Quality Improvement Project: Mindfulness Program to Reduce Compassion Fatigue and Burnout Among Nurses and Certified Nurse Assistants

Teresa Robinson, MSN, RN, DNP-PMHNP Student
Angela Hamel, DNP, ARNP, PMHNP-BC
Kathy Christensen, MSN, RN-BC
Kadlec Regional Medical Center
Richland, WA.
Background

- Current studies estimate between 50% and 70% of healthcare workers report experiencing compassion fatigue and burnout. More presently, the COVID-19 pandemic adds increased stress, pressure, and exposure that intensifies compassion fatigue and burnout (Bridgeman et al., 2018; Perlo et al., 2017).
- Prolonged exposure to suffering, residual compassion stress, and traumatic memories all play a part in negative workplace conditions and environmental factors (Nolte et al., 2017; Sacco & Copel, 2017).
- The 2021 executive team’s strategic priorities involved developing effective approaches to caregiver wellness, including reducing burnout.
Purpose: Goals and Aims

Goal
• To decrease compassion fatigue and burnout and increase compassion satisfaction as defined with the Professional Quality of Life survey questionnaire

Aim 1
• Gain understanding of the effects of compassion fatigue and burnout nurses and certified nurse assistants were experiencing

Aim 2
• Mindfulness techniques trained and practiced with nursing staff during each shift change for 6 consecutive weeks

Aim 3
• Measure results of the mindfulness program and examine the ability to replicate mindfulness programs throughout the organization
Jean Watson’s Philosophy and Science of Caring

• Watson’s Philosophy and Science of Caring and mindfulness practices provided the groundwork for improving compassion satisfaction and in turn, supported decreasing compassion fatigue and burnout.

• The theory encourages the art of “practicing mindful presence, looking and listening deeply, and being with intention with those around us who suffer” (Constantinides, 2019, p. 222).

• Watson’s nursing theory is foundational to nursing practice and supports the daily routine of mindfulness practice habits taught in the program.
Intervention

Mindfulness Program Design

• Mindfulness topics were discussed during daily safety huddles for six weeks
• Detailed weekly newsletters containing information about how mindfulness can help compassion fatigue and burnout were distributed
• Practice habit flyers were enlarged and placed throughout the department
• Mindfulness rocks were provided as a tangible reminder to “Be mindful, be in the moment”
Data Collection Methods

- Professional Quality of Life 30 question Likert scale survey questionnaire was created in Qualtrics electronic database.
- Pre ProQOL sample size: n=28 and post ProQOL sample size: n=12.
- Data was securely downloaded to a Microsoft Excel spreadsheet and formatted using the ProQOL manual recommendations.
- Subscales of compassion fatigue, burnout, and compassion satisfaction were analyzed, both separately and as aggregate outcomes.
- Participant demographic and satisfaction questions provided both quantitative and qualitative data.
Results

- Compassion Fatigue results indicate an overall mean score decrease of 20.3%
- Burnout results indicates a significant decrease of 30.7%
- Compassion Satisfaction indicates the overall mean score increased by 14%
Participant Attitudes & Observations

**DID YOU FIND IT EASY TO INCORPORATE MINDFULNESS PRACTICE HABITS INTO YOUR DAILY WORK?**
- Yes: 86%
- No: 14%

**DID THE MINDFULNESS ROCK HELP REMIND YOU TO COMPLETE A PRACTICE HABIT?**
- Yes: 86%
- No: 14%

**ARE YOU GOING TO CONTINUE TO INCORPORATE MINDFULNESS PRACTICE HABITS IN YOUR DAY-TO-DAY SCHEDULE?**
- Yes: 91%
- No: 9%

**What did you like most about the mindfulness program and why?**
- It opened the door to discussions about mental health
- I appreciate the focus on the positive
- Being mindful helps change your focus
- It was a helpful reminder to take care of myself

**What could be done differently in the mindfulness program and why?**
- Direct classes
- Continue it. Find champions in the departments to keep it going
- Provide employer-based counseling resources and wellness programs
Conclusion and Implications on Nursing Education, Practice, and Research

• Incorporating mindfulness practice habits into day-to-day nursing activities, such as when administering medications, washing hands, and donning personal protective equipment, has shown positive results (Cheung et al., 2020; Duarte & Pinto-Gouveia, 2016)

• Current literature suggests if healthcare workers can foster positive emotions, learn personal behavioral techniques, and be mindful of thoughts, feelings, and individual body sensations, that stress, anxiety, and depression will decrease (Morrison-Wylde et al., 2017; Cheung et al., 2020; Cohen-Katz et al., 2004)

• More research should include other modalities throughout the hospital, as well as ambulatory clinics and urgent care facilities
Limitations and Sustainability

- The mindfulness program included a small sample size
- Difficulty ensuring that mindfulness practice habits were discussed at all daily safety huddles.
- Inability to link pre and post ProQOL questionnaire results
- Implementing a champion group would help sustain the mindfulness program on other units and departments
- Continued stakeholder support and engagement
Recommendations to the Clinical Agency

• Future mindfulness programs would guarantee mindfulness practice habits are presented at every daily safety huddle for both the day and night shifts
• Implementing a mindfulness program demonstrates organizational support of mental health wellness and enthusiasm to create a positive environment
Lessons Learned

• Leadership support is very important for successful program implementation

• Collaboration with stakeholders will foster engagement and encouragement

• When using a pre and post survey design, it is important to have secure identifier to link the survey results
References

Take a picture to download more information