Lateral Violence: It’s Time to Stop this Blight on our Profession

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In this issue of the SC Nurse, we are providing a series of articles that address the problem of lateral violence and, more importantly, proposing strategies to assist nurses trying to grapple with this difficult issue. These articles are written by members of a statewide task force that has been working for a year building a coordinated effort to help nurses in SC implement effective programs and processes to create positive workplace environments.

Simultaneously throughout SC, several key groups were addressing lateral violence. The Center for Nursing Leadership (CNL) has had communication, conflict management and resolution as preventative strategies for workplace violence in its leadership development programs for 15 years with Dr. Phyllis Kritek, internationally known expert, as faculty. CNL collaborated with Dr. Rick Foster of the South Carolina Hospital Association in January 2008 to hold a statewide conference on conflict resolution with Dr. Kritek as the facilitator. One key attendee was Karen Stanley from MUSC, who had been doing research and training on lateral violence throughout the state for several years. The Upstate AHEC had received a 3 year HRSA grant to do training on lateral violence with a goal of reaching 3600 licensed nurses and senior nursing students in the upstate through audience specific classes. During this same time the ANA House of Delegates passed a resolution to systematically address lateral violence and the SC Psychiatric-Mental Health Chapter followed with a sponsored a resolution at the SCNA Annual meeting that included a plan to convene a statewide task force on lateral violence.

In 2008, all the statewide forces converged. Author Malcolm Gladwell would say a, “Tipping Point occurred” (2002). This occurred when the CNL held a workshop for Nurse Executives and Academic Leaders on Creating a Safe Work Culture by Building Competencies in Managing Conflict and Disruptive Behavior featuring Dr. Phyllis Kritek. During the conference, Lydia Zager, Director of CNL, Dr. Phyllis Kritek and attendees Peggy Dulaney, Chair of the PMH Chapter and a curriculum consultant for Upstate AHEC, Dianne Jacobs, Upstate AHEC Project Director and Susan Kyzer, Curriculum and Training Coordinator met, shared what each had been doing and developed plans to convene a SC task force.

The Task Force first met in January 2009 with broad representation from nurse leaders in practice and academia dedicated to address lateral violence in SC. One priority goal of the Task Force was to hold a statewide conference on lateral violence. We are privileged that Alpha Xi Chapter of Sigma Theta Tau and the CNL invited us to present much of our work at the Mary Ann Parsons Lecture on February 12, 2010 (see ad for conference on page ___).

We hope you will take the time to read the articles and please plan to attend the event on February 12, 2010 for more information. It is time to Stop the Bullying and Create Positive Workplace Environments in South Carolina!

Reference:

Task Force Members:

Board of Nursing
College of Nursing, University of South Carolina
DHEC
Long Term Care
Medical University of South Carolina
Office of Rural Health
Palmetto Health
Upstate AHEC
Ralph H. Johnson VA Medical Center Charleston
SC Deans and Directors
South Carolina Nurses Association
South Carolina Organization of Nurse Leaders
Student Nurses Association of SC