

## **Creating a More Positive Work Environment for Nursing Students: Breaking the Cycle of Horizontal Hostility**

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**Problem:** Based on student evaluations of recent years, the clinical objectives and expectations of nursing students have consistently been met. However, the evaluations have uncovered some staff nurse behaviors that could be classified as horizontal hostility. Comments like “students are not made to feel welcome on the unit” were common.

**Evidence:** Exposure to such behavior during a clinical rotation can have a negative impact on a student’s approach to practice as well as their intent to become a nurse. The ability to recruit students into an organization and retain them in the profession depends largely on their clinical experience as a student.

**Strategy:** Priorities for change were derived largely from the literature and focused on raising awareness with the staff of the effects of their interactions with the students as well as implementing activities to assist the staff establish relationships and expectations with the students.

**Practice Change:** Education forums were held to assist the unit leaders identify those student comments which could be classified as horizontal hostility. Unit based orientations, unit based student appreciation activities, preceptor recognition activities and student debriefing sessions were implemented to help establish relationships and expectations.

**Evaluation:** At the completion of the clinical rotation, all students are expected to complete an evaluation of the clinical experience. These scores and comments will be compared to the scores and comments from evaluations collected prior to the practice change.

**Result:** Results from these evaluations should be available for analysis by June 30, 2008. Comments made by students and faculty during the debriefing sessions indicate that most have experienced a positive work environment on their assigned units.

**Recommendations:** Identification and implementation of strategies to create a more positive work environment for nursing students should continue in order to ensure a healthy pipeline of new nurses into the profession.

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