Improving Interprofessional Communication Between Hospice Nurses and Providers

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Learning Objectives

• Identify barriers that can affect nurse-provider communication in our agencies
• Explore methods to improve interprofessional communication
• Share our experience, how we approached this, and what we learned
Improving Interprofessional Communication

- Effective communication between nurses and providers has been associated with better patient/family satisfaction and improved care outcomes.
- Patient mortality, medical errors, hospital length of stay, and overall experience satisfaction scores are negatively affected by inadequate nurse-provider communication.¹⁻⁹

Improving Interprofessional Communication

- The hospice interdisciplinary group is the setting where excellent interprofessional communication should be achieved.
- Our hospice agency core values of communication, collaboration, and accountability are very important and promote positive relationships between our providers and nurses as we strive to provide excellent care for our patients and families.

Core Values

- Accountability: We embody personal and professional commitment of our mission to provide a comprehensively supporting interdisciplinary, empowering, and compassionate approach to care and financial outcomes.
- Communication: We engage in communication that is honest, respectful, & direct. We will encourage open discussion & timely decisions. All communication will be guided by the highest ethical & spiritual standards.
- Collaboration: We promote collaborative relationships/partnerships with colleagues, residents, families, & external stakeholders/organizations & our community through cooperation, active listening & support.
Hospice and Palliative Care of Greensboro (HPCG)

- Serving Guilford County and surrounding counties for 36 years
- ADC of 350
- 4.9 Provider FTEs (includes CMO, physicians for homecare, LTC, Kids Path, Inpatient Facility, and NP for palliative care)
- 45.1 Nursing FTEs (includes homecare, LTC, Kids Path, Inpatient Facility, Referral Center, and Nursing Leaders)

Improving Interprofessional Communication

- In January 2015, we decided to examine our hospice agency nurses and providers communication through a confidential survey monkey.
- We used a questionnaire set developed by the Institute for Healthcare Improvement (IHI).10

Introduction

- Our goals:
  - Obtain a baseline evaluation from both disciplines
  - Identify barriers for effective interprofessional communication
  - Create action plans to improve the communication outcomes
  - Reevaluate their opinions 6 months after the initial survey
  - Analyze the results from both surveys to assess the action plan effectiveness and identify areas for continued improvement
Baseline Survey

- Responses:
  - Strongly Agree, Agree, Neutral, Disagree, Strongly disagree
  - Weighted Average Score (WAS): 1-5 range
  - Response rate: 69% RNs (38/55), 85% Providers (6/7)

Q1: Physicians/Nurses plan together before making decisions.

PHYSICIANS RESPONSES

NURSES RESPONSES
Q2: There is open communication between Physicians/Nurses in making decisions.

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Q3: There is good communication between Physicians/Nurses.

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Q4: Return calls in a timely manner.

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Q5: I receive relevant information on the status of patients.

PHYSICIANS RESPONSES

NURSES RESPONSES

Q7: I receive correct information from nurses/physicians.

PHYSICIANS RESPONSES

NURSES RESPONSES

Q8: I feel certain about accuracy of information.

PHYSICIANS RESPONSES

NURSES RESPONSES
Q6: There are no delays in relaying information regarding patient care.

PHYSICIANS RESPONSES

NURSES RESPONSES

Baseline Survey Key Findings

• The majority of our nurses (86.8%) and providers (100%) believed that had good MD-RN communication in our agency.

• Both disciplines also agreed about planning together before making care decisions (RNs 76% and MD 83%).

• Some nurses expressed a higher degree of frustration, felt intimidated when they had unsuccessful communication experiences.

• Communication dissatisfaction was more likely to occurred during team cross-coverage and on-call due to the lack of familiarity with the patient.
Baseline Survey Key Findings

• Physicians weighted average score were lower for questions related to the accuracy and completeness of information they received from nurses.

• This raised the question if our clinical staff had clear expectations about what information our providers needed (assessments, pertinent clinical information, medications, etc.) to make adequate medical decisions for our patients.

Lessons Learned

• To achieve successful RN-Provider communication and make appropriate treatment decisions, requires a higher degree preparation and exchange of clinical information.

• We used this as an opportunity to work on better ways to direct our lines of communication in a way that we can get from each other the information we to make reasonable decisions without an unnecessary level of frustration.

• How we interact with each other can have lasting effects and increases the likelihood of negative patient outcomes.

Action Plan

• Help our clinical staff to prepare appropriately prior to calling a provider by giving more emphasis on the patient’s assessment, history, medications, recent care changes and overall goals.
  – SBAR communication format education
  – Set a workflow for nurses that helps easier access of key patient information

• Reinforce with providers the need to listen to and interact professionally with our clinical staff.

• Create Clinical Pathways to help with symptom management.

• Reassess RNs and Providers feedback in 6 months.
Follow-up Survey

- Follow-up survey
  - Same confidential IHI questionnaire
  - Response rate: 53% RNs (29/55), 100% Providers (8/8)

Open Communication.

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<td>100%</td>
<td>96.5%</td>
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<td>WAS 4.50</td>
<td>WAS 4.38</td>
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<tr>
<td>100%</td>
<td>81.5%</td>
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<td>WAS 4.50</td>
<td>WAS 4.05</td>
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Planning together before making decisions.

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<td>83%</td>
<td>100%</td>
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<td>WAS 4.17</td>
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Getting relevant Information.

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<td>WAS 3.83</td>
<td>WAS 4.29</td>
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Receive complete information.

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<td>50%</td>
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<td>WAS 3.67</td>
<td>WAS 4.38</td>
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Feeling certain about accuracy of information.

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<tr>
<td>67%</td>
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<td>WAS 3.83</td>
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No delays in relaying information regarding patient care.

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<td>WAS 3.84</td>
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Follow up Survey Key Findings

- There was a significant score improvement in all the questions for both disciplines.
- Providers scores for RN information accuracy, completeness, and timely relay had a significant improvement.
- The decline in RN survey participation seems not to be the cause of their score improvement. RNs comments indicated the provider improvements seen since the first survey.
- Nurses scores for open communication, planning, and getting information from the providers also showed significant improvement.
Next Steps

- Continue to focus on:
  - Information preparedness prior to calling
  - SBAR communication format
  - Listening first
  - Professional interactions

- Identify areas that still need work and continue to work on collaborative communication

- Explore opportunities to improve RN survey participation

- Annual interprofessional communication assessment survey

References

10. Improving Interprofessional Communication

Questions?
Thank you!