

PROMOTING QUALITY OF LIFE AT WORK: EXPERIENCE REPORT OF A WORKSHOP INVOLVING NURSING STAFF*

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ABSTRACT: The aim of the report is to describe the experience of a workshop focused on the Promotion of Quality of Life at Work with nursing staff. This is an experience report about the performance of a workshop with nursing staff of a university hospital. Participants in the workshop were 60 nursing staff, with six workstations for the Promotion of Quality of Life at Work. Six workstations were carried out, simultaneously, with approximately 10 workers in each and an average duration of 30 minutes. The stations were conducted by nurses and physiotherapists with the support of a professor, covering themes relevant to the Health of the worker. The report aims to contribute to broadening the discussions on the subject, offering subsidies to rethink the work process and possible interventions aimed at improving working conditions, empowering workers in relation to self-care and preventing accidents and diseases.

DESCRIPTORS: Nursing; Health of the worker; Health promotion.

PROMOÇÃO DA QUALIDADE DE VIDA NO TRABALHO: RELATO DE EXPERIÊNCIA DE UM WORKSHOP ENVOLVENDO OS TRABALHADORES DE ENFERMAGEM

RESUMO: O objetivo do relato é descrever a experiência da realização de um workshop direcionado à Promoção da Qualidade de Vida no Trabalho com trabalhadores de enfermagem. Trata-se de relato de experiência sobre a realização de um workshop com trabalhadores de enfermagem de um hospital universitário. Participaram do workshop 60 trabalhadores de enfermagem em seis estações de trabalho destinadas à Promoção da Qualidade de Vida no Trabalho. Foram realizadas seis estações de trabalho, simultaneamente, com aproximadamente 10 trabalhadores em cada uma e duração média de 30 minutos. As estações foram conduzidas por enfermeiros e fisioterapeutas com o apoio de docente e temáticas relevantes para a Saúde do trabalhador. O relato visa contribuir para ampliação das discussões sobre o tema, oferecendo subsídios para repensar o processo de trabalho e as possíveis intervenções com vistas à melhoria das condições de trabalho, empoderamento dos trabalhadores no tocante ao autocuidado e prevenção de acidentes e doenças.

DESCRIPTORS: Enfermagem; Saúde do trabalhador; Promoção da saúde.

PROMOCIÓN DE LA CUALIDAD DE VIDA EN EL TRABAJO: RELATO DE EXPERIENCIA DE UN WORKSHOP CON TRABAJADORES DE ENFERMERÍA

RESUMEN: El objetivo del estudio fue describir la experiencia de la realización de un workshop para la Promoción de la Calidad de Vida en el Trabajo con trabajadores de enfermería. Es un relato de experiencia acerca de la realización de un workshop con trabajadores de enfermería de un hospital universitario. Participaron del workshop 60 trabajadores de enfermería en seis estaciones de trabajo destinadas a la Promoción de la Calidad de Vida en el Trabajo. Fueron realizadas seis estaciones de trabajo, de modo simultáneo, con aproximadamente 10 trabajadores en cada una y duración media de 30 minutos. Las estaciones fueron conducidas por enfermeros y fisioterapeutas con el apoyo de docente y temáticas relevantes para la Salud del trabajador. El relato pretende contribuir para ampliación de las discusiones acerca del tema, ofreciendo subsidios para repensar el proceso de trabajo y las posibles intervenciones a fin de mejorar las condiciones de trabajo, empoderamiento de los trabajadores acerca del autocuidado y prevención de accidentes y enfermedades.

DESCRIPTORES: Enfermería; Salud del trabajador; Promoción de la salud.

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INTRODUCTION

The problem of workers' health has been the focus of national and international studies, highlighting the need for interventions⁽¹⁻⁴⁾. In nursing, authors describe the exposure of nursing staff to biological, chemical, physical, mechanical, physiological and psychological loads at work, based on the framework of social determination, generating adaptation processes that translate into exhaustion^(2, 5). The exhaustion processes can be defined as the loss of potential and/or effective capacity of the body and mind of the worker, or the illness itself, with consequent presenteeism, absenteeism and loss of productivity⁽⁶⁾. In this aspect, diseases of the musculoskeletal system and mental and behavioral disorders represent the groups that generate more days off and temporary or permanent disability in nursing staff.

