

Evidence-Based Practice: The Clinical Nurse Specialist as Change Agent
Patricia A. Heale, MSN, RNc
Newton-Wellesley Hospital

Problem: Change is difficult. In healthcare, implementation of Evidence-Based Practice (EBP) directly opposes old ways of thinking and the habits of a professional lifetime.

Evidence: A search of the literature identified the Advanced Practice Nurse (APN) as a key figure in the process of change. The literature was collected and appraised for validity and reliability. An over-riding theme emerged; the Clinical Nurse Specialist (CNS), as an APN, is ideally suited to act as a change agent for the use of EBP. The CNS possesses the classic competency of change agent, the credentials to advocate for change, and the inherent notion of change.

Strategy: Through a summary of the evidence; the CNS acts as broker for knowledge transformation due to advanced education, clinical specialization and expertise, and exposure to research on a graduate level.

Practice Change: The CNS, as change agent, utilizes change theory according to the Change Management Process Model (CMPM). Through the use of this model the CNS utilizes nine steps to implement change; (1) establish the need for change; (2) develop and disseminate a vision of the change; (3) diagnose/analyze the current situation; (4) generate recommendations; (5) detail recommendations; (6) pilot test recommendations; (7) prepare recommendations for roll out; (8) roll out changes and; (9) measure, reinforce, and refine changes.

Evaluation: Outcomes were measured at various steps throughout the implementation including one-month after both the pilot implementation and the full roll-out. The measurement tools included nursing staff surveys assessing their ability to acclimate to the change as compared to changes in the past.

Results: Nursing staff evaluated themselves as less reactionary to change and more accepting of change when the CNS participated in the implementation as the change agent.

Recommendations: Utilization of the CNS as change agent and broker for knowledge transformation during implementation of EBP.

Bibliography

- DeVillers, M. J. (1998). The clinical nurse specialist as expert practitioner in the obstetrical/gynecological setting. *Clinical Nurse Specialist: A Journal for Advanced Nursing Practice* 12(5), 193-199.
- Galpin, T. J. (1996). *The human side of change*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Hamric, A. B., & Spross, J.A.. (1989). *The clinical nurse specialist in theory and practice*.
- Jeffreys, M. R. (2005). Clinical nurse specialists as cultural brokers, change agents, and partners in meeting the needs of culturally diverse populations. *Journal of Multicultural Nursing and Health*.

Malloch, K. M., & Porter-O'Grady, T. (2006). Introduction to evidence-based practice in nursing and healthcare. Boston: Jones and Bartlett.

Melnyk, B. M., & Fineout-Overholt, E. (2005). Evidence-based practice in nursing and healthcare: A guide to best practice. Philadelphia: Lippincott Williams & Wilkins.

Nelson, P. J., Holland, D. E., Derscheid, D., & Tucker, S. J. (2007). Clinical nurse specialist influence in the conduct of research in a clinical agency. *Clinical Nurse Specialist: A Journal for Advanced Nursing Practice* 21(2), 95-100.

Stevens, K. R. (2002). ACE Star Model of EBP: *The Cycle of Knowledge Transformation*. Academic Center for Evidence-based Practice. www.acestar.uthscsa.edu.