Constructive Accountability Improves Patient Outcomes in the Emergency Department

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Constructive Accountability Improves Patient Outcomes in the Emergency Department

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Background/Significance
- A lack of accountability in healthcare can erode the quality of care.
- Creating a culture of accountability is necessary for advancing an organization and sustaining change efforts.
- Improved engagement and strengthened performance occur when there is a sense of mutual responsibility.
- Positive results of constructive accountability include improved performance.
- One nurse leader identified an opportunity to implement constructive accountability to improve patient outcomes in an acute care hospital’s Emergency Department (ED).

Project Goal/Objectives
- Project goal was to improve patient outcomes in an acute care community hospital Emergency Department through constructive accountability.

Methods
- In January 2023, ED nurse staff were held individually accountable for their outcomes by ED leadership team.
- Weekly, nurses named in patient experience survey complaints addressed directly.
- Nurses held accountable for timeliness of care (TOC).
- TOC data - including arrival to triage, arrival to disposition discharged and discharge order to disposition - posted monthly in staff lounge and reviewed with each nurse by ED leadership for opportunities for improvement.

Results/Outcomes
- ED patient experience improved by 22% for satisfaction with arrival (incl. Waiting time to treatment area); 3.9% for satisfaction with nurses (incl. Nurses responses to questions/concerns) and 6.54% for satisfaction with overall assessment of care (incl. Staff cared about you as a person).
- Timeliness of care metrics decreased by 35% for Arrival to first room, 31% for Bed assign to disposition order and 24.4% Discharge order to disposition.

Conclusion
- Nurse leaders holding nursing staff individually accountable, positively impacts nurses’ practice which positively impacts patient outcomes.

Implications/Discussion
- ED patient experience improved by 22% for satisfaction with arrival (incl. Waiting time to treatment area); 3.9% for satisfaction with nurses (incl. Nurses responses to questions/concerns) and 6.54% for satisfaction with overall assessment of care (incl. Staff cared about you as a person).
- Timeliness of care metrics decreased by 35% for Arrival to first room, 31% for Bed assign to disposition order and 24.4% Discharge order to disposition.
- Constructive accountability allows nurses to understand their individual role in timeliness of care and overall patient experience.

References
https://www.opm.gov/policy-data-oversight/performance-management/reference-materials/more-topics/accountability-can-have-positive-results/