

The Improvement of Patient Safety within a “Just Culture” Haley Towers

INTRODUCTION

To establish a culture that supports and promotes safety is an essential part of improving safety in healthcare. Just culture contributes to a safe culture by providing an important approach by learning from unsafe incidents and to then prevent their recurrence. Learning through unsafe incidents promotes improving patient safety, which is a top priority in healthcare (Walker et al., 2020).

“Penn (2014) describes a safe learning culture as one in which students are treated fairly, errors are viewed justly and leadership is approachable and accepting” (Walker et al., 2020, p. 51).

“Approximately fourth-fifths of acute care hospitals in the United States report adoption of just culture, but corresponding increases in error reporting and improvement in safety culture have been difficult to achieve in clinical practice” (Walker et al., 2020, p. 50).

SIGNIFICANCE

- “In a just culture, there is a shared recognition that adverse events may be multifactorial and systems and processes play an important role in increasing the likelihood of individual human errors. A just culture stresses the importance of creating systems and processes that decrease that likelihood” (Allyn, 2019, para. 19).
- A mature safety culture is a common characteristic of high-performing health care organizations. The goals to shape a more just organizational safety culture is to improve patient safety incident reporting and learning (Flott et al., 2018).

As stated by Dr. Slanetz:

‘Staff who raise concerns must be viewed as providing opportunities for departments and organizations to grow. Only then can health care organizations add value, and most importantly, be able to provide the highest quality of care’ (Allyn, 2019, para. 21).

POSITION STATEMENT

A just culture is a shared mindset that asserts that everyone will focus more on learning from errors and adverse events, rather than assigning blame (Allyn, 2019).

The essential first step to align nursing education with practice is promoting just culture as the mechanism for patient safety (Walker et al., 2020).

SUPPORT FOR POSITION

- There are multiple key differences existing between experienced nurses in the professional setting and student nurses confirming original changes, as well as necessitating additional modifications to the JCAT-NE (Walker et al., 2020).
- The JCAT-NE findings reveal that with an increase in understanding the differences in perception and experience related to errors that students have, shows the different stages of their professional development (Walker et al., 2020)
- “Modifications to these items to include the word ‘if’ allows the exploration of the perceptions students may have in light of their lack of actual experience and creates an opportunity to explore the extent to which students perceive they can trust the culture of the academic institution in addressing safety-related events, increasing the reliability and validity of the JCAT-NE” (Walker et al., 2020, p. 56).



(Erickson, 2012)

IMPLICATIONS FOR PRACTICE

- This study contributes to the refinement of the JCAT-NE, which is a valid and reliable instrument that measures student perception of just culture in academia (Walker et al., 2020).
- The prevention of error is a goal for all healthcare organizations and registered nurses’ figure prominently in this work (Walker et al., 2020).
- “Whether students will report errors as registered nurses depends on the culture of the institution that employs them and on their experience with reporting errors, which is greatly shaped by their academic institutions’ policies” (Walker et al., 2020, p. 56).
- Throughout the instrument of JCAT-NE, the following concepts of openness, communication, fairness, quality improvement and trust are all reflected and incorporated (Walker et al., 2020).
- The JCAT-NE can measure continuous process improvements within the programs of nursing education as the actions of integration of principles, within a just culture are being taken (Walker et al., 2020).
- “The importance of instilling the principles of just culture in nursing students during their formative education cannot be understated, as they will enter an error-prone healthcare system where reporting errors is the best defense for mitigating future errors” (Walker et al., 2020, p. 56).



(Biospectrumasia, 2019)

CONCLUSION

“If nurses are to adopt behaviors aligned with concepts of just culture, those behaviors must be modelled during their education and the knowledge, skills and attitudes that align with just culture must be integrated in the curricula” (Walker et al., 2020, p. 57).

“Assessment with a valid and reliable instrument to identify areas of strength and areas where improvement is possible within the education program is the first step in creating curricula that support student development of the professional behaviors needed to adopt just culture as a mechanism for high-quality safe practice before they enter the healthcare workforce” (Walker et al., 2020, p. 57).

By acknowledging that experienced professional make mistakes, could promote and open a safe reporting system, that way everyone can speak up without fear of reprisal. Shared learning errors can prevent the errors from occurring again (Allyn, 2019).

“Improving safety culture in health care is a long-term process that demands conviction for improvement and timely interventions that are aligned with the needs of staff members and the preferences of patients” (Flott et al., 2018, para. 37).

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