

AMERICAN
ASSOCIATION
of CRITICAL-CARE
NURSES

**Healthy Work Environments
Case Study #2**

Institution / Unit: Oregon Health & Science University, Portland, OR / Pediatric Intensive Care Unit and OHSU School of Nursing, Senior Leadership Class and Senior Clinical Immersion

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Summary: The PICU has historically committed to a healthy work environment, but “The Standards” validated that we were evidence-based. Collaboration and skilled communication helped us survive a 56-day strike without losing one nurse. Those who crossed the picket line, and those who didn’t, kept talking through the entire ordeal via weekly “potlucks” and e-mail chat-lines.

The commitment to a healthy work environment was strengthened at NTI 2003 when the attendees from the unit signed Bold Voices Commitments. We took the momentum back to the unit and introduced Bold Voices to the multidisciplinary team. Team members signed Commitments, and Bold Voices logos were posted at strategic points in the unit.

Bold Voices did not stop there! A core group of team members also wanted to change the unit culture to be more nurturing and supportive, a place where professional growth and development would be encouraged. Our unit wanted to provide an atmosphere of co-mentoring that transitioned the newer staff in a safe nurturing way. Nursing in general has a reputation for “eating their young”, and allowing new nurses to “sink or swim”. Our team wanted to use Bold Voices to ensure this didn’t happen. We wanted new nurses to immediately be recognized as team members. To meet this challenge, an all day retreat was planned for those committed to Bold Voices. The group spent time brainstorming ways to ensure new staff members were seen as equal team members as soon as they were hired. The slogan, “Bold Voices Builds Strong Teams”, was adopted, and terms such as “newbie” and “junior” were deemed unacceptable.

The group also decided to utilize the words “Bold Voices” as a “call for help”, when staff members were being disrespected in any way. When “Bold Voices” is called out, available team-members come-to- the-rescue by coming along side the person, providing support, and assisting in diffusing the situation. When a person is being disrespected, and five team-members show up as support, it doesn’t take long for those who are disrespectful to understand that this type of behavior will not be tolerated.

At the end of our retreat day, a statement was penned, and the core group signed it, then stood and stated it boldly: “I commit to being a team player and mentor in the PICU. I commit to being a positive role model in giving and receiving feedback. I acknowledge that this may involve changes in my own behavior. Bold Voices do make strong teams. I commit to using my bold voice to build the PICU team

When “The Standards” were released in 2005, they were introduced to the PICU Multidisciplinary Practice Council who embraced them and implemented those left undone. Nurse recognition has improved through perpetual plaques that spotlight our CCRNs, and another plaque for individual achievement recognition related to publishing, public speaking, etc. is being purchased.

The unit is hiring a new nurse manager and will use the standards during the interview process as a framework. It has been the philosophy of the unit to “hire nice people”. The belief is that we can always mentor someone to be a competent practitioner, but the chance is slim that we can mentor someone to be “nice”.