

Safety Huddles

The Problem

The resource nurse is responsible for initiating and leading the safety huddle, where staff gathers to briefly update all team members on patient acuity, any safety issues, and assignment management. The safety huddle should be a quick and effective tool that increases situational awareness of the unit - the ability to “generate actionable knowledge through the use of relevant information”. However, when our team surveyed the resource nurses, we learned that no standardized huddle format existed. Not all floors huddled. Huddles were not well-attended and staff came late and left early. Staff felt huddles were too long, unfocused, and often of little value.

Aim/Goal

Develop, implement, and sustain a stream-lined huddle process in order to:

- Foster team communication
- Increase team members’ situational awareness of unit
- Promote caregiver safety and balanced nursing assignments
- Promote patient safety and effective patient care

The Team

Meg Femino	Kim Sulmonte	Jennifer Lane Black	Simone Rinaldi
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Robin McLaughlin	Mary O’Connell	Kathleen Adams	Christine Saba
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The Interventions

Revised guideline #100-23 Implementing Safety Huddles: “huddles should be under 5 minutes and focused on the caregiver’s ability to manage work assignment safely and effectively. Each caregiver should verbalize concise, pertinent information regarding any patient with high/escalating acuity. Each caregiver should also verbalize patient assignment status to determine if support and/or workload reassignment is necessary”.

Developed staff educational materials:

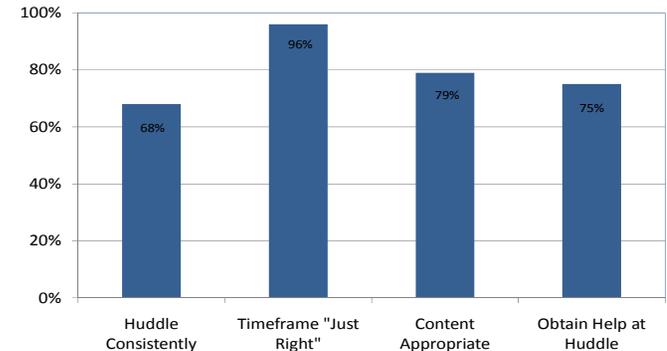
- “Facilitating a Huddle” and “Huddle Trouble-Shooting” were added to huddle policy appendix
- Safety Huddle video, added to clinical portal under “Self-help/Training”



The Results/Progress to Date

In July 2009, 6 months after the safety huddle re-launch, a follow-up survey was completed by the nursing leadership group (Nurse Managers, Clinical Nurse Specialists, Unit Educators, and Resource Nurses) to assess the use of huddles. Additionally the survey was distributed to nursing staff across the medical center – a total of 135 nurses responded.

6 Month Post-Implementation Survey Results



Lessons Learned

The safety huddle is a quick and effective tool that increases situational awareness of the unit. When the huddle goes well, we have better communication, stronger teams, and a timely response of to any issues or concerns – keeping both patients and staff safe!

Next Steps/What Should Happen Next

With a stream-lined process and resources now in place, ongoing monitoring is occurring at the local level by nurse managers, clinical nurse specialists, and unit educators. Additionally, our team has incorporated huddle educational materials into the centrally-based nursing orientation (reinforced through preceptors at the unit level). We've also recommended that huddle materials be incorporated into existing/ongoing nursing educational offerings (e.g. Resource Nurse Training and Bedside Emergencies).



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