**How Nurse Administrators and Managers Can Support Staff Education**

Nurses in management and administrative roles may view staff education activities as something outside their responsibilities, however, they do play an important role. The reason for this is that a crucial component of staff education is the guidance and coaching to staff as they implement what they learn. In addition, staff education is important to the activities of nurse managers and administrators because it contributes to:

* staff retention
* staff satisfaction
* compliance with regulations
* resident satisfaction
* efficient operations

In other words*, education is an investment that offers positive returns for everyone*.

You play a role in staff education in the following ways:

* ***Orientation***  New people...new place...new ways of doing things.... Being a new employee is challenging and the new information gained in orientation classes can be overwhelming. You can help by first, letting new employees know that you understand this. Ask them if they have any questions about what they've learned in orientation class and invite them to discuss with you anything that isn't clear. Make them comfortable and welcomed on the unit by introducing them to coworkers and residents, showing them the location of items they will need, and initially assigning them a buddy to share breaks and lunch with. Observe their performance and assist and guide them in assuming their responsibilities. Guide them in correcting problems and recognize their positive efforts.
* ***On-the job training***  There may be situations in which employees are faced with a new procedure, piece of equipment, or situation. This may require you to educate them on the spot. Assess their educational needs and tailor your teaching to address them. Try to provide written instructions and information to supplement your verbal instruction and demonstrations.
* ***Skills updates***  You are in an ideal position to note the quality of care being provided, complaints, practice changes, and other issues that result in the need for staff to improve existing competencies or learn new skills. Be sure to communicate this as specifically as you can to the Staff Development Director/Educator.

There are some general ways that you can support staff education:

* Know what your staff is being taught. Attending staff development classes yourself not only enables you to understand the content being presented to your staff, but also shows to staff that you support the content.
* Plan time for staff to attend educational programs. Place educational classes on the schedule and assure staff are assisted in attending the classes by providing adequate coverage and assisting them in completing assignments so that attending class doesn't cause them to fall behind on their work.
* Serve as a role model in demonstrating principles and practices presented in classes.
* Guide and coach the staff in implementing what they've learned in class. For example, if staff has been taught to check residents' previous vital signs to the current ones, help staff in navigating the electronic medical record so that they learn how to retrieve information and discuss comparisons of past to present findings.
* Acknowledge staff's use of new information. When you notice that staff are performing a procedure in the way in which it has been taught in class or otherwise applying knowledge gained from educational programs, give them feedback and praise them for implementing what they've learned.
* Let staff know that they can share with you deficits that they've identified in themselves. Encourage staff to regularly self-evaluate their practice and to let you know if they believe they have knowledge deficits or practice weaknesses. Convey that you want to know about their individual educational needs and will be committed to helping them improve.
* Assess staff competencies and identify staff education needs. Residents are admitted requiring new procedures that have never been done in your setting before. A rise in a new immigrant population has heightened the need to understand dietary, language, and other differences. Regulatory changes have resulted in the introduction of new forms that the staff has to use. Health care facilities are dynamic organizations that experience change.

Please see  *Fast Facts: Creating a Learning Organization* for additional suggestions on how you can support staff education.