Aggression Prevention Initiatives: Innovative and Organizational Approaches to Managing Violence in Inpatient Behavioral Health
Joseph G. Whelan, RN
North Shore - Long Island Jewish Health System

Problem: The Zucker Hillside Hospital (ZHH) is committed to providing recovery and wellness-based patient and family centered mental health care. The use of physical restraints, if a patient’s behavior becomes dangerous to self or others, poses safety concerns for all involved and impedes the delivery of trauma-informed care.

Evidence: Physical Restraint is a Joint Commission (JC) Core Measure for Hospital Based Inpatient Psychiatric Services (HBIPS) and ZHH data revealed an opportunity for improvement.

Strategy: A multi-disciplinary task force was convened to design a comprehensive approach to preventing aggression and reducing restraints. Structured interventions included staff education on aggression prevention and communication skills, use of individual patient safety plans, standardized assessment tools, revised safety policies, persistent leadership focus, daily electronic data analysis, TeamSTEPPS and the addition of a new job description.

Practice Change: ZHH placed a high professional value on eliminating the use of restraints. The delivery of patient care shifted to a recovery and trauma informed care model. This process led to enhanced patient safety and strong staff satisfaction outcomes.

Evaluation: Each facet of the restraint reduction initiative was evaluated independently and modified to optimize practice improvements.

Results: ZHH had a 71% reduction in restraint usage from June 2010 to January 2012. Employee Engagement Survey scores improved in the areas of work environment, leadership, learning and development, and overall engagement in the workplace.

Recommendations: Restraint usage is a challenging issue and presents potential for harm to patients and staff alike. Staff participation and investment are key components, as is administrative support in reduction of inpatient aggression.

Lessons Learned: High risk interventions require significant organizational dedication and investment of resources to effect process change. Interdisciplinary collaboration, project management, and ongoing evaluations are critical to sustain a substantial cultural change.
Bibliography:


