

New Graduate Nurses in the Emergency Department

Description

The need for an effective transition to practice program in nursing has been discussed for more than eight decades (Spector, Silvestre, Barnsteiner, Lynn, Ulrich, Fogg & Alexander, 2015). The transition to practice of newly licensed nurses occurs in an increasing complex healthcare environment with patients that are more diverse, sicker, and older than in previous generations (Spector et al., 2015). It is agreed that in order to ensure the success of the newly graduated nurse in the Emergency Department (ED), it takes time, patience, planning, and precepting to develop systems thinking in the complex healthcare environment (Papa & Lefton, 2015). Strong interpersonal skills, a good academic record, and the ability and confidence to identify self-learning can be predictors of success for new nurses in the ED (Papa & Lefton, 2015). New-to-practice nurses are unique in the sense that they are a “clean slate,” and create an opportunity to shape the future of nursing (Papa & Lefton, 2015). Therefore, new graduate nurses have a place in the ED.

TxENA Position

1. Orientation programs that are more robust than those for experienced RNs, that include clinical and didactic learning opportunities, are imperative for new nurses in any ED.
2. Clinical preceptor relationships based on individual personalities and learning styles of the new nurse are beneficial to the new nurse’s development.
3. In addition to clinical and didactic educators, a formal or informal mentor relationship supports the growth of new graduate nurses.
4. Departmental cultures support a questioning, learning environment to develop the critical thinking skills of new graduate nurses.
5. New graduate nurses will be successful in EDs with robust orientation programs, clinical preceptor guidance, mentor relationships, and supportive cultures included in their transition to practice program.

Background

We were all new nurses at one time. Nursing has had a historical reputation of overtly criticizing inexperienced nurses without supporting their knowledge development (Papa & Lefton, 2015). Approximately 17.5% of newly licensed RNs leave their first nursing job within the first year, and 33.5% within two years (Silvestre et al., 2017). Twelve-month turnover rates of hospitals using transition-to-practice programs are less than those who do not have supportive programs for new nurses (Silvestre et al., 2017). Mentoring is shown to improve social workplace interactions, promote career development, and increase long-term commitment (Killian, 2015). The leadership team in the department should meet regularly with new graduates to ensure that they are receiving adequate support during their transition into practice, and make adjustments to the new graduates learning plan as appropriate (Papa & Lefton, 2015). In a supportive environment which includes the department leadership, preceptors, mentors and all other staff members, a new nurse can successfully transition into practice in the ED.

Resources

American Nurses Credentialing Center. (2018). Practice Transition Accreditation Program. Retrieved from <https://www.nursingworld.org/organizational-programs/accreditation/ptap/>.

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