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Strategies for Promoting Staff Wellbeing and Preventing Burnout in Inpatient Oncology Units

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Working with patients with cancer is rewarding, but can also lead to staff burnout. Staff members frequently help patients and families cope with death and dying. Cancer treatment can be lengthy and has negative side effects that challenge the coping skills of most patients and families. Nursing staff members are a caring presence through it all, assisting patients and families as they confront what is frequently the biggest challenge of their lives. The members of the staff, in turn, need a support structure to help them care for themselves and to enable them to be a loving presence for their patients. Following are two examples of support structures in place at UC San Diego Health that promote staff well-being: 1) Remembrance Rock Rounds – an inter-professional effort to help staff cope with the death of a patient, 2) The Workplace Bliss Committee – a staff-led effort focused on members helping each other through recognition and social support.

Remembrance Rock Rounds

Jacobs Medical Center 5FG is a palliative care and medical oncology unit on which the nursing staff often witnesses the dying process. Nurses are challenged to address the physical, emotional, psychological and spiritual aspects of care every day. Nurses in the medical oncology and palliative care unit go back and forth between actively treating one patient while helping another patient cope with death. This process takes a toll on the nursing staff.

5FG staff members recognize the need to help each other replenish compassion at the bedside. A few days after a patient dies, the Palliative



Andrea Bogardus, BSN, RN, CHPN is a Registered Nurse on the Blood and Marrow Transplant unit at Jacobs Medical Center. Andrea has been a Registered Nurse for 6 years. She started her career on an Acute Leukemia Telemetry unit at the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor. She has worked at UCSD on the BMT unit for the last 4 years. She earned her bachelor's degree from Eastern Michigan University. Andrea is the Shared Governance Chair for the BMT unit and is the Co-Chair of the Workplace Bliss Committee. Andrea is an active preceptor on her unit for nursing students, new grads, and experienced nurses. Andrea is also a Certified Hospice and Palliative Nurse.



Karen Lubanga Armenion, MSN, RN graduated with a Bachelor of Science in Nursing from Cebu Normal University in the Philippines. She ranked 16th overall in the Philippine National Licensure Examination for Registered Nurses in 1999. Since then, she has worked in several organizations as a registered nurse in the acute care setting. She joined UC San Diego Health in 2003 as a clinical nurse II in the HIV/Infectious Disease Unit. She pursued her Master's Degree in Nursing and graduated in 2009 from the University of Phoenix. Karen has 12 years of administrative nursing leadership experience; 7 years as an acute care nurse manager. She has been successful in improving operations, work processes, nurse-sensitive outcomes and patient experience at the unit, divisional and organizational levels. Karen has been a mentor for nursing staff in their leadership and clinical advancement. She promotes transformational leadership in her daily interactions with staff and patients. She provided leadership in the opening of Jacobs Medical Center 5FG, the Medical Oncology and Palliative Care Unit. Karen is the recipient of the 2014 Nurse Manager of the Year for Empirical Outcomes.

Patient Satisfaction Nursing Scores CAHPS

Year	Communication	Courtesy	Listen	Explain
2013	86	92.6	82.6	82.6
2014	84	89.9	80.4	81.8
2015	86.3	90.8	84.2	83.9
2016	86.4	90.4	83.3	85.4
2017	88.7	95.5	87.5	83

Care Team and/or the nursing staff gathers together to remember the patient. A small rock is passed on from one staff person to another as each speaks about his or her memory of the patient. The rocks are placed inside a glass vase on the unit to serve as a reminders of the lives that we have cared for.

Remembrance Rock Rounds allow the staff members to speak about the patient as they remember him or her. It provides them an opportunity to value the patient as a person that they cared for. It is a way for the staff to create closure in caring for the patient and their families. The process has emerged organically from the staff as a way to come together after a patient's death. The unit is now in the process of investigating ways to measure the effectiveness of remembrance rock rounds in assisting the staff to cope with death and dying.

The Workplace Bliss Committee

Jacobs Medical Center 6FGH is a blood and marrow transplant (BMT) unit where a Workplace Bliss Committee (WBC) was created by the staff. The WBC focuses on improving staff morale, encouraging staff recognition, increasing workplace satisfaction, and creating an atmosphere of fun in which all staff members, including members of the interdisciplinary team, work together and help each other.

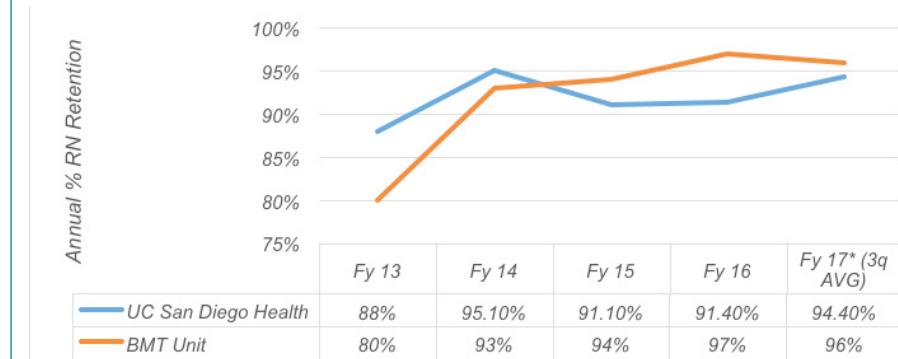
Supporting the well-being of the staff is vital to improving patients' quality of care. Two areas that influence work satisfaction are relationships with co-workers



Be The Match Drive (September 20, 2017)

7 staff members volunteered for the day. Pictured here: April Parker, Andrea Bogardus, Sandy Morin, Alyson McDonough

Nursing Retention for BMT Unit and UCSD 2013 - 2017



and acknowledgement of work performed. Social support from co-workers enhances the effects of work engagement and nurses' satisfaction. Promoting a fun work environment is important for employee morale and productivity. Outside work activities and celebrations involving food are most favored by employees for providing a sense of fun. To determine the effectiveness of the WBC, pre and post surveys were analyzed as well as Press Ganey Patient and Employee Satisfaction scores (Table 4) and retention data (Figure 1). Over 60% of the staff participated in outside work

activities. Survey results demonstrated an increase in staff morale and in feelings of recognition in all categories of the Press Ganey. Nurse retention scores steadily increased after the initiation of the WBC exceeding the retention rates for UCSD Health. Patient satisfaction, measured through the HCAHPS, also increased.

Remembrance Rock Rounds and the Workplace Bliss Committee are evidence that frontline staff members can be successful in initiating structures and processes that promote caring both for themselves and others.