



Community-Based Strategies to Improve Nurse Retention in Ravalli County Nursing Homes

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Hypothesis

- Improve CNA and RN retention at nursing homes via education about compassion fatigue and burnout
 - Increased retention will help Montana's aging population by improving care and capacity at nursing homes



Map of Montana highlighting Missoula and Hamilton, the largest town in the Bitterroot Valley.

Background

- 27% of Ravalli County population is >65 y.o. compared to 19% for MT
- Early 2022: 2 nursing homes in the area closed (1 in Hamilton, 1 in Missoula)
- Many patients in the Bitterroot Health hospital occupy swing beds indefinitely due to lack of capacity in nursing homes

Community Profile: Assets

- Discovery Care Center is only remaining nursing home in Bitterroot Valley
- Had 25 full-time CNAs on staff pre-pandemic; currently has 5
- Capacity limited more by lack of staff than actual number of beds
- Works closely with case managers at Bitterroot Health to place patients as capacity allows
- Two local assisted living facilities and home health organizations can absorb some demand, but not that of patients needing skilled nursing

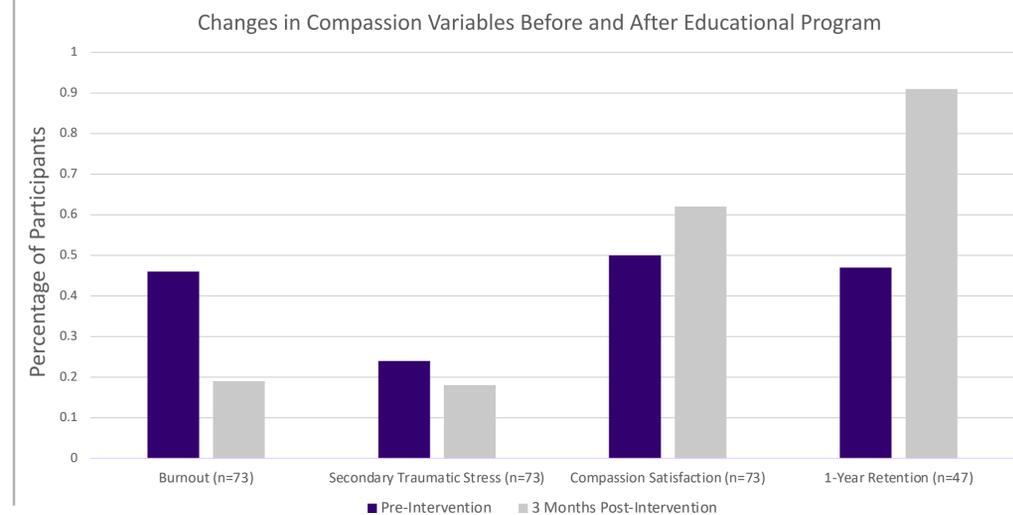


Conclusions

- These educational programs are low-cost and could be implemented at Discovery Care Center
- Improved retention would help Discovery be less reliant on locums nursing staff, thereby minimizing costs
- Retaining local nursing staff helps address housing shortage (no need to find housing for locums nurses)
- One constraint: would have been best implemented before pandemic to retain staff; current small staff size minimizes impact
- Requires buy-in of current staff
- Significant time commitment to plan logistics and recruit skilled community member to lead trainings

Literature Review

- Nursing homes implemented educational programs on burnout and compassion fatigue
 - Burnout and secondary traumatic stress improved from pre-intervention to 3 months post-intervention
 - Compassion satisfaction improved after intervention
 - 1-year retention improved from 47% to 91%



Sources: 1) Dreher, M. M., Hughes, R. G., Handley, P. A., & Tavakoli, A. S. (2019). Improving retention among certified nursing assistants through compassion fatigue awareness and self-care skills education. *Journal of Holistic Nursing*, 37(3), 296-308. 2) Flarity, Kathleen DNP, PhD, CEN, CFRN, FAEN; Gentry, J. Eric PhD, LMHC, CAC; Mesnikoff, Nathan MA, BCC. The Effectiveness of an Educational Program on Preventing and Treating Compassion Fatigue in Emergency Nurses. *Advanced Emergency Nursing Journal*, July/September 2013 - Volume 35 - Issue 3 - p 247-258 doi: 10.1097/TME.0b013e31829b726f