



Workforce Management: Intermediate Care Orientation Redesign Program

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Problem

- In 2013, Sentara CarePlex hospital combined 3 nursing units to form an intermediate care unit. The human resources team aggressively recruited experienced nurses with little success. Experienced nurse applicants sought positions elsewhere in the hospital (intensive care unit or the emergency department). Prior unit managers did not consider new graduate nurses viable candidates for employment on this unit.
- Vacancy rates and turn-over rates, on the intermediate care unit, exceeded 50% for extended periods of time. The cycle time from posting nurse positions to interview averaged 4 months. Likewise, the cycle time from posting to hire often exceeded 6 months.
- Current unit managers determined new graduates were a viable applicant pool. They implemented the Intermediate Care Orientation Redesign Program to offer select new graduates employment opportunities.

Background and Significance

- Workforce management includes all the activities needed to recruit, hire and maintain a qualified, productive workforce to meet the needs of patient populations.
- The Intermediate Care Orientation Redesign Program was designed to provide the infrastructure and resources to support the integration of new graduates into an intermediate care setting.
- Beginning a clinical practice within the intermediate care environment can be challenging. These initial lived experiences often shape how new graduates develop within professional nursing.
- A quality intermediate care orientation redesign program, with protected time between the preceptor and orientee, may offer the best possible start for these new graduates.

Program Aims

This program aimed to hire nurses with knowledge, skills, and abilities required to manage an intermediate care patient population. The following question was explored:

- Will there be a difference in workforce management (turn-over rate, vacancy rate, position post to interview time, and position post to hire time) following implementation of the Intermediate Care Orientation Redesign Program?

Program

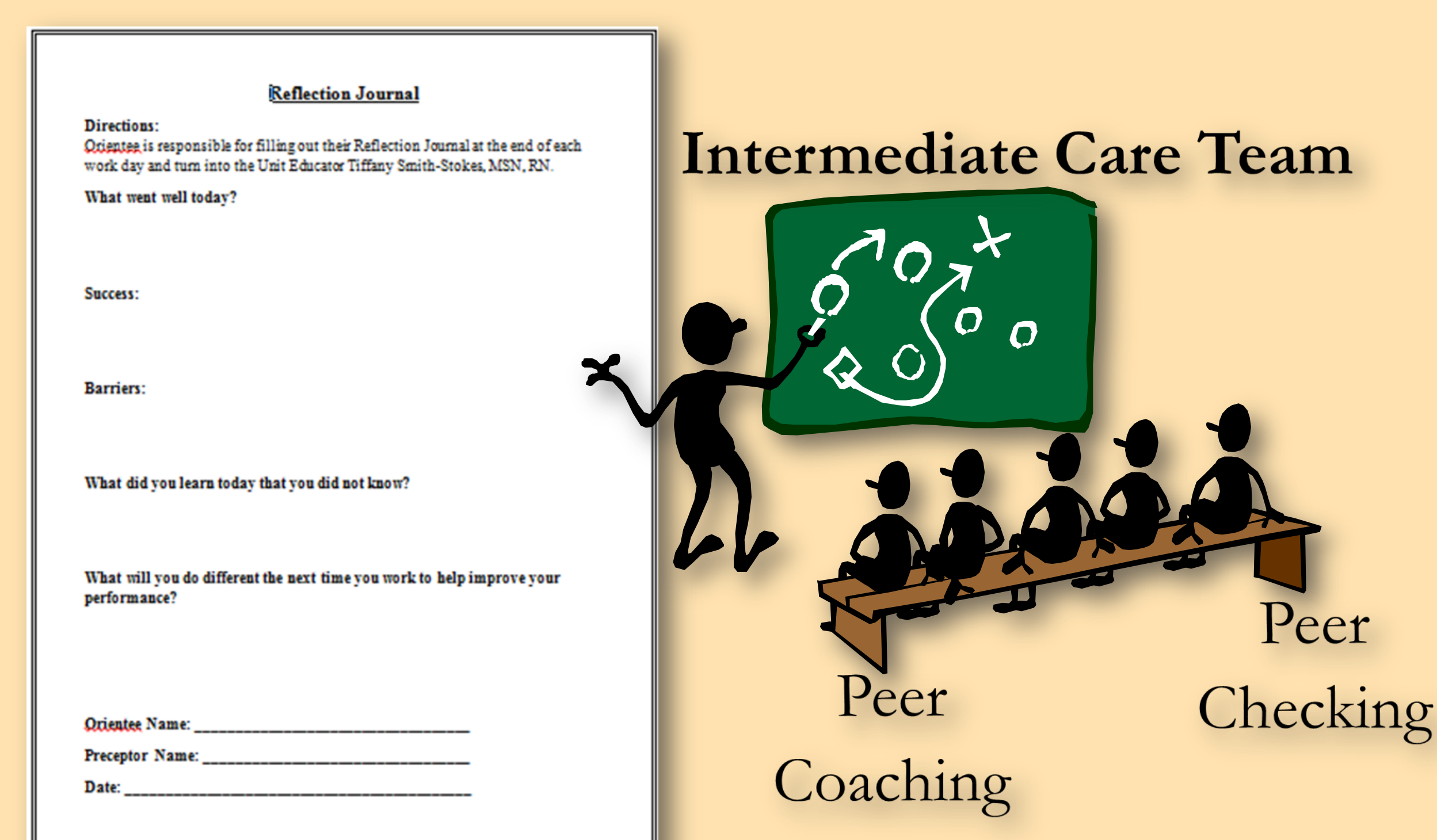
- The Intermediate Care Orientation Redesign Program is unique in that this workforce management strategy targeted new graduates, an unconventional employee population for intermediate care.
- The program promotes workforce management by recruiting, interviewing, and hiring the top 10% of new graduate applicants. Selective hiring practices may improve nurse job satisfaction, commitment, and retention.
- Applicants are interviewed by an interview panel consisting of nurse managers, educators, Clin IIs, and staff nurses. The panel provides an overview of the unit composition, patient mix, and skill mix.
- The interview process incorporates behavior-based questions. Applicants are asked to respond to three scenarios (vignettes) designed to assess knowledge, skills, and abilities required to manage competing priorities (resource utilization, prioritization, and delegation).

