Nursing Advance sessions underway!

Bringing the nursing mission to life

On a recent afternoon in February, 53 nurses gathered in Sherman Auditorium. The group included clinical nurses, advanced practice nurses, clinical advisors, and nursing directors, from inpatient and outpatient settings, East Campus and West. Many looked puzzled, as if they didn’t know exactly what to expect. They had come in response to a call from Marsha Maurer, RN, senior vice president for patient care services and chief nursing officer, inviting every nurse to attend one of a number of four-hour events for nurses that have been scheduled through the end of 2017. The purpose? To give nurses a chance to become familiar with the new nursing mission and, especially, to think about and share how it applies to their practice.

Maurer is there to introduce the agenda. She talks about the year-long process to iterate a mission – work that she explains arose from her sense of concern that the current hectic pace of health care leaves little time for nurses to step back to reflect on their practice and to stay connected to a shared sense of purpose. She describes the process of obtaining input from over 600 BIDMC nurses about why they chose the profession and what’s most important to them – information that was brought to a June 2016 nursing leadership retreat, called an “Advance” to signify forward motion. From that event, a draft mission statement for nursing emerged – a statement meant to succinctly capture the main concepts and values involved in the practice of nursing at BIDMC. The statement has since been finalized (see page 3), with help from direct care staff who attended a special event in November. Addressing the February session, Maurer says the goal now is to bring the mission work back to its origins – to the broader nursing staff; to give all nurses a chance to think about the stated mission and to consider how it applies to their daily work.

A Nursing Advance for all

After the June 2016 event, a planning group, led by nurse specialists Kerry Carnevale, RN, and Barbara Donovan, RN, began working on these reflective sessions for staff. They decided at the outset to use the model of the leadership program as a template. Recalling the positive energy and enthusiasm of the leadership event, Donovan says, “This was so wonderful for us that we wanted to bring it to everyone.” Donovan and Carnevale say the 4-hour sessions for staff, also dubbed an Advance, have been designed to provide the time and space for busy nurses to step away from their routines in order to reflect on and celebrate their practice, to share their reflections with colleagues, and to think about how their everyday work is connected to the newly articulated mission. Carnevale says it’s about encouraging a mindful realization of purpose – one that is common to all nurses across the organization.

The planning group teamed up with Jo Ayoub, senior director of organizational effectiveness, and

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Amy Wasserman, director of organizational development, both of whom had been instrumental in planning the leadership event, to begin to plan the on-site, four-hour sessions for staff. They are holding morning, afternoon, and evening sessions on designated days through the end of 2017.

Sharing a photo
The sessions include the “climate setter” that was a big success at the leadership Advance – asking participants to share a photograph of themselves as a nurse and explain why it is meaningful. Donovan says some of these photos bring out a lot of emotion as nurses think about how they formed their nursing identity. In

the recent February session, one nurse shared her graduation photo, noting its symbolic representation of the possibilities for the future. Another shared a photo of herself with her mom and her daughter – all nurses. Another nurse talked about the inspiration she received from traveling to Haiti and holding an orphaned baby.

Storytelling
After they shared photos, the nurses at the February event watched a video of past and present nurses from BIDMC and its founding hospitals, and then listened to session facilitator, Donna Williams, RN, nurse specialist in cardiology, talk about using storytelling as a vehicle to connect the words of the mission with the lived experience of nurses. Ayoub explains, “Storytelling is incorporated into the design as a vehicle to achieve the primary goals of these sessions: give nurses the time and space to reflect on their key purpose, and invite them to think about how their own work relates to the key concepts of the nursing mission – legacy, compassionate care, the art and science of nursing, and advocacy.”

Ayoub says that this kind of reflection and sharing can refresh the spirit in an age when everyday practice can be so stressful.

“故事” and the power to heal

There are thousands of moments that can quickly get buried in the business of a nurse’s day,” she says. “Pausing to remember a meaningful moment and telling others about it helps clinicians to recognize – to bring to consciousness – their purpose and contributions.”

