

YOU ARE THE EXPERT

HOW TO TALK TO YOUR MANAGER
ABOUT YOUR PROFESSIONAL
RESPONSIBILITY COMPLAINT

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PROFESSIONAL PRACTICE
TELECONNECT

OBJECTIVES:

- Develop strategies for talking with Managers about Professional Responsibility Workload Report Forms (PRWRFs)
- How to prepare for the meeting
- Establish problem-solving techniques

Speaking with your manager is part of the process:

Hospital collective agreement Article 8.01:

The parties agree that patient care is enhanced if concerns relating to professional practice, patient acuity, fluctuating workloads and fluctuating staffing are resolved in a ***timely and effective*** manner.

In the event that the Hospital assigns a number of patients or a workload to an individual nurse or group of nurses such that ***they have cause to believe*** that they are being asked to perform more work than is consistent with proper patient care, they shall:

Meeting with your manager may be part of the process in the collective agreement:

- (a) i) At the time the workload issue occurs, discuss the issue within the unit/program to develop strategies to meet patient care needs using current resources.
- ii) If necessary, using established lines of communication, seek immediate assistance from individual(s) identified by the Hospital (who could be within the bargaining unit) who has responsibility for timely resolution of workload issues.
- iii) Failing resolution of the workload issue at the time of occurrence, the nurse(s) will discuss the issue with her or his Manager or designate on the next day that the Manager or designate and the nurse are both working or within five (5) calendar days, whichever is sooner. The Manager will provide a written response to the complainant(s), with a copy to the Bargaining Unit President.

Examples of categories of Workload Issues to be discussed:

- Change in patient acuity or level of activity i.e. admissions and discharges
- Delay in assessment, treatment or medications
- Non-nursing functions and interruptions
- Physician related issues
- Staffing levels and/or skill mix
- Communication
- Education/orientation
- Environment
- Equipment
- Supplies
- Job descriptions and duties
- Policies and procedures/practices

Meeting with your Manager:

- Many nurses find it difficult to speak to their Manager, however, it is the first step in the process to resolve PRCs, and is required by most collective agreements.
- It is the professional responsibility of the member to report and address issues in order to find resolutions and provide safe, ethical and quality care as required by CNO Standards.

Why are nurses reluctant to complete PRWRFs and speak to their Manager?

- Nurses are often afraid to speak to Managers who react defensively or negatively when PRWRFs are filed
- Nurses are reluctant to document that they could not provide safe, ethical and quality patient care
- Nurses don't think they have time to complete the PRWRFs
- Nurses lose faith in the process "I've filled them out before and nothing has happened."

Difficult Discussions

- Managers often take offense to the PRWRF being submitted
- They may become defensive in their discussions or meetings with staff
- Don't make the same mistake.....speak calmly and professionally, focusing on the issues and the workload concerns
- Relate the workload issue to the potential negative impact on patient care
- Be prepared to explain how the Manager's attempts did not resolve your workload issue, and therefore you were exercising your professional right to complete the PRWRF.

Difficult Discussions

Addressing PRW Report Form concerns often involve:

- Disagreement with the Manager regarding the circumstances or events
- Managers may imply 'hurt feelings' because they believe they did everything within their ability at the time
- Managers often feel blamed and caught in the middle
- Managers often believe that budgetary constraints prevent solutions

These are not your issues.....YOU are required to provide safe, competent, ethical patient care

Difficult Discussions

- Use open ended questions when speaking with your Manager
 - Start with who, what, where, when, why and how
 - This prevents one word answers such as yes and no

Examples:

- ✓ What was the reason you chose that schedule?
- ✓ How would you interpret this CNO Standard?
- ✓ How do you see this issue?
- ✓ Why did you choose that particular time frame to analyze your data?