In spite of the magnitude of this problem, underreporting of accidents at work is situated at around 75% to 85% of cases, and both musculoskeletal problems and those of a mental nature in workers, have a great impact on the quality of nursing care⁽⁷⁾. In healthcare institutions, incapacity for work causes a serious cycle of disease in workers, considering the heavy work, the psychic loads and the difficulty of replacement of the workforce in quantitative and qualitative terms⁽⁷⁾.

Given the problem in question, it is necessary to adopt intervention measures in order to promote the health and quality of life of the staff and improve working conditions. Health promotion proposes the articulation of technical and popular knowledge and the mobilization of institutional resources, as well as public and private community resources for its resolution. This concept is related to various other concepts, such as the quality of life, health, equality, democracy, citizenship and others. In addition, it should be noted that various strategies and articulations are necessary, these being individual, community, performed by the state and by the health system for health promotion actions to take place⁽⁸⁾. In this context, among the strategies prioritized by Health Promotion, it is worth mentioning the creation of public policies, the creation of sustainable environments, the reorientation of the health services and the development of the capacity of individual subjects through the empowerment and strengthening of community action.

The foundation of these strategies are

principles that act on the determinants and causes of health, of social participation and of the need for development of alternatives to the educational practices that are restricted to intervention regarding individual habits and lifestyles⁽⁹⁾. From the critical-social perspective, the use of the notion of social/community empowerment is recommended, considering this able to contribute to the advancement of intersectoral and healthy public policies with political potential to integrate a public agenda directed towards citizenship and the production of reflective, autonomous and socially solidary subjects.

Empowerment can be defined as a dynamic process that involves cognitive, affective and behavioral aspects. Therefore, this is not performed for people but by themselves from the moment they perceive a situation of vulnerability in which they empower themselves^(10,11). From this perspective, it is argued that the professionals are responsible for creating actions or helping to create spaces that encourage the empowerment process, which will reflect situations of change in the course of life. It is therefore understood that improving the quality of life of workers may occur through individual reflections originating from collective meetings that raise conscientization in the workers about their working conditions, enabling the reflection and the search for alternatives to promote health⁽¹¹⁾.

Considering the aspects described, the proposal of this study is to present an experience report from a workshop held with the aim of discussing the quality of life at work in university hospitals and raising awareness of issues relating to the process of becoming ill, with a view to improving the working conditions.

AIM

The aim is to describe the experience of performing a workshop to promote quality of life among the nursing staff of a university hospital in São Paulo.

METHOD

This is the experience report of a workshop performed in a university hospital with a view to promoting quality of life among the nursing staff. The initiative for the workshop arose from the creation of a Study Group on the Health of the Nursing Staff at the University Hospital (GESTE/HU), with the approval of the Technical Council, to discuss the health problems of the workers.

The workshop was performed in six workstations, namely: "Taking care of my body", with clarification regarding the proper performance of movements at work, and the application of techniques for relaxation of the muscles and tendons; "Chemical products: what care should I take", directed toward guidance on the importance of personal protection equipment (PPE) use when handling chemical substances and guidance on the proper use and disposal of chemical waste; "Learning to relax and reduce stress", with the application of relaxation techniques to reduce fatigue and stress; "Work-related musculoskeletal disorders: what I need to know", which discussed the disease and the symptoms for its early detection and adequate treatment; "Understanding mental exhaustion in nursing staff", with the presentation of the concepts of stress and burnout and measures that can reduce mental exhaustion at work; and finally, "Strategies to transform the work quotidian", a workstation that addressed the importance of the collective construction of a more suitable working environment. The workshop participants were 60 nursing workers of the day and night shifts.