Sessions spark enthusiasm
Maurer has been getting enthusiastic emails from participants who have attended the Advance sessions. She is hearing about the value nurses place on being given the time to stop and reflect and to share those reflections with colleagues. Maurer said an email she received from Lauren Sullivan, RN, unit educator on Farr 11, was particularly poignant. Sullivan told Maurer, “I want to thank you for giving us all the time and opportunity to come together with colleagues to reflect and share. At the end of the day, I returned to the unit feeling refreshed and renewed, with a newfound sense of purpose. I remember why I became a nurse. My goal now is to find a way to take time each day to really think about what I do and why I do it.”
Alison Small, RN, nursing director for Rosenberg 6 and the T-SICU and one of the session facilitators, says it’s important for staff to realize that the Nursing Advance is not like a workshop. “Staff are used to going to educational sessions where the goal is for them to learn a new skill or new idea,” she explains. “This isn’t what the Advance is all about. We want to make sure staff understand – this is a day set aside to recognize you; to recognize your practice and how it applies to our nursing mission. We want you to be able to reflect on what you do and to feel appreciated.” Maurer agrees, saying, “It’s about time to reflect, connect, and share.” Donovan and Carnevale are pleased with the responses coming in on the session evaluations. They are leading an energized group of session facilitators who see tremendous value in this effort. Says Donovan, “I feel really proud to be part of this work.”

The BIDMC nursing mission statement, with supporting documentation

Direct care staff who attended a special event in November helped craft the full documentation that describes the elements of the mission statement.

The BIDMC Nursing Mission

To build on a legacy of nursing excellence by caring with compassion, advancing the art & science of nursing, and advocating for the health of patients, families, and communities

Legacy

Nursing practice at BIDMC is built on a strong and enduring foundation – a legacy of nursing excellence. Our nurses share a personal and collective sense of pride related to that legacy, and they are committed to preserving its core, passing on its key tenets, and striving to ensure that it continues to grow and develop. BIDMC nurses feel they are part of something important and unique. They want to both live up to the reputation that preceded them and to do their part to sustain that reputation into the future. Experienced staff feel a commitment to pass on “the way we do nursing” at BIDMC; novice nurses embrace and celebrate the chance to learn from seasoned colleagues.

Caring with Compassion

BIDMC nurses deliver empathic, compassionate care through the bonds they establish with patients and families. By creating personal connections, nurses communicate genuine caring. While they recognize and preserve appropriate professional boundaries, they have the courage and wisdom to know how to create the supportive, personal connections that are best for each patient, using parameters that are dictated by the situation at hand. This creates a care environment that is rich with meaning for the patient and the nurse. Nurses at BIDMC say that through the human-human connections they establish, they provide the type of care that they would want for their family, their friends, or themselves. They consistently go “above and beyond” in order to meet patient needs.

Art & Science of Nursing

BIDMC nurses share a commitment to preserving and advancing both the art and science of nursing. They understand that self-awareness, self-care, and mindful, reflective practice are prerequisites for practicing the art of nursing, in which nurses use the “self” as a therapeutic tool to care for patients and families. They nurture a culture of teamwork and collaboration within which the art of nursing can thrive.

Lifelong learning is a key component of BIDMC nursing, encompassing both ongoing clinical education and academic advancement. Nurses use their understanding of science and scientific methods to advance and promote the evidence base for nursing practice. They design and carry out nursing research, support broader research endeavors, and are key drivers of medical center quality and process improvement activities. They share their knowledge with others in the care environment by serving as educators and mentors, and with colleagues in the profession at large through participation in local, national, and international professional forums.

Advocacy

Nurses at BIDMC leverage their clinical knowledge and the trusting bonds they establish with patients to advocate for the wellbeing of patients and families. In countless ways, nurses stand next to patients and families – educating, supporting, and guiding them through the complex world of health care. This includes helping patients and families understand what is happening in the moment and what to expect on the path ahead. Nurses teach patients and families how to be active participants in care. As providers who are often in closest contact with patients, nurses serve as liaisons, communicating and collaborating with colleagues from other disciplines to ensure the highest care quality. They are committed to equitable care for all, and maintain an unwavering stance of respect for patients representing a broad diversity of cultures, values, and life circumstances. BIDMC nurses advocate on behalf of populations through leadership activities within organizations; through the advancement of nursing science; and by using their expertise to work on the local, national, and global health policy agenda. Their underlying commitment is to improve the health and wellbeing of patients, families, and communities.