem. These were:

- Team and leadership
- Communication
- Individual staff factors
- Patient factors

Changes were then introduced, including open visiting and 'bay nursing', with one nurse on duty in each bay at all times. A further whole-team awayday helped create a shared vision, and was also a chance to listen and learn from each other, and to have fun. Staff made pledges to the team and to patients and their carers.

• Back on the ward

The awayday seemed to have a huge impact on the ward. There was a greater sense of teamwork and shared purpose: team members supported each other and there was fairer sharing of work. Feedback was more positive and the culture tool reflected the changes in the ward (see green scores in table).

• Outcomes

There were many positive outcomes, including a reduction in complaints, falls and pressure ulcers, and an improvement in length of stay and patient experience in general. Overall, the project team reported that the Patients First Programme had a highly positive impact on the staff team, in terms of learning and outcomes.

	Team culture tool (Pritchard and Dewing, 2000). Statements scored by nursing staff before and after awaydays and culture changes		
		■BEFORE SCORES ■AFTER	
A	People in my team have dissimilar values and beliefs	1 **2** 3 <u>4</u> 5	People in my team share values, interests and beliefs
B	People in my team break rank and go it alone	1 **2** 3 <u>4</u> 5	People in my team pull together
C	Individuals in my team operate alone and there is conflict between them	1 **2** 3 4 <u>5</u>	There is community spirit and cooperation in my team
D	My team is ruled by standards of the past	**1** 2 3 4 <u>5</u>	My team is ruled by visions of the future
E	Meetings are an aspect of the culture in my team	1 2 **3** <u>4</u> 5	Working in small teams is an aspect of the culture in my team
F	In my team there are winners and losers, them and us	1 **2** 3 <u>4</u> 5	People confront and move beyond their differences in my team
G	My team is anti-change	**1** 2 3 <u>4</u> 5	My team is change oriented
H	There is weak coordination in my team	1 2 **3** 4 <u>5</u>	There is strong coordination in my team
I	My team is inward looking and focused on itself	1 **2** 3 <u>4</u> 5	My team is outward looking and does not focus on itself
J	My team is dominated by routine and systems	1 **2** 3 4 <u>5</u>	My team is creative and dominated by ideas
K	People do not reflect about their work in my team	**1** 2 3 4 <u>5</u>	People reflect about their work in my team
L	There is disagreement in my team	**1** 2 3 <u>4</u> 5	There is harmony in my team