Developing Self-Care Practices Among Nursing Staff on In-Patient Acute Care Units

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Abstract

The level of engagement of care providers plays an important role in the delivery of care and attaining optimal patient care outcomes. The prevention of burnout and compassion fatigue among nurses is pivotal in this regard. Self-care for nurses is an important contributor to this prevention and to the attainment of optimal engagement levels. Krietzer (2015) validates the importance of self-care for nurses through the inclusion of caregivers’ health and wellbeing as a major principle in the Integrative Nursing framework. The role of nurse leaders in establishing healthy work environments which support the care of self is articulated in the American Nurses Association’s (ANA) Standards for Nursing Administration (2016).

The purpose of this study was to add to the body of knowledge around self-care as it relates to nursing staff in an acute care hospital setting, the identification of meaningful self-care opportunities within the hospital setting, and the benefit of these practices to levels of engagement.

This program development project utilized a mixed methods design including a pre and post intervention survey (developed by the principal investigator) and focus groups. The project involved four units – two study units and two control units. A self-care program was designed and implemented on the two study units for a period of one month.

While there were no statistically significant results from the study, trends and themes included an increase in engagement levels in the intervention group. It is unclear whether confounding variables impacted this outcome and further study is warranted.