

Socialization

The Preceptor's Role

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Objectives

The learner will be able to

- Verbalize understanding of the definition of socialization
- Recognize how a nursing student transitions into a professional via socialization
- Provide examples of various strategies which can be used to socialize an individual into a unit
- Explain strategies of “what to do” and “where to go” if things are not going well in a socialization relationship

Pre-test

1. There are 3 ways that a new graduate nurse becomes socialized into the nursing profession
 - a) True
 - b) False
2. If a preceptor is having difficulty with a preceptee, a meeting with the clinical educator should take place
 - a) True
 - b) False
3. Strategies for socializing the new graduate nurse to the new unit are very important
 - a) True
 - b) False

Pre-test

4. Ensuring the preceptee has a locker and is on mass email distribution lists are tactics for socialization
 - a) True
 - b) False
5. Socialization, like learning, is a lifelong process
 - a) True
 - b) False

Professional socialization

A process of learning the norms, attitudes, behaviors, skills, roles, and values of the profession. It involves the internalization of the values and norms of the profession in the individual's own behavior and self-concept.

Professional socialization as a process

There are two processes that help individuals learn their roles

- The process of interacting with groups and significant others (experiential)
- To learn from role play, identification, modeling, instruction, observation, trial and error and role negotiation (educational)

A lifelong process

- Professional socialization is a lifelong process that begins with the curriculum and faculty of the nursing program and then extends into the work setting
- Individuals should seek opportunities to socialize-- formal and informal unit function

A lifelong process

Formal and informal nursing unit function

- Understand nursing unit functions - formal and informal leadership
- Understand nursing unit roles - management and staff
- How policies are developed
- Operational goals - finance, quality

Many times it is not only learning this structure but also adapting to or accepting it that allows the individual to be socialized

Professional socialization as an outcome

- The goal is to develop a professional identity whereby certain attributes become a part of the new graduate nurse's personal and professional self-image and behavior
- Professional socialization allows all healthcare team members to communicate effectively as professionals

Outcomes...

- As a result of professional socialization, preset values are replaced with values of the nursing profession
- A change in values results in a change in behavior
- Finally, an individual's self-concept is changed resulting in the development of a professional identity

Outcomes of professional socialization

There are 3 different outcomes of the professional socialization process

1. New graduate nurses become socialized into the nursing profession when they successfully internalize norms, attitudes, behaviors, skills, roles, and values of the profession (informal)
2. Also socialized by passing the NCLEX exam (formal)
3. Failure to socialize

Outcomes of professional socialization

- Some new graduate nurses have difficulty adapting to the “real world of nursing” and to the work environment
- Some new graduate nurses never become professionally socialized and thus are at risk to leave the profession

Why is this important?

- Professional socialization, like learning, is a continuous, interactive and lifelong process
- Healthcare organizations must recognize and assist new graduate nurses through their role transition from student to professional

Preceptor into socializer

- Learn strategies to become a good socializer
- Teach the informal norms of the unit
 - Who the informal leaders are on each shift
 - Who are the resources are on each shift
- Be an advocate for the preceptee

Strategies for becoming a good socializer

- Send a welcome card to the new graduate nurse, signed by nursing unit staff
- Assign a locker to the preceptee prior to the first day on the unit
- Have orientation calendar ready for first day on the unit
- Talk positively about preceptee to all staff
- Introduce and speak positively about preceptee to the informal unit leaders
- Add preceptee to unit mass email/text distribution lists before the end of orientation
- Develop a welcome board for new hires

Further advice for socialization

- Introduce preceptee to the “rules of work”
- Examples
 - How to ask for PTO
 - Teach about generational gaps on the unit
 - Diversity teaching specific to the unit
 - How and where to clock-in
 - When to ask for and take breaks

Post-test

1. There are 3 ways that a nursing student becomes socialized into the nursing profession
 - a) True
 - b) False
2. If a preceptor is having difficulty with a preceptee, a meeting with the Clinical Educator should take place
 - a) True
 - b) False
3. Strategies for socializing the new graduate nurse to the new unit are very important
 - a) True
 - b) False

Post-test

4. Ensuring the preceptee has a locker and is on mass email distribution lists are tactics for socialization
 - a) True
 - b) False
5. Socialization, like learning, is a lifelong process
 - a) True
 - b) False

Pre & post-test answers

1. True
2. True
3. True
4. True
5. True

References

Clancey, C. (2014). *Critical conversations in healthcare*. Indianapolis, IN. Sigma Theta Tau International.

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