Webinar Recap for December 6th, 2021

LTC+: Acting on Pandemic Learning Together

TOPIC

Promising Practices for Supporting Long Term Care Providers Resilience

KEY AREA(S)

People in the workforce

SPEAKER(S)

- **Dr. Carole Estabrooks**, Professor, Faculty of Nursing, University of Alberta; Scientific Director of Translating Research in Elder Care (TREC); Canada Research Chair in Knowledge Translation

OBJECTIVES

- To share the qualitative findings of a study exploring promising practices to foster personal resilience, team cohesion, and organizational learning that will assist LTC managers to address the longer term effects the pandemic may have on their care staff.

SUMMARY

Sdfjowiefjwoef

sidjfij

- High-level insights from interviews with LTC leaders and researchers on the impact of COVID-19 on LTC staff:

  o Staff experiences significant distress from witnessing residents' distress

  o Workload and staffing issues present before the pandemic were exacerbated by COVID-19

  o The one-work site policy had unintended consequences on staff (i.e., reduced income for some)

  o Strong communication and consultation of frontline staff is a priority throughout the pandemic

- o Frontline staff are faced with significant emotional and mental health impacts due to the traumatic stress faced during COVID-19; however, peer support has been an important source of resilience.

- Learnings from LTC managers centered around two key themes of visible leadership and team effectiveness.

- LTC managers noted the importance of visible leadership, or working shoulder-to-shoulder, (i.e., 24hr on-call support, face-to-face time with staff, including evening and night shifts) for ensuring that care staff feel seen, understood and supported. New communication strategies (i.e., non-hierarchical communication structures, frequent check-ins) enabled strong leadership.

- A leadership strategy emerging from the Yukon included the following four rules:

  - o Be generous with praise, information and feedback

  - o Ask genuine and curious questions

  - o Model a calm and wise approach

  - o Delegate appropriately and intentionally

- Team effectiveness was achieved by developing a climate of psychological safety in LTC (i.e., regular check ins, support for grief and loss); identifying creative ways to recognize staff (i.e., written notes from families); staff education (i.e., sharing best practices, increasing huddles and bidirectional exchange of information); and wellness programs (i.e., creative new activities for physical and mental health).

- The following are being created by researchers to support LTC providers during COVID-19:

  - o Mental health support / moral injury prevention toolkit (Dr. Bonnie Lashewicz, UC)

  - o Evidence based staff scheduling tool to inform staff mix decision making and reduce staff shortages (Dr. Farinaz Havaei, UBC-V)

  - o Feasible Sustainable Culture Change Initiative used to train and empower care aides to drive improvement in care processes (Dr. Sienna Caspar, UL)

- TREC is leading the implementation and evaluation of a strategy to help care aides develop knowledge and skills to manage acute and chronic stress:

  - o INFORM – support managers of care units to work with their teams to improve performance

- o SCOPE – support and empower care aides to lead improvement interventions

- Knowledge translation efforts throughout the pandemic included 'TLC' for LTC staff by the Family Councils of Ontario; the development of reflection rooms for grieving; the adoption of the National Standard of Canada for Psychological Health and Safety in Ontario; and Mindfulness-based stress reduction programs for improved coping skills in Toronto.

- Overall observations from the study exploring the impacts of COVID-19 on LTC staff:

  - o Active, accessible, and authentic leadership combined with participative decision making is key to generating high functioning teams.

  - o A lens towards continuously improving and learning, as teams are able to modify traditional hierarchical organizational cultures, into more just and trusting organizational cultures. Empowering staff, especially unregulated care aides (personal support workers), proved impactful for patient care, as well as staff morale and resilience.

  - o Greater and meaningful participation in decision making about care leads to a sense of meaning and purpose and subsequently, improved resident experience.

  - o Safe and supportive options for sharing and discussing personal and professional experiences with trusted peers was a prime outlet for staff. Deliberate conversations and peer-to-peer support groups may be promising practices to leverage this pattern.

  - o Just in time education, huddles, webinars and courses designed to not only prepare staff to respond to the pandemic, but to learn about how to compassionately care for themselves and others resonated with staff and leaders.

  - o Traumatic stress has a significant impact on staff, as such, strategies to support mental and emotional health should be prioritized.

  - o While there are several areas of promising practices, the sector needs support with coordinated effort and identification of the most promising areas.

  - o Research is extremely limited in this field – greater involvement would contribute to better evaluation of existing practices; identifying new promising ones; and assisting with screening out practices that have little effect on improving conditions or may be unsustainable.

RESOURCES SHARED

- [Reimagining Care for Older Adults Report](#)

- [Promising Practices for Supporting Long-Term Care Provider Resilience](#)

WEBINAR RECORDING

- [Watch the full webinar here!](#)

Healthcare Excellence Canada is an independent, not-for-profit charity funded primarily by Health Canada. The views expressed herein do not necessarily represent the views of Health Canada.