Development of a Distance Based Long-Term Care Nurse Residency Program

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Background

• Long term care (LTC) nursing is complex and highly regulated.
• Many LTC nurses (RNs) are associate degree trained with little leadership or gerontological nurse training.
• LTC RN burnout and turnover is high.
• LTC nurse residency programs (LTC NRP) for baccalaureate prepared RNs that include didactic and preceptor training have been successfully implemented.
• Our goal was to develop a distance based LTC NRP that could be attended remotely by rural and urban LTC RNs.

Online LTC NRP development

1. Literature review of LTC nursing competencies and future needs, and existing NRPs in acute, community and LTC settings.
2. Input from nursing faculty, long-term care partners, nurse residency experts obtained.
3. Key content areas identified:
   a) Team leadership and communication
   b) The long-term care nursing environment
   c) Gerontological nursing competencies in the long term care setting
4. Course content integrated with INTERACT®.
5. Online Canvas by Instructure course created including:
   • Three 12-week content sections (corresponding to a-c above)
   • Weekly modules including readings, activities and online discussions
   • Bi-weekly “live” video-conferencing sessions with residents, mentors, course faculty and guest lectures
   • Self, team and older adult resilience threaded throughout.
   • Quality improvement (QI) project on the use of the INTERACT® Stop and Watch Early Warning Tool was developed and conducted by nurse residents.
6. LTC partners asked to identify RNs working in LTC (nurse residents) and experienced RNs (mentors) from the same facility.

LTC NRP pilot

• 7 nurse residents and 6 mentors from 5 nursing homes enrolled in 9-month pilot cohort.
• The NRP began with a 1-day retreat attended by nurse residents, mentors, corporate and educational partners, and nursing faculty.
• Nurse residents completed the QI project and presented posters at the annual UGEC retreat and resident graduation.

Building on initial success

• Challenges: Protected time is needed in order for LTC RNs to fully engage in the NRP. RN and staff turnover compete with NRP prioritization at corporate, faculty and individual RN levels.
• Opportunities: LTC corporate partners and RNs advocated to include both novice and experienced RNs in the NRP. One corporate partner has agreed to pay for NRP graduates’ Gerontological Nursing Certification. The support of LTC corporate partners resulted in tripling the 2nd cohort of the LTC NRP (ongoing).

Conclusions

• Online LTC NRPs are a way to provide LTC nurses with the leadership skills and knowledge to become LTC leaders and improve the care of older adults living in LTC.
• Support from LTC corporate and facility management is paramount to LTC NRP success in decreasing RN turnover and burnout, and improving outcomes such as rehospitalizations, falls and anti-psychotic medication use.

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