Setting Expectations for Safety & Error Prevention Behaviors - Right from the Start!

Michelle Olech Smith MSN, RN-BC, CHSE; Gina Reid Tinio, PhD, MSN, MPH, RN-BC
Northwestern Medicine Central DuPage Hospital & Northwestern Medicine Delnor Hospital

Background
As our organization embarked on our journey to high reliability, we did what many organizations do and made sure to include education related to our expected safety and error prevention tools and behaviors in new employee orientation. We utilized a heart-warming video introduction by our executives paired with a series of e-learning modules and hoped that our new employees would see the behaviors in action when they arrived on their home units. Together, these educational strategies would sure to have these new expected safety tools and behaviors hardwired right? What we learned is the content wasn’t sticking. Through leader Rounding to Influence as well as our Pulse Checks with HPI, many new employees were unable to restate the safety and error prevention tools and behaviors. Upon receiving this data, our Professional Development team knew they needed to do something different.

Description
Clinical orientation facilitates the transition to professional practice of Registered Nurses (RN’s) (experienced and new graduates) and Patient Care Technicians (PCTs) within the culture of nursing at Northwestern Medicine Central DuPage Hospital and Northwestern Medicine Delnor Hospital. Orientation is designed to ensure that each orientee acquires the knowledge and skills to deliver safe, quality care in an environment that promotes clinical excellence and enhances the patient’s experience. During the first year of our journey to high reliability, a number of indicators were pointing to the need to redesign nursing and patient care technician orientation to make the experience more meaningful to new employees. The Professional Development leaders engaged a Six Sigma Green Belt to help lead the change.

• The Individual
The focus is placed on improving demonstrated competency, rather than only on the acquisition of knowledge. This was key in relationship to our safety and error prevention tools.

• The Experience
We create an experiential learning environment that supports application of knowledge, skills and attitudes using simulation-based principles. Simulated experiences are designed to identify what real-life clinical experiences are needed to improve competency and have team members actually learn how they work together instead of in isolated groups.

• The Environment
The primary source of learning and orientation for RN’s and PCT’s needs to be on the unit (Zigmont, 2015). Unit-based orientation was standardized with a strong focus on preceptor preparation. To accomplish the IMPACT goals, the team moved completely away from traditional classroom learning and developed a number of high-fidelity simulation experiences.

New nurses and PCTs move through a series of skills stations followed by simulation scenarios with real actors known as standardized patients instead of simulators. Each skill station as well as each simulation scenario includes safety and error prevention content.

Results
A highly experiential week one Nurse and Patient Care Technician orientation entitled IMPACT. The purpose of IMPACT falls into three major categories:

Following each simulation scenario, new-hires participate in a debriefing session, uncovering reasoning for decisions and actions as well as closing performance gaps to ultimately translate takeaways to real clinical practice. Scenarios include areas of high risk such as falls, blood transfusions, managing sepsis, and emergency response. Within each scenario, there are a core set of common themes related to patient safety including error prevention techniques and tools.

Conclusion
So, have we seen a difference in the ability of our new RN’s and PCT’s to perform the safety and error prevention tools and behaviors after experiencing IMPACT? Early signs all point to a more engaged and competent team member following this new week one orientation experience. The true outcome, a safer and more satisfying hospital experience for our patients and their loved ones.