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Do Nurse Residency Programs Better Prepare Nurses To Enter The Nursing Profession?

Faith Sinclair

INTRODUCTION

Nurse residency programs are specialized, extended orientation programs for new graduate nurses to help bridge the gap from nursing school to professional nursing. With the number of experienced nurses in hospitals rapidly declining, new graduate nurses need to be properly trained in order to safely fill those roles. While nursing school teaches students an abundance of knowledge and gives them the tools to succeed as a nurse, it takes time, practice and experience to figure out how to apply that information. Nurse residency programs provide both didactic and simulation education as well as 1:1 orientation to help new graduates safely transition into the role of a professional nurse.

SIGNIFICANCE

- Hospitals with nurse residency programs demonstrated a 6% to 10% reduction in voluntary turnover rates, equating to approximately \$17.6 million in annual statewide cost savings (Warren et al., 2018).
- Group cohesion is effective in moderating the negative effects of current stress exposure and post traumatic stress symptoms on negative nurse outcomes, specifically on increased compassion fatigue and burnout (Walsh, 2018).
- The Texas median facility turnover rate is 23.6% for registered nurses (RNs), but the one year retention rates are > 90% following the implementation of a standardized residency curriculum (Cline et al., 2017).

POSITION STATEMENT

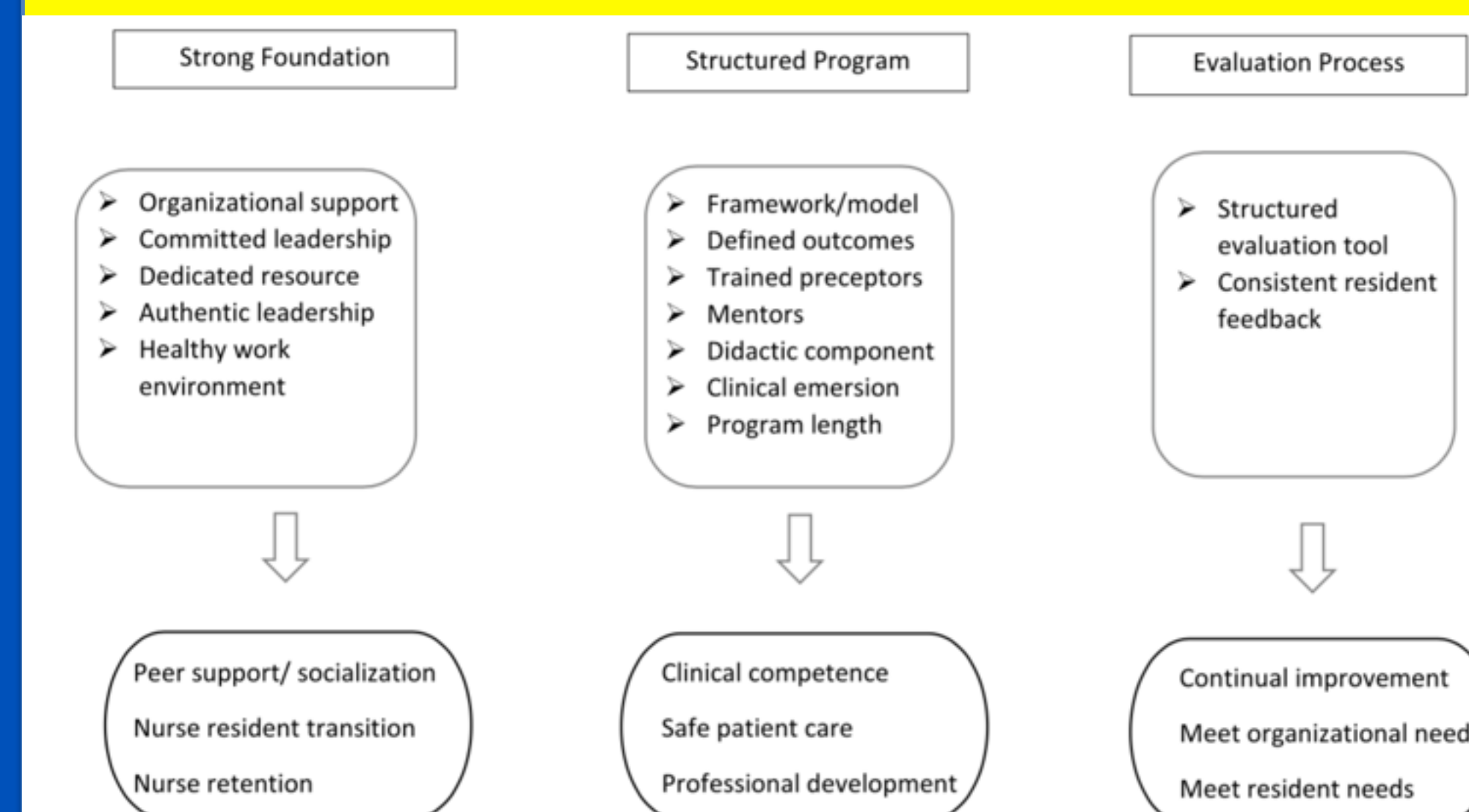
- Nurse residency programs better prepare nurses to enter the nursing profession.
- Nurse residency programs increase staff satisfaction and staff retention rates (Warren et al., 2018).
- Nurse residency programs save hospitals money (Perron et al., 2009).

SUPPORT FOR POSITION

Nurse residency programs prepare new graduate nurses by providing supplemental education as well as 1:1 orientation. They give new graduate nurses the ability to gain confidence as they enter the profession and it better prepares nurses to succeed after the residency program ends. Adequately preparing nurses helps improve patient care and helps to decrease nurse burnout. These together end up saving hospitals money because of increased retention rates. Research studies indicate that nurse residency programs have resulted in increased retention in the first year following hire, improvements in overall job satisfaction and improved perceived clinical-decision making. Decreased attrition results in financial benefits to facilities due to decreased hiring and training costs (Perron et al., 2009).

IMPLICATIONS FOR PRACTICE

New nurses often are faced with reality shock, burnout and poor retention rates (Walsh, 2018). Nurse residency programs were created to help combat these problems and help new graduate nurses successfully transition into the role of a graduate nurse. Only 10% of hospital leaders believe new graduate nurses are fully prepared to practice (Blanzola et al., 2004). Not only do new graduate nurses lack confidence in themselves, their superiors also doubt their abilities to succeed without an extensive orientation. Nurse residency programs provide additional structure, education, and guidance that could enable new graduate nurses to gain confidence and improve clinical decision-making skills (Perron et al., 2009). This leads to more competent nurses and better patient care. These programs increase confidence, self-proclaimed proficiency, fulfillment, and a decrease in distress (Perron et al., 2009).



(Chant & Westendorf, 2019)

CONCLUSION

Nurse residency programs prepare new graduate nurses to enter the workforce by providing them with didactic education, simulations and 1:1 preceptorships. This allows new nurses to gradually begin their career and increase their responsibilities as they gain confidence and experience. The transition into a graduate's professional nursing career is stressful and overwhelming. A proper orientation program to help new graduates get acclimated makes the transition much easier. Nurse residency programs increase new graduates confidence, helping them feel less overwhelmed, through classroom education as well as hands on experience. Nurse residency programs should be the gold standard for new graduate nurses.

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