

## **Conducting Peer-led Stay Interviews with Nurses to Promote Connection, Employee Engagement, and Seek Retention Solutions**

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**Background & Significance:** Due to many complex factors including an aging workforce, shortage of nursing faculty, limited capacity for enrollment at current nursing schools, and the COVID-19 pandemic and resulting burnout, hospitals are facing a national nursing shortage crisis. Retention of nurses continues to be at the forefront of hospital planning. One often underutilized retention strategy is the implementation of stay interviews.

**Clinical Question:** Are peer-led stay interviews an effective and feasible method for learning about nurses work-related experiences to promote connection, enhance engagement, and seek retention solutions in the workplace?

**Evidence:** Stay interviews, typically utilized within business and technology fields, are discussions a leader conducts with employees to learn how to strengthen the employee's engagement and increase retention. While nursing literature continues to focus on measuring burnout and seeking causational and correlational factors related to turnover, further discussion of why nurses choose to remain in their current roles may prove to be an essential retention strategy.

**Intervention Implementation:** This quality improvement project was coordinated by a subcommittee within a Retention Committee of a large academic medical center and composed of two direct care nurses, two nurse leaders, and a human resources business partner. The interviews were conducted over a 1-2 month period and were conducted by informal leaders on the respective units. Interview participants volunteered and were asked the following three questions: (1) What makes you feel valued at work? (2) What factors contribute to you doing your best work? (3) Why do you stay/What keeps you working here?

**Evaluation:** A thematic analysis was conducted with the pilot data using Miles, Huberman and Saldana's method for data condensation, data display, and drawing and verifying conclusions.

**Results:** Analysis of the data revealed that receiving recognition, relationships with leaders, and feeling part of a team were consistent themes that make nurses feel valued. A good work-life balance, positive team work, and having adequate staff and resources are all factors that contribute to nurses doing their best work. Co-workers, patients, and schedule flexibility also keep nurses working within their unit.

**Significance/Conclusion:** Using open-ended questions and follow-up discussion in a comfortable and private environment, the Retention Committee learned what nurses valued, what allowed nurses to feel motivated at work, and what kept them satisfied within their current nursing role. The Stay Interview process proved to be a feasible, effective, and positive experience for nurses and interviewers. The Retention Committee was able to use the interview data to begin implementing new retention strategies.