

What Leadership Behaviors Impact Staff Nurse Retention

Mary A. Scurlock, BSN, RN

Conroe Regional Medical Center

Rowena Sneathern

Problem:

Staff turnover rates are swelling as labor expenses incurred by healthcare organizations escalate with the excessive costs of overtime and agency personnel (Kerfoot, 2000). Research estimates the cost of registered nurse turnover at \$82,032 to \$88,006 (Jones, 2008). Turnover expense is a huge organizational concern that forces leaders to direct themselves to find ways of promoting staff retention (Waldman, Kelly, Arora & Smith, 2004). Furthermore, high staff turnover rates have adverse financial consequences for an institution, can cause patient care to suffer, and may result in escalating malpractice claims (Waldman, Kelly, Arora & Smith, 2004).

Evidence:

A literature search was conducted via CINAHL, PubMed, Medline, Academic Search Complete, Business Source Complete, and Eric EBSCO. The search engines utilized were limited to OVID and EBSCO Host. The search limits used were humans, nursing journal, scholarly or peer-reviewed journals, and articles written in the English language for the period of September 15, 2007 to February 18, 2008. The key words of the search were: staff nurse retention, nurse turnover, management behaviors, managerial behaviors, manager leadership behaviors, leadership behaviors, leadership, leadership influence, leadership characteristics, leadership attributes, and leadership skills. Retention was measured using organizational turnover rates, staff's intention to stay, and job satisfaction. The evidence outlines five consistent themes that lead to nurse retention.

Strategy:

The reasons for the nurse shortage are plentiful. Nurses are expected to be retiring in large numbers over the next decade, nursing schools are not graduating enough nurses to meet the current demand, and nurses across the nation are reporting increased stress and dissatisfaction with nursing (Atencio, Cohen & Gorenberg, 2003).

Determining the connection of leadership behaviors to staff nurse retention will provide the evidence on the important role of leaders in creating a healthy work environment. In turn, the actions of the leaders will promote staff retention, reduce recruitment costs, and improved quality of care. The aim of this research synthesis is to identify the best available evidence on the issue of leadership behaviors and their relationship to staff nurse retention.

Practice Change:

Managers with who seek value and contribution from staff provide a climate in which information is shared effectively, encourage professional development, promote decision making at the staff nurse level, exert position power and influence the coordination of work will provide an environment that maintains a stable cadre of nurses. Managers should endeavor to achieve the transformational and transactional styles of leadership to best impact staff nurses retention (McGuire & Kennerly, 2006).

Evaluation:

This synthesis suggested that leadership behaviors do impact staff nurse retention. The leadership styles discussed in the synthesis indicated that a personal relationship with the staff, leadership visibility, staff inspiration, the opportunity to develop personally and professionally, and individual consideration of the staff by the leader does increase retention.

Results:

The results of the systematic review indicated that a leadership behavior such as active management by exception was the only behavior significantly correlated with staff nurse turnover (Kleinman, 2004).

Recommendations:

Nursing administrators can benefit from these findings in selecting and developing nurse managers for critical care and in fostering an optimal organizational climate (Boyle, Bott, Hansen, Woods & Taunton, 1999).

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