Healthy Work Environments

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*To Err Is Human* estimated that medical errors cause 44,000-98,000 deaths each year

- Broke the silence
- Errors are caused by faulty systems, processes, and conditions that lead people to make mistakes or fail to prevent them

Reinventing the Healthcare System
Silence Kills

- Study conducted in partnership with AACN
- Purpose:
  - The study explored specific concerns around communication that may contribute to avoidable errors and other chronic problems in healthcare.

Available at: http://www.vitalsmarts.com
Silence Kills

1. **Broken Rules**: shortcuts
2. **Mistakes**: Difficulty following directions; Poor clinical judgment
3. **Lack of Support**: Reluctance to help
4. **Incompetence**: RN, physician, other team members
5. **Poor Teamwork**: Gossip; Divisive behaviors
6. **Disrespect**: Condescending; Rude; Verbally abusive
7. **Micromanagement**: Abuse of authority
Do they confront the person?

RN Competence Problems:
- 3% of non-supervisors and 16% of supervisors will confront

Physician Competence Problems:
- < 1% of non-supervisors or supervisors will confront

Disrespect/ Abuse:
- 2% of non-supervisors and 5% of supervisors will confront
What about those who DO confront the person?

RNs and physicians who confronted incompetence:

- Observed better patient outcomes
- More satisfied with workplace
- Intend to stay in unit
- Work beyond minimal requirement
Silence Kills Study: Conclusions

- The problem described in this study is severe
- Health care providers see others make mistakes, violate rules, or demonstrate dangerous levels of incompetence
- Happens repeatedly, over long periods of time, in ways that hurt patient safety and employee morale and they don’t speak up
- Confidence in the ability to speak up is the critical variable that breaks this chain
The Joint Commission: Root Causes of Sentinel Events

- **Communication Issues:**
  - Present in 69% of all sentinel events reported
    - Present in more than 75% of wrong site surgeries and delays in treatment
    - Present in more than 60% of medication errors and ventilator events

[Graph showing percent of 2966 events]
Disruptive Behavior

The Joint Commission: Sentinel Event Alert

- Intimidating/ Disruptive behaviors:
  - Foster errors
  - Increase cost
  - Increase turnover

- Safety and quality of care are dependent on:
  - Teamwork
  - Communication
  - A collaborative environment

Regulatory Requirements

- Code of conduct that defines acceptable as well as disruptive and inappropriate behaviors.
- A process for managing disruptive and inappropriate behaviors.
- Medical Staff follow six core competencies including interpersonal skills and professionalism.
AACN Standards for Establishing and Sustaining Healthy Work Environments: A Journey to Excellence

HWE: The Assertions

- Healthy work environments are directly linked to patient safety
- Healthy work environments require a formal program
- Leaders must drive healthy work environments
Essential Elements of a Healthy Work Environment

• Skilled Communication
• True Collaboration
• Effective Decision Making
• Appropriate Staffing
• Meaningful Recognition
• Authentic Leadership
AACN Standards for Establishing and Sustaining Healthy Work Environments

**Skilled Communication**

Nurses must be as proficient in communication skills as they are in clinical skills.
Communication Problems

- Disruptive behaviors linked to adverse events and increased mortality
- Disrespect/ Abuse
- Silence/ Violence
Skilled Communication

- Accountable for identifying personal learning and professional growth needs related to communication skills
- Focus on finding solutions and achieving desirable outcomes
- Mutual respect to build consensus and arrive at common understanding
- Demonstrate congruence between words and actions, and hold others accountable for doing the same
- Skilled communicators have access to appropriate communication technologies and are proficient in their use
- Seek input on communication styles and strive to continually improve
Skilled Communication

• Strategies:
  – Educational programs
  – Invite and hear all relevant perspectives
  – Zero tolerance policies and processes
  – Include as criterion for performance appraisal
  – Huddles
AACN Standards for Establishing and Sustaining Healthy Work Environments

**True Collaboration**

Nurses must be relentless in pursuing and fostering collaboration.
Effective Teams

- Shared commitment
- Respect for all members
- Individual competence
- Team competence
Nurses must be valued and committed partners in making policy, directing and evaluating clinical care and leading organizational operations.
Effective Decision Making

• Individual team members share accountability for effective decision making by:
  – Acquiring necessary skills
  – Mastering relevant content
  – Assessing situations accurately
  – Sharing fact-based information
  – Communicating opinions clearly
  – Inquiring actively

• Bedside to board room
• Patients and families
Empowerment

- Critical Care Nurses
  - Empowerment Scale
    - Score range 6-30, mean was 17.66
  - More likely to feel less emotional exhaustion and higher levels of mental health in hospitals and units that foster empowerment and professional nursing practice.

Tigert et al., Critical care nurses’ perceptions of workplace empowerment, Magnet hospital traits and mental health. Canadian Association of Critical Care Nurses, 2004
Empowerment

- Shared Governance
- The Question:
  - *Do you feel you have control over your practice?*
Appropriate Staffing

Staffing must ensure the effective match between patient needs and nurse competencies.
Synergy

- Synergy results when the needs and characteristics of a patient, clinical unit or system are matched with a nurse's competencies
  - Nurses seek opportunities to obtain knowledge and skills required to demonstrate competence
- Data must be used to make and to evaluate staffing decisions
- The health care organization adopts technologies that increase the effectiveness of nursing care delivery
AACN Standards for Establishing and Sustaining Healthy Work Environments

Meaningful Recognition

Nurses must be recognized and must recognize others for the value each brings to the work of the organization.
Meaningful Recognition

- Members of the healthcare team want to be recognized for their contributions
- What is “meaningful”? 
Nurse leaders must fully embrace the imperative of a healthy work environment, authentically live it, and engage others in its achievement.
Who are the Nurse Leaders?

EVERY nurse is a leader

- Transformational leaders are essential in today’s healthcare environment
- The path to excellence depends on nurses embracing their individual leadership roles
How to become an authentic leader: A practical guide

• Read books about authenticity in leadership/ Seek Internet sources to enhance authenticity in leadership
• Volunteer to serve on a community board and actively participate in the group’s service projects
• Participate as a team member in an organization-affiliated mission trip to an underdeveloped country or community
• Initiate a personal program of self-renewal
• Complete a self-assessment of personal strengths
• Commit to mentoring a future leader within or outside your organization
• Participate in an executive coaching program available at major universities throughout the country or enroll in a university-based course on authentic leadership
• Attend the annual authentic leadership development institute to learn more about the scholarly development of theory and research in authentic leadership

Interdependence
Call to Action

Health Care Organizations:
• Adopt and implement these standards as essential and nonnegotiable for all
• Incorporate principles from these standards into expectations for all
Call to Action

Nurses and all Health Care Professionals:

• Embrace their personal obligation to create healthy work environments
Imagine tomorrow is in our hands.
It's up to you and me, and it's as simple as giving your word.

~Connie Barden

Excerpted from the AACN President’s Address at NTI delivered by Connie Barden on May 19, 2003 in San Antonio, Texas.