

The Transition from Student to Registered Nurse

Literature Review

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THE TRANSITION FROM STUDENT TO REGISTERED NURSE

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Making the transition from nursing student to registered nurse is not an easy task. Many graduate nurses experience “transition shock”, which has been described using terms such as “terrified, drowning, and scared to death” (Wakefield, 2018). With the increasing number of aging patients, as well as the daily retirement of experienced nurses across the country, new graduate nurses are in high demand. The U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics expects employment of RNs to grow 15 percent by 2026, compared to 7 percent growth for all occupations (Registered Nurses, 2019). This is why listening to the needs of these graduate nurses is important in ensuring job retention and reducing turnover rates in these nurses. This literature review will look at three different sources discussing the transition from student to Registered Nurse. It will also discuss the benefits of structured training programs, residencies, and assigned nurse preceptors to new graduate nurses.

From Nursing Student to Registered Nurse: The Challenge of Transition

This article discusses the difficult process for new graduate nurses to transition from nursing students to registered nurses. The main purpose of this article is to discuss the benefits of implementing a structured training program to gradually train newly licensed nurses at their first nursing jobs. Graduate nurses often have fear and anxiety about their new roles and feel as if they are not doing well as nurses. This leads to several job changes early in their careers, or even quitting nursing entirely. According to the text, “17.5% of newly licensed nurses only work for 1 year while 43% of newly licensed nurses leave the hospital within 3 years of starting” (Blevins, 2018, para. 3).

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Studies have shown that a transition period has to be allowed to promote success and retention in nursing (Mellor & Gregoric, 2016). This transition period focuses on two main concepts; structure and socialization. This is why residency programs with assigned preceptors are becoming the norm for nurses once they graduate. Newly licensed nurses feel more comfortable in their role when they have a preceptor to ask for guidance and share experiences with. This also gives the new nurses a safe zone to ask any questions they may have without the potential for embarrassment.

Key Points

The key points in this article include the current nursing shortage, the difficult transition that nurses face upon graduation, and the benefits of a residency program with assigned preceptors. The key question that the author is addressing is how hospitals can ensure newly licensed nurses can feel more comfortable in their new roles. Several newly licensed nurses are not happy with their jobs, face constant anxiety, and question their decision to become a nurse in the first place. With this transition that newly licensed nurses face upon starting a job, a support system is key. This is the most important information retrieved from this article, as the main inference of the article is the belief that nurse residency programs are the best option for new nurses. New nurses feel comfortable seeking advice from individuals who demonstrate a level of caring and approachability (Blevins, 2018). By utilizing a residency program with assigned preceptors for each newly licensed nurse, the nurses will feel comfortable asking questions and adapt more quickly to their new position, while remaining in a safe learning environment. The key concepts that need to be understood from this article are the poor retention rates of new nurses, and how a structured training program with established preceptors can help hospitals employ nurses for

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longer periods of time. This will save the hospital money, save the nurses from extra fear and anxiety, and give extraordinary nurses the opportunity to become preceptors.

Assumptions

The main assumption underlying the author's thinking in this article is that all newly licensed nurses experience anxiety, or need to have a preceptor. If we take this line of reasoning seriously, the implications are that the author is, in fact, correct, and every new graduate nurse will feel more comfortable with a preceptor. If we fail to take this line of reasoning seriously, the implications are that not every new nurse needs a preceptor, and certain newly licensed nurses may be better off without a residency training program. While there may be some new nurses who do not feel they need a preceptor, it is up to the hospital and the residency program guidelines to determine if each nurse will be assigned a preceptor, or be put through a residency program. The main point of view presented in this article is that of the author, who believes that all nurses, regardless of their own desires, will benefit from a training program such as a residency.

Deficit/Conclusion

In conclusion, this article makes a great argument that newly licensed nurses should utilize residency programs with assigned preceptors during their transition from student to nurse. Not only do these programs minimize transitional shock for these nurses, but they also provide a structured environment in which these nurses can grow and develop.

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