

## Leadership Connection 2018 (15-18 September)

### Achieving Work-Life Balance in an Ambulatory Surgery Center

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According to the American Association of Colleges of Nursing [AACN] (2016), there are more than 3.1 million nurses in the United States, making the nursing profession the largest in health care. With the current and growing shortage of nursing professionals (AACN, 2014), it is important that the current nursing workforce feel empowered to take responsibility for creating a work environment that encourages commitment to the profession (Asiri, Rohrer, Al-Surimi, Da'ar, & Ahmed, 2016).

It has been shown that interference in work-life balance is prevalent in the profession of nursing (Chen, Brown, Bowers, & Chang, 2015); therefore, it is crucial to the nursing profession to identify the modifiable factors that contribute to this phenomenon. Assisting nurses in achieving optimal work-life balance should be at the forefront of nursing leadership in all healthcare facilities. The relationship to work-life balance and job satisfaction in nursing has been well documented (de Melo, Barbosa, & de Souza, 2011) and modifiable factors, such as a healthy work schedule, have been identified (Han, Trinkoff, & Gurses, 2015). A healthy work environment includes reasonable access to paid time off.

Considerable research has shown that an adequate work-life balance in the nursing profession is necessary for job satisfaction and retention. In a small facility, such as an ambulatory surgery center, it is harder to access paid time off because of the limitations and restrictions, which can be cumbersome, unreliable and result in frustration of the nursing staff. It was the purpose of this study, which was structured around the Revised Nursing Work life Model (Manojlovich & Laschinger, 2007), to identify modifiable factors that affect the paid time off request process.

To investigate what was considered important to the staff regarding the current paid time off method used in an ambulatory surgical center and the purpose of discovering what works well for an acceptable work-life balance, a non-experimental, mixed methods study was conducted. Three focus groups consisting of five participants, using open-ended questions were held to uncover the common themes perceived concerning the method of requesting paid time off and work-life balance. The responses were coded to develop an ethnographic survey that was distributed to the staff, using the themes discovered from the focus groups. The results were analyzed using descriptive statistics. Findings of this study were expected to indicate the nursing staff's dissatisfaction with the method of requesting paid time off in relation to work-life balance. While the study was projected to show dissatisfaction with the current method, it was also expected to produce solutions presented by the staff. Many of the solutions offered by the staff who participated in this study were presented to the nursing leadership of this facility and assisted in a change of practice that was expected to improve the team's perceived work-life balance.

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#### **Title:**

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#### **Keywords:**

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**References:**

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**Abstract Summary:**

With more than one million nurses retiring in the next 15 years (American Association of Colleges of Nursing [AACN] (2016), it is important to identify the modifiable factors, including scheduling and the availability of time off from work, that influence the work-life balance and job satisfaction of nurses.

**Content Outline:**

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## I. Background

### A. Purpose of study

### B. Research Design

## II. Methodology

### A. Setting

### B. Sample

## III. Data Collection

### A. Method

### B. Final Analysis

## IV. Implications for Practice

### A. Implication for nursing administration

### B. Recommendations for further research

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