Collaboration in Healthcare

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Delegation is a task that requires a clear and concise understanding of both management and legal concepts. It is critical to understand the principles specific to delegation. As a delegator, it is important to know what and whom to delegate to and ways to assess outcomes of what has been delegated. In every workplace delegation is obligatory wherever there is a hierarchal order of individuals working together to achieve goals. The authority for delegation is outlined in the organization chart of every facility. Delegation is not an easy task and it requires clear communication, trust and coordination. Tension in the workplace amongst members of the interdisciplinary team may arise due to improper delegation or refusal of a delegated task. This tension can affect the overall quality of patient care.

Nurses have many responsibilities and delegating task is one of them. Effective delegation is important because patient outcomes may be affected during the delegation process. Delegation is a skill and a “complex process in professional practice requiring sophisticated judgment and final accountability for patient’s care” (NCSBN, 2016). With delegation comes responsibility and accountability. Nurses and unlicensed personnel, patient care assistants and certified nursing assistants work together to provide patient care. The relationship between a registered nurse and a certified nursing assistant is a “symbiotic” relationship, meaning, “you help me and I help you”. In order for relationships to thrive trust needs to be developed. As a newly registered nurse graduate, coming to a unit would be difficult to delegate to unlicensed assisted personnel or certified nursing assistants who have been on the unit for years. Prior to delegation, it is important that the nurse assess the needs of the patient. During the delegation process communication should be direct and specific in order for the task to be delegated successfully. Lastly, the task that was delegated should be evaluated by the nurse.

**A Difficult Interaction**

The interaction took place at Kingbrook Medical Center on the third floor. The unit is a medical- surgical unit. The nurse to patient ratio was 1:7. There were four certified nursing assistants on the unit. The nurse (me) assigned a certified nursing assistant to patient in room 322. The task that was delegated was to record the amount of urine collected in the drainage bag and then discard the urine. The certified nursing assistant responded with a head nod. The nurse explained to the certified nursing assistant that the client has urinary retention and that it is important to record how much urine is in the drainage bag. An hour later the nurse requested the results of the clients urinary output. The certified nursing assistant did not complete the assigned task. The nursing assistant complained of having too many patients. The refusal to complete the delegated task jeopardized the safety of the patient and caused tension amongst the members of the interdisciplinary team. The nurse was unable to give the results to the doctor in a timely manner. The nurse reported the certified nursing assistant to the nursing supervisor.

**Describe** **what was done well**

There are five rights of delegation: the right task, right circumstance, right person, right direction/communication and right supervision/evaluation. For effective delegation to occur, the following elements must be present: Autonomy: the power to do the job; competence: the skill to do it (Porter-O’ Grady & Malloch, 2016). When the nurse delegated the task to the certified nursing assistant all five measures were met. The certified nursing assistant was competent enough to perform the task given. The instructions were communicated clearly. The nurse also explained why the urine needed to be recorded. Thompson wrote that successful delegation of tasks will be demonstrated by mangers that use transformational leadership skills. These include being sensitive to subordinates capabilities, being aware of their training requirements and communicating task details clearly and accurately (Thompson, 2012). The nurse assessed the patient and delegated the task to the right person. The task delegated was in the certified nursing assistant’s scope of practice. The information was clear and background content was given explaining why the urine should be recorded.

**Describe what was not done well**

The nurse failed to communicate pertinent information to the certified nursing assistant during the delegation process. The nurse did not give clear information on a timeframe of when the results should be obtained. The nurse should have set expectations for communicating updates. The nurse also failed to confirm understanding of the delegated task. The nurse assumed that the certified nursing assistant understood the assigned task. The employee should have been asked to paraphrase the assignment. Health professionals are held accountable and responsible for what they perform under their license. Although the nurse delegated the task to the certified nursing assistant, the nursing assistant did not confirm commitment to the task. The nurse should not have assumed a head nod was a sign of the nursing assistant accepting the task. Communication of consequences if the task was not completed was also not relayed to the certified nursing assistant. A qualitative study was conducted to perceive how nurses utilize critical thinking skills during the delegation process. The article concluded that successful delegation depended on how well the nurse communicated the delegated task to the unlicensed assisted personnel (Bittner, Gravlin, 2009). Communication is critical amongst health care professionals. Quality care and patient safety depends on teamwork. Holding individuals accountable for their work builds a culture of safety. The certified nursing assistant did not complete the task due to patient overload; however, the certified nursing assistant did not communicate this to the nurse until the nurse requested the results. The certified nursing assistant was held responsible for the refusal.

**Explain what could have changed to make it effective**

The nurse could of given the certified nursing assistant another chance to complete the assigned task prior to speaking with the nursing manager. Fatigue and burnout often occur amongst healthcare professionals. Nurses are leaders and leaders need to give people second chances. The nurse could have had a conversation with the certified nursing assistant in a private space. Actively listening and communicating with the certified nursing assistant could have alleviated tension amongst the two workers. Sometimes emotions tend to get the best of us and influence the actions that are executed. It is important that the nurse sets an example for others and communicates with colleagues in a therapeutic manner. Therapeutic communication does not solely exist within patient care. A nurse needs to be able to communicate effectively with other members of the healthcare team. A nurse is a leader and leaders are coaches. The certified nursing assistant depends on the nurse for feedback and support. Working on a team requires team dynamics, collaboration and conflict management. There are several interventions that the nurse could have executed in this situation. The nurse should have listened carefully to the certified nursing assistants concerns. The nurse then could have acknowledged the certified nursing assistants concerns by conveying empathy. The conversation could have proceeded by the nurse asking open ended questions regarding the certified nursing assistants’ workload. In order to achieve team goals the nurse needs to comprehend that there are certain elements and processes allied with the interdisciplinary team. Communicating team roles and understanding that there are challenges that every team may face is critical. It is imperative to confront these challenges and identify mechanisms to improve the conflicts faced. Developing an understanding of how to tackle challenges during the delegation process is also vital. Addressing inadequacies or problems amongst staff members entails effective communication. Identifying skills to help improve self awareness will help the nurse undertake any challenge that may arise. The authors of the book Motivational Interviewing in Health Care: Helping patients change Behavior discuss ways to interact with patients. Three motivational techniques that they identify are to follow, direct and guide during patient interaction ( Rollnick & Butler, 2007). This technique can be used during interactions with colleagues as well. A nurse can follow or listen to any concerns and then communicate by explaining and educating the employee on ways to address these issues.

Difficult situations arise in the healthcare field every day. It is the role of the members of the interdisciplinary team to address these concerns in an effective manner. Lack of communication can hinder the quality of care patients receive. Understanding the principles of how to communicate in ways that are clear is essential. Patient safety is the overall goal.

References

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