



FoNS Improvement Insights

Evaluation of 'Back to the floor Friday' at Imperial College Healthcare NHS Trust

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Project background

A Back to the floor Friday (BtFF) implementation model was developed and agreed by the senior nursing and midwifery team in December 2008. The BtFF initiative was implemented to realise the Trust's vision that empowerment of nurses at all levels would enable innovation and creativity in the clinical environment. As a result, all nurses/midwives above Band 7 (n= 171) were asked to organise their weekly workload so that they could work in uniform in clinical practice on Fridays from January 2009. The purpose was to undertake work relevant to their role and support clinical staff at ward and departmental levels. The BtFF initiative aligned to the Trust's mission to provide world-class healthcare. It was centred on the premise that strengthened visible clinical leadership would improve the patient experience and clinical practice. The aim was to promote critical debate and evaluation of service provision and provide discussion about clinical issues faced in everyday practice.

Aim and objectives of the project

The aim of this project was to evaluate the impact of the BtFF initiative on the improvement of the patient experience and patient care. To achieve this aim the objectives of the project were to:

- Identify what activities BtFF nurses/midwives were undertaking and the impact of these on patient care
- Explore future activities that BtFF nurses/midwives would undertake to further improve the patient experience
- Identify the perceived support needs of the BtFF nurses/midwives undertaking current and future activities
- Evaluate with the BtFF nurses/midwives the perceived value of the programme and make improvements as required

Key activities and outcomes from the project

A collaborative action research methodology was used to focus on the 'real world' of clinical practice and systematically analyse practice problems and subsequent actions using an experiential learning cycle. Three continuous learning or PDSA (Plan, Do Study, Act) cycles were developed, reflected on and then acted upon in a collaborative way. Data was collected using a variety of methods to inform the process. The focus of the learning cycles

evolved throughout the life of the BtFF initiative and included the following themes:

- PDSA Cycle 1: Identifying current and future activities of BtFF participants using a survey and a focus group. Key themes identified were; empowerment, learning together, professional networking, communication, championing the change and matron power
- PDSA Cycle 2: Exploring role clarity using a survey method and three focus groups that coincided with senior nursing and midwifery staff meetings examining the logistics of BtFF in practice. Key themes that emerged were; role clarification (in particular for Matrons, Clinical Nurse Specialists and Nurse Consultants), the impact of uniform (on role and with patient care) and sustaining the initiative with competing professional demands
- PDSA Cycle 3: Investigated the impact of BtFF on the improvement of the patient experience and care and the embedding of this within future operational management. Methods used were fieldwork and convenience sampling, nursing staff (n=45), CNS (n=1), patients (n=4), interviewing the therapy team and the use of a multi-disciplinary team focus group. Building on the previous cycles, themes were; clarity of purpose, communication cascade, use of the uniform and the specific impact of the BtFF on the patient experience

The project identified positive themes to sustain the BtFF initiative although patient benefits were more difficult to evidence at the time of the project and work in this area continues. A comprehensive set of nurse-sensitive outcome measures has since been identified contributing to an ongoing quality improvement framework. BtFF is now an established way of working for the senior nursing and midwifery team and the team's findings have been formally published.

Implications for practice:

- Supportive line managers, senior leadership and peer support were enabling factors to successful implementation of the clinically focused BtFF initiative
- Whilst participant views were mainly positive, nurse sensitive outcome measures (or metrics) are required to evidence patient benefits
- It was recognised that nurses across the workforce needed clarity of purpose and engagement with the initiative to drive effective change

A full project report including references can be accessed from: <http://www.fons.org/library/report-details.aspx?nstd=24404>

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