Caring in an era of constraints

The Case for Healthcare Huddles
Presentation Objectives

- Demonstrate an increased awareness of health care huddles
- Recognize the benefits that huddles can provide to their home organizations/workplaces
- Realize how huddles promote patient safety
- Learn the format for structuring huddles
Let us Introduce Ourselves

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2004 Canadian Adverse Events Study: Suggested that of the ~ 2.5 million annual hospital admissions in Canada, about 185,000 are associated with an adverse event and close to 70,000 of these are potentially preventable.

Also concluded that between 9,250 and 23,750 deaths from adverse events could have been prevented.

Led to the Safer Healthcare Now! Campaign - targeted interventions to improve patient safety
It’s worth it

~10% of hospitalized patients experience an adverse event
Making Patient Safety Everyone’s Concern

- Too many patients are being harmed in our hospitals
- 1/3 employees are typically engaged in what they do.
  - This means that 2/3 employees are not engaged. We can re-engage employees if we involved them in finding solutions to patient safety issues and quality (Stevenson, 2012).

Huddles foster a culture of continuous improvement
What is a Huddle?

Are focused on a visual communication board that is updated daily

Brief, daily, stand-up two-way meetings held between front-line staff and managers

The discussion is two-way, with active feedback and problem-solving

Each department has goals that are aligned with the key organizational strategies - and they are meaningful to the unit
Origins of the Huddle Format

- Our modern conceptual image of a huddle as a circle used primarily in sports derives its’ origin from the aboriginal traditions of the healing and talking circle.
- The shape of a circle allows for the de-stratification of authority roles.
Origins of the Huddle

- In Aboriginal Tradition, each member of the circle is important, but none is the final authority.
- It is this sense of community participation that gives the circle (huddle) its’ power as a communication format.
Where do Huddles Work?

- In small clinics, hospital units, operating rooms, outpatient settings, and in many other health care settings (Stewart & Johnson, 2007)

- While the main focus of huddles is to improve communication between care providers, they can also lead to an increased understanding of team members’ contribution to patient care.
Common examples of the huddle format can be found in pre-flight safety checks (Patient Safety 2008).

Business executives huddling before a major presentation (Patient Safety, 2008)
Where to Start

- Getting buy in
- Senior management support
- Pre-determined structure
- Define the purpose
Huddle Facilitation

- Charge nurse acts as facilitator & cheerleader
- Facilitator selects from a list of hot topics (falls risk, restraints, daily discharges)
- Include and involve all disciplines
- Everyone has a voice
A huddle board in early development
Attributes of a Huddle

- Increase communication and awareness between unit leaders and front-line staff
- Increase awareness using data and visual management tools
- Discussion of root causes of problems and issues that arise daily
- Accountability provides a method for corrective actions
- Deals with today’s issues today, while they are fresh in everyone’s mind
Keep it short

- 5-10 minute maximum
- Standard questions - It is important to stay positive and keep the communication on track.
- A transparent approach
Collaboration, communication, and camaraderie amongst staff.

A real sense of teamwork!

A great place to introduce new staff, and new initiatives.
An effective Huddle contains these four key elements:

**Schedule/Process**
- The meeting is planned and follows an agenda
- The right people can be there
- The team leader/facilitator is prepared
- The team understands the goals and objectives

**Communication**
- Team feels comfortable to share and participate
- Feedback is encouraged and is constructive
- Everyone feels responsible and involved

**Problem Solving/Solution-Driven**
- Team works together to identify actions that can be taken to solve problems identified
- Actions are distributed fairly and are tracked

**Data/Metrics**
- Discussion is based on facts and metrics
- Data is current, clear, and understood by all
Visual Data Templates
Make your Huddle Fun

- The Golden Helmet Award (Awarded in Recognition of An Exceptional Effort)
- The Coveted Green Jacket (this is rotated from person to person as a means of including all staff).
Our Surgical Team

[Image of a group of people, possibly a surgical team, smiling and posing around a cake with a 2012 design.]
Huddle Take-Aways

- Helps to breakdown barriers to communication by encouraging total participation
- Provides a platform for learning and sharing practice tips and advice (Frank, 2011)
- Can be a forum for change. Ideal venue to introduce new initiatives and care priorities (Frank, 2011)


Hayden, G., Rockley, W., Ware, J., Smith, M. (2010). Protecting a healthy work environment despite change: Shift huddles enhancing team communication and patient...
References

