

Gratitude interventions for nurses

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Innovate and track the outcomes.

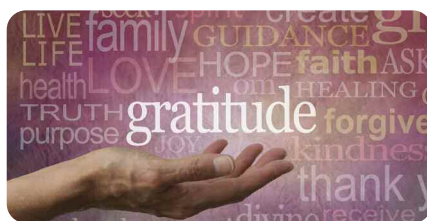
GRATITUDE is a simple concept that we're all familiar with, but it may be difficult to routinely express it in our everyday work environment. Imagine starting each shift with nurses and other healthcare professionals huddled together expressing their gratitude. And imagine leaving the shift with a focus on shared gratitude rather than on what didn't work well. In the spirit of National Nurses Week, innovate with gratitude in your workplace.

Gratitude is defined as the state of being grateful and thankful; when you're grateful, you appreciate the benefits you've received. Some consider gratitude an emotion directed toward appreciating the help of others. However, the key to gratitude isn't just being grateful for others. Particularly for nurses who multitask in busy, stressful environments, gratitude involves a consistent, moment-to-moment internal focus on observing, recognizing, and appreciating the positive aspects of life. Easier said than done, right? It takes practice, but it may offer health-related benefits.

Try these gratitude interventions.

Gratitude list

List what you're grateful for in the workplace, and invite nurses in your organization to do the same. Perhaps you're grateful for exemplary nursing practice, effective interdisciplinary collaboration, the resources that empower nurses to be the best they can be, or the opportunity for nursing to be innovative and drive quality outcomes in the organization. Or maybe you're grateful for something simpler, such as making it to work on time (or at all), considering challenges you face at home; having good staffing; attending an important meeting; working on a special project; having a healthy meal during your shift; getting in 15,000 steps; taking an uninterrupted break; or just being able to go to the bathroom or get a drink of water. Or perhaps a nurse leader, peer, or colleague thanked you for your work and acknowledged your extra effort. Observe how you feel when the focus is on what you and others are grateful for.



Gratitude visit

How often does something occur in the workplace for which we're grateful, but we don't do more than say "thank you"? Instead, write a letter or email to someone at work thanking them for what they did. But rather than just sending it to them, read it to them in person. Observe whether this action provides more happiness than just sending the email or letter.

Gratitude huddle

Many organizations have huddles to identify daily priorities and action plans. Innovate in upcoming huddles with gratitude. Ask everyone to express what they're grateful for, then observe the outcomes. Do you see a change in satisfaction, communication, or teamwork on the unit?

Gratitude challenge

In November 2017, the American Nurses Association's (ANA's) Healthy Nurse, Healthy Nation™ Grand Challenge identified five ways being thankful can help you become happier and healthier. Participants expressed gratitude and shared comments with the community at hnhn.org or in the private Facebook group. In the

workplace, nurses were most thankful for their career, supportive co-workers, and education opportunities. Helpful gratitude practices included journaling and sharing thankfulness. Look for this challenge again in November 2018.

We need research on effective nursing interventions focusing on gratitude. Please share your gratitude experiences on ANA's Healthy Nurse, Healthy Nation Facebook group or join the conversation in the Quality of Life section at hnhn.org in recognition of National Nurses Week 2018 and throughout the year. ★

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Selected reference

Wood AM, Froh JJ, Geraghty AW. Gratitude and well-being: A review and theoretical integration. *Clin Psychol Rev*. 2010;30(7):890-905.