Understanding Nurse & Caregiver Learning Styles In Relation to Discharge Instructions

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Background/Significance
- Discharge from a hospital inpatient unit is a complex process involving an interdisciplinary team of health care providers
- Learners have preferences in the ways they receive and process information
- Because unmet discharge needs may increase readmission rates, it is important that healthcare providers accurately identify patients/caregivers’ learning styles and find innovative ways to meet these needs

Method/Design
- An interdisciplinary team developed a quality improvement initiative aimed at addressing the learning styles of caregivers as it relates to discharge instructions
- To understand issues affecting patient caregiver and nurse learning styles, the team reviewed current literature on health literacy, learning theories and learning styles
- A fishbone analysis was conducted to understand existing issues
- Results generated from a fishbone decision analysis method informed the intervention.
- A Plan, Do, Study, Act (PDSA) model was developed
- The VARK(T) tool (tip sheet) was developed to modify our discharge teaching based on the VARK(T) assessments

Conclusions
- 43/59 nurses completed the VARK (T) survey for a response rate of 73%.
- Percentages of visual, aural, read/write and kinesthetic were 7%, 7%, 16.3% and 11.6% respectively
- Results from the pilot unit show that there is significant variation in the way that nurses learn

Next Steps
- Recruit patients and/or caregivers admitted on a surgical unit to determine their learning preference
- Follow up with caregiver post discharge to evaluate the effect of intervention on caregiver retention of discharge instructions/plan and caregiver satisfaction with care

VARK Tip Sheet

Key Driver Diagram