

Dissemination of nursing knowledge - Presentations at professional meetings

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(Accepted)

Growing Our Graduates.

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Purpose: The nursing shortage demands creative strategies to meet staffing needs hospital-wide. This need prompted us to hire graduate nurses directly into our ICU. To properly prepare and assimilate the new nurses, we developed and implemented a stage-based orientation program.

Description: The critical care fellowship stages begin in a medical-surgical unit and advance to the critical care units. The initial stage is intended to provide a foundation for basic nursing, time management, and computer charting skills. A rotation-specific preceptor is designated for each graduate nurse in all unit rotations. Multidisciplinary classes are also held throughout the fellowship. The orientation stages continue in the ICU. Stage I consists of stable ICU patient assignments centered on learning unit-specific routines and standards. Stage II consists of increasingly challenging assignments and development of advanced critical care nursing knowledge. The focus of Stage III is fostering independence in preparation for the end of orientation. Formal evaluations occur at 4 week intervals throughout this 23 week orientation. After orientation ends, one to one mentoring begins, to provide a clinical resource and further stimulate critical thinking skills.

Outcomes/Evaluation: After two years of implementing the stage-based fellowship, 75% of our graduate nurses successfully completed the program and continue to thrive as critical care nurses. The stage-based approach has also allowed us to appropriately place new grads and weed out those not suitable for critical care, thus saving time and money.