

Amber Bloedel

Question: With the high turnover rate of ICU nurses, will providing a longer, more comprehensive orientation with simulated skills training compared to a shorter, less thorough orientation decrease the amount of ICU nurses leaving the specialty?

Summary: New graduates in ICU have an intense shift from being a student to a critical care nurse. Preparedness is a crucial piece of transitioning and creating a safe environment for critical patients. Reasons for new nurses leaving the critical care setting include unsafe nurse-patient ratio, lack of guidance or support, too much responsibility and feeling unprepared. “High turnover continues to contribute to nursing shortages—factors like burnout, family obligations, and violence in the healthcare setting all influence a nurse’s decision to remain in the workforce” (Handzel, 2021). Critical care units can hire new nurses every week in small groups or large numbers of new nurses during peak seasons. It can be difficult to train new graduates in large groups while considering each intern’s specific needs (Weiss, Kennell, Lakdawala, 2020). Pairing a new nurse with an experienced nurse can help address individual needs and give the new nurse someone to rely on (Handzel, 2021). To better prepare interns, facilities can organize the materials they need for successful training. Ensuring there are adequate textbooks or eBooks available, having space readily available to perform simulated activities and hold discussions, and ensuring there is enough preceptors available for the number of interns hired (Miller, 2019). Assessing the new hires strengths and weaknesses can help guide the orientation. You can gather information on this by creating a survey for the interns to fill out, and using the results to tailor that orientations timeline (Handzel, 2021). It is also important to provide frequent feedback to the new nurse based on individual performance. Depending on the residency program, you may

provide feedback daily, biweekly, monthly, etc. This will help the new nurse gain experience with criticism and identify new strengths and weaknesses (Miller, 2019). Ensuring patient safety with a novice nurse is a crucial part of the orientation process and takes priority when determining the length and detail of the orientation.

Conclusion: Critical care units expect a lot out of their nurses and for a new nurse, that can be intimidating and overwhelming. “The problem is especially prominent among younger nurses. Up to 33% of nurses leave the profession within the first two years of practice, leading to problems like lower quality patient care, higher morbidity, and increased mortality rates” (Handzel, 2021). Orientation is a critical piece of ensuring a decline in turnover and an increase in patient safety. Taking into account the new nurses specific needs and the expectations of the facility can create a comprehensive orientation residency that leaves novice nurses feeling prepared and more confident (Miller, 2019).

Work Cited:

Primary Article:

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Weiss, R. Kennel, J. Lakdawala, L. (2020). Nursing Professional Development

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