Guiding Principles

The following guiding principles are used to evaluate and select new graduates for employment:

- Identify the top 10% of new graduate applicants to recommend for interview.
- Knowledge, skills, and abilities required for successful nursing practice in intermediate care include:
 - Professionalism
 - Critical thinking skills
 - Critical questioning
 - Customer service
- Preceptor interaction with new hires is protected from interruptions. New hires complete reflection journals (see Figure 1) at the end of each work day to reflect on the successes, barriers, and shared learning during the shift.

Figure 1. Protected Time to Reflect



Results

- Workforce management improved significantly following program implementation (see Table 1).
 - Turn-over rate dropped from 50% to 0%
 - Vacancy rate dropped from 50% to 0%
 - The number of days between position post, interview, and hire was significantly reduced.
- Of the 9 new graduates hired, 67% (6) successfully completed the program and are still employed. Three are currently on orientation, progressing appropriately.
- Anecdotally, new hires expressed satisfaction with their on-boarding process and often requested similar assignment areas.
- New hires actively engaged in peer coaching and peer checking activities to ensure the health care team provided safe, quality patient care.
- Protecting preceptor interaction with new hires from interruption allowed orientees to successfully complete orientation within the allotted timeframe

Table 1. Intermediate Care Orientation Redesign Program

Nursing Unit Workforce Management	Before Program	After Program
Turn-over rate	50%	0%
Vacancy rate	50%	0%
Position post to interview	120 days	7 days
Position post to hire	180 days	30 days

Conclusions and Implications

- The Intermediate Care Orientation Redesign Program offers a viable alternative to traditional programs.
- The program assisted orientees to develop confidence as practitioners and refine knowledge, skills and abilities within a protected practice environment.
- The program facilitated shared learning and may result in an enhanced patient care experience; increased competency; and increased job satisfaction, commitment, and retention.
- To demonstrate value, workforce management outcomes should be measured, tracked, and evaluated over time. Feedback from preceptors and orientees should be incorporated in subsequent program design.

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