RESULTS

The planning of the workshop was divided into committees by the group, for the purpose of division of tasks to better organize the activities. These were: committee for disclosure through distribution in strategic places of banners and leaflets drawing attention to the event, committee responsible for registration and reception of the participants of the event and committee for the organization of refreshments. In addition, the coordinator of the group was responsible for the preparation of certificates for the participants and a member of the group was selected to accompany the participants in each of the proposed stations.

The workshop was held in the morning, with the participation of the nursing staff of the morning, afternoon and evening shifts, with a total of 60 workers. These included auxiliary nurses, nursing technicians, clinical nurses and nurses with positions of leaders and directors. Initially a reception was held, with the formal presentation of the GESTE group and its purpose in the institution, then specific guidance on the dynamics of the workshop was given, so that everyone could participate in all the proposed stations. Table 1 presents the description of each station.

Six workstations were carried out, simultaneously, with approximately 10 workers in

each and an average duration of 30 minutes. At the end of each season, the group of 10 workers was conducted to the next station by monitors appointed by GESTE-HU. The stations were conducted by nurses and physiotherapists with the support of a professor and the organization of the infrastructure necessary for their implementation was carried out by the nursing staff that makes up the GESTE-HU group. The stations contemplated the issues of greatest relevance to the Health of the nursing staff, enabling guidance and clarification of doubts and applying relaxation techniques to reduce stress and fatigue. The workshop ended with a dynamic involving all the participants, in order to recover the concepts of teamwork and commitment to the improvement of the working conditions.

DISCUSSION

The results showed that the use of the workshop strategy for conducting interventions to promote the health of nursing workers is a challenging experience, with it being possible to engage different hierarchical levels, enabling a space of learning and knowledge exchange. Studies show the importance of the construction of interventions for the promotion of workers' health to reduce injuries and maintain the capacity to work^(1,12). In this sense, the stations enabled the discussion of RSI/MSDs, which represent some of the major health problems of recent times and are considered one of the most common injuries in nursing workers, since a series of factors inherent to healthcare activities contributes to their emergence and high prevalence^(13,14,15).

This context of illness due to musculoskeletal problems has a close relationship with the work routine, characterized by the intense pace, handling of equipment and obsolete and damaged materials, among other aspects^(6,16,17). It was also possible for the workers to discuss the difficulty of finding effective treatments that minimize symptoms, which can lead to disability, affecting the performance of daily and work activities, and that, if not properly treated, result in reduced quality of life and health, generating health costs^(18,19).

The workstation that addressed mental exhaustion sought to address the complaints most reported by these workers that are related to the pressure, control and strict supervision, still present in the nursing work process, causing problems such as mental and behavioral disorders and symptoms such as headache,

Table 1 - Workstations. São Paulo, SP, 2012.

Stations	Speaker	Title of the Station	Goals of the Station
1	Occupational Therapist, member of GESTE/HU, with Master's from the Graduate Program in Nursing Management/EEUSP	Taking care of my body at work	Clarification and guidance regarding the proper performance of movements at work, and the application of techniques for relaxation of the muscles and tendons
2	Guest from EEUSP, Registered Nurse, PhD from the Graduate Program in Nursing Management/EEUSP	C h e m i c a l products: what care should I take?	Directed toward guidance regarding the importance of using PPE in handling chemical substances, guidance about use and the adequate disposal of chemical waste
3	Physiotherapist, member of GESTE/HU and Master's student of EEUSP	Learning to relax and reduce stress	Application of Jacobson's progressive muscle relaxation techniques to reduce fatigue and stress
4	Guest from EEUSP, Registered Nurse, Master's from the Graduate Program in Nursing Management/EEUSP	MSDs: what do I need to know?	Discussion of the disease, the symptoms for early detection and the appropriate treatment.
5	Guest from EEUSP, Registered Nurse, Master's student of the Graduate Program in Nursing Management/EEUSP	M e n t a l exhaustion in the nursing staff	Understanding and presentation of the concepts of stress, burnout and measures that can reduce mental exhaustion at work.
6	Nurse, member of GESTE/HU, Associate Professor of the Department of Vocational Guidance of EEUSP	Strategies to transform the work quotidian	Addressing the importance of the collective construction of a more suitable working environment.