Prepare for the meeting with your Manager:

- Link the workload issues with the CNO Practice Standards, and/or Practice Guidelines; any other applicable legislation ie (OH&S Act); the RNAO Best Practice Guidelines and/or any specialty association standards e.g.. CNA, OPANA, etc.
- Link the workload issues with the facility's Vision, Mission and Values.
- Gather any necessary documentation- ie policies, procedure, forms, schedules etc.
- Brainstorm with co-workers for potential resolutions to the issues identified in the report(s) and document them in writing.

Prepare for the meeting with your Manager:

- Ideally, all nurses involved in the report speak to the Manager together.
- Be very detailed regarding the nature of the issues identified (i.e. acuity of patients).
- Be prepared to discuss the professional practice and workload issues, and provide the employer with solutions/resolutions and rationale.
- Unit grown solutions are usually the best!

Why do we provide the employer with recommendations?

- The College of Nurses Standards require nurses to bring professional practice issues to the employer
- The Standards further charge nurses with the obligation to look for and recommend solutions to the issues they identify
- You have the best knowledge and understanding of the issues, and suggestions of what will improve your workplace/workload

Intent of the PRC Process – Rationale to give to your Manager

- Follows the process set out in the collective agreement
- It is not a grievance, it is a collaborative, problem-solving process between Employer and Union
- Front line members and managers have the solutions
- To achieve mutual interests: to provide safe, ethical and quality patient care
- Intent is to improve working conditions
- Provides demonstrated rationale and evidence for increased resources, both human and environmental/equipment

Intent of the PRC Process – Rationale to offer your Manager

- Protects your nursing practice and that of your manager (http://www.cno.org/docs/prac/41006_ProfStds.pdf)
- Builds relationships and procedural trust
 - *Procedural trust is the trust we place in any given structure or process we are involved in.
 - *Elements include - respect, transparency, consistency, being heard, being recognized for contribution and understanding reasons for actions.
 - *Procedural trust is linked to job satisfaction and retention of employees.

Think through your role?

- What do you have a responsibility to report?
- What do you have a responsibility to enforce?
- What role will you play if a settlement is reached with your manager?
- What role will you play if no settlement is reached with your manager?

Conditions necessary to facilitate resolution of the PRWRF issues:

1. Opportunity to resolve the issues:
 - sufficient time to have full discussion
 - all affected parties available if possible
2. Capacity to resolve the issues:
 - the parties have the ability to resolve the conflict, including the communication skills and necessary resources
3. Volition to resolve the issues:
 - the parties have the desire to resolve the issues

Next steps IF an agreement is reached with your Manager:

- Resolution should be reached in a collaborative consensus building approach
 - The parties identify the issues and engage in problem solving approaches together
 - They agree on a course of action to resolve the issues
 - The parties participate and feel a sense of ownership of the outcome (Win-Win)
- Document the discussion and resolutions agreed to on the PRW Report Form, using a separate piece of paper if necessary
- Discuss the agreement with BU President to ensure the resolutions comply with the collective agreement
- Ensure that BU President receives a copy for tracking purposes (BU President forwards copy to LRO)

Next steps IF NO agreement is reached with your Manager:

If your Manager:

- ignores the concerns raised
- does not take concerns seriously
- does not attempt to work with the nurses and the union in resolving the issues
- joint resolutions are never completed or implemented as agreed to
- no resolutions are jointly agreed to

The issues are forwarded to the Employer Agency Committee (HAC) for discussion, and the PRC process continues.

CONCLUSIONS

- Speaking with your Manager is part of the process
- Many Managers become defensive or hostile when discussing workload and practice concerns
- Many nurses are intimidated or uncomfortable when speaking with their Manager about workload and practice concerns
- Nurses are reluctant to document that they could not provide safe, ethical and quality patient care
- Link your workload issues with CNO Practice Standards, Practice Guidelines, applicable legislation, and specialty association standards.
- It is the professional responsibility of the member to report and address issues in order to find resolutions and provide safe, ethical and quality care as required by CNO Standards.

CONCLUSIONS

Conflict is everywhere, it is present in all societies and in all relationships.

Conflict is inevitable, but not all conflict is bad.

Some of the most creative ideas and inventions stem from what began as an issue in conflict.