

Title: Pain Management Clinic Orientation: Developing an Improved Onboarding Process for Newly Hired Nurses

Author: Loren Steinfeldt, RN, BSN

Statement of the Problem: Orientation and training needs in a new setting are different for novice and experienced nurses. Learning new specialized skills may cause anxiety in experienced nurses. Current orientation processes and materials at St. Joseph Hospital's Pain Clinic are not designed to adequately train and assess competency in required skills and knowledge for nurses of all experience levels.

Background: A literature review demonstrates that nurses should be considered novices in new settings, regardless of experience level. Orientation must focus on key material. Careful selection and development of preceptors is also critical to successful orientation.

Objectives: This needs assessment examined current orientation processes at St. Joseph Hospital's Pain Clinic to identify learning needs and inform the revision of orientation content and competencies.

Methods: All clinic nurses (n=7) completed a 29-item needs assessment. Likert-scaled items addressed satisfaction with orientation experiences and preceptors, confidence about pain knowledge and management skills, preceptor experience and preparation for this role. Open-ended questions asked about orientation pros and cons, topics for ongoing learning, previous nursing experience, years of experience, and education level.

Findings: Most nurses (85.7%) were confident in pain knowledge. Nurses with >10 years in the clinic (71.4%) were very confident (3 on 0-3 scale) in their pain assessment and intervention skills competency. Nurses with <2 years' experience in the clinic were more likely to rate themselves satisfied (2 on a 0-3 scale) with their skills competency after orientation. Qualitative questions identified that orientation should include preceptor training, as well as education about new pain medications, including cannabinoid use. All nurses rated their preceptor a 3, but preceptors self-competency ratings varied from 1-3.

Implications for Practice: This project indicates a need for improved orientation materials, including utilization of online preceptor training and ongoing education for all nurses on current pain management medications and practices.