gastric problems and insomnia⁽²⁰⁾. Therefore, it constituted a reflective space for dialogue, in which the workers were able to discover the concepts, discuss the symptoms and perceive the need to consider the psychological demands in the work process. This station also approached the varied feelings of achievements and frustrations, as a result of the quotidian experience of the workers, promoting the exchange of experiences related to psychological distress. Some studies highlight that there is a relationship between the psychological distress of the nursing staff and the work process in the hospital environment. Furthermore, there is a need to construct interventions for identification and treatment. These strategies can be at the organizational level, applied to the work environment; individual strategies focused on personal responses when trying to regulate emotions faced with a stressful situation; or combined strategies, focused on the interaction of the individual with the occupational context. Preventive actions are feasible when psychological distress is not the sole responsibility of the professional-user nor a stigma directed toward them, but rather a problem related to the individual-process of work-organization^(21,22). Considering that the nursing staff often referred to pain, disability, and symptoms of anxiety and stress, actions to prevent the progression of these complaints

are of great importance, as they interfere with the quality of life of the professionals. In this respect, the relaxation practices were conducted in order to sensitize and equip the workers for self-care. In one of the stations of the event, the proposal was to apply and teach techniques of relaxation of the muscles and tendons, with a study that evaluated the functional capacity of the worker revealing that physical activity helps to improve functional capacity⁽²³⁾. Another study from Finland confirmed that this intervention showed that physical activity is one of the positive points that influences the work capacity, ability and competence of the workers, having an impact on quality of life⁽²⁴⁾. Studies reaffirm the need to develop care strategies with the nursing staff. The performance of relaxation techniques has presented significant results in reducing musculoskeletal pain and stress, during and after working hours, however, should not be adopted as the only method for prevention and promoting health^(25,26).

Another factor discussed in the literature is the aging of the worker associated with the work demands.

Several studies corroborate this association, highlighting that institutions are not prepared for the aging of the professionals. In addition to

being constantly exposed to situations of physical and emotional stress, the nursing professionals who work in hospitals are aging, which also leads to early retirement^(27,28,29). One of the stations discussed the importance of using protective equipment when handling chemical substances and guidance on use and the proper disposal of chemical waste, providing the workers with greater knowledge and awareness about the issue. Studies evidence the exposure to chemical load among nursing workers, with numerous injuries resulting from this exposure, highlighting the need for a plan of interventions aimed at preventing exposure and promoting the health of nursing staff with regard to this issue⁽²⁾.

The finalization of the workshop enabled the discussion of issues such as autonomy, teamwork and co-responsibility, through a dynamic involving all the nursing staff. These discussions provided a space for reflection on autonomy, responsibility and teamwork, enabling the workers to rethink the work practice and quality of life, through means of empowerment and the creation of reflective processes, becoming subjects of change themselves. In this aspect, the problem of nursing staff health becomes a challenge for the health institutions and the management of human resources in nursing. In the current context, the incorporation of intervention strategies in the workplace should be part of the institutional mission, aiming to prioritize the management of human resources, considering the impact on the quality of the work processes when the workers are healthy and satisfied with their professional activity.

CONCLUSIONS

The performance of the workshop highlighted the gaps in knowledge about illness at work and enabled the sensitization of the workers regarding the collective construction of a more healthy work environment. The stations approached the most relevant issues, considering the injuries present in nursing workers and allowed, in addition to the space for debate and guidance, the exchange of knowledge and experience regarding the work process. It was noted, with this experience, the responsibility of each group to identify and construct creative strategies that can involve the workers, minimizing accidents and work-related illnesses, offering support for further studies, especially of an interventional character in the field of workers' health.

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