



**COLLEGE OF NURSES
OF ONTARIO**

**ORDRE DES INFIRMIÈRES
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THE STANDARD OF CARE.

What is Accountability in Nursing? An Exploration of Nurses Perception and Understanding

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Objective

- Share the results CNO Advisory Groups project on Accountability

Project

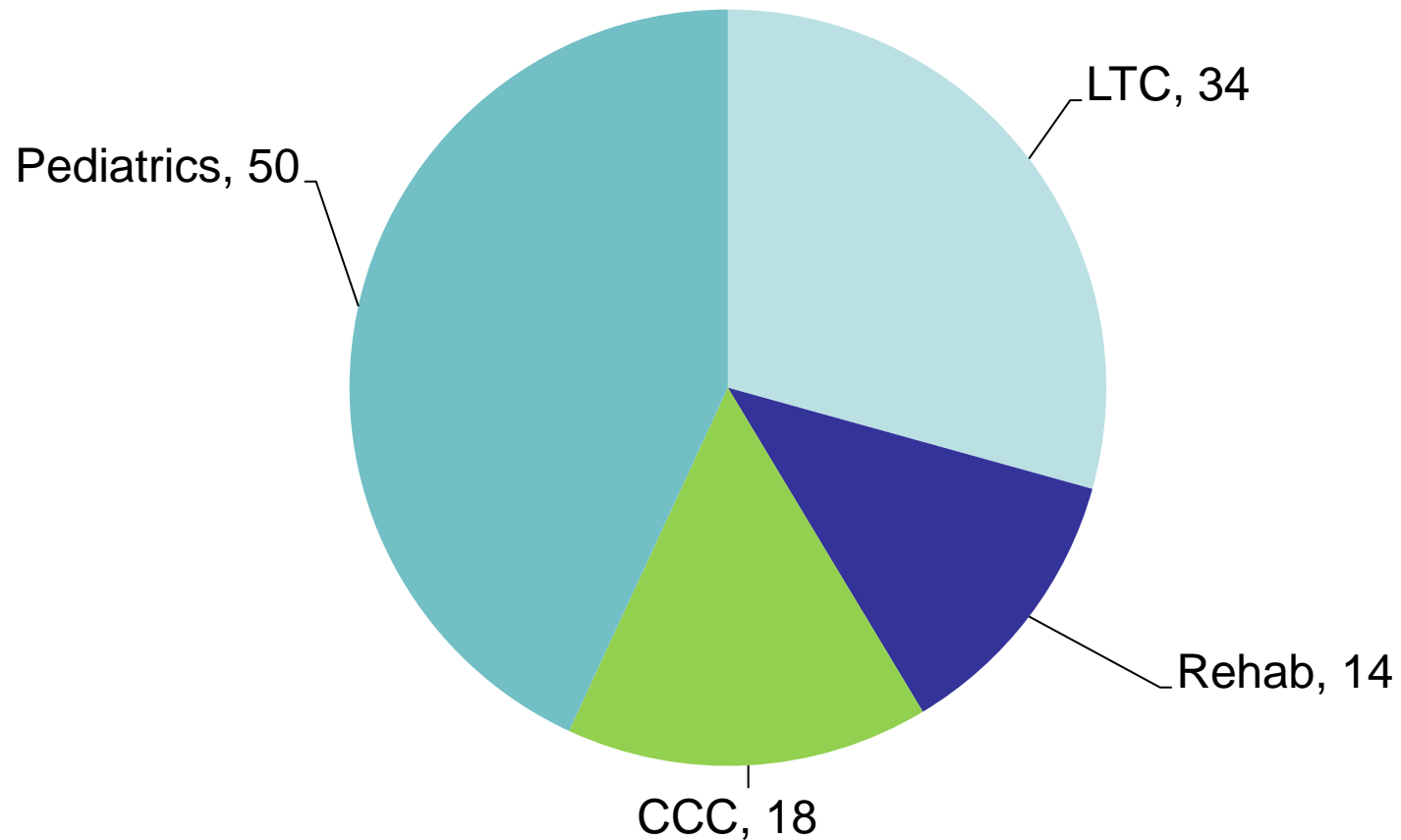
- Background
- Literature review
- Participants
- Methods
- Results

Purpose

To explore nurses' understanding of accountability in their professional nursing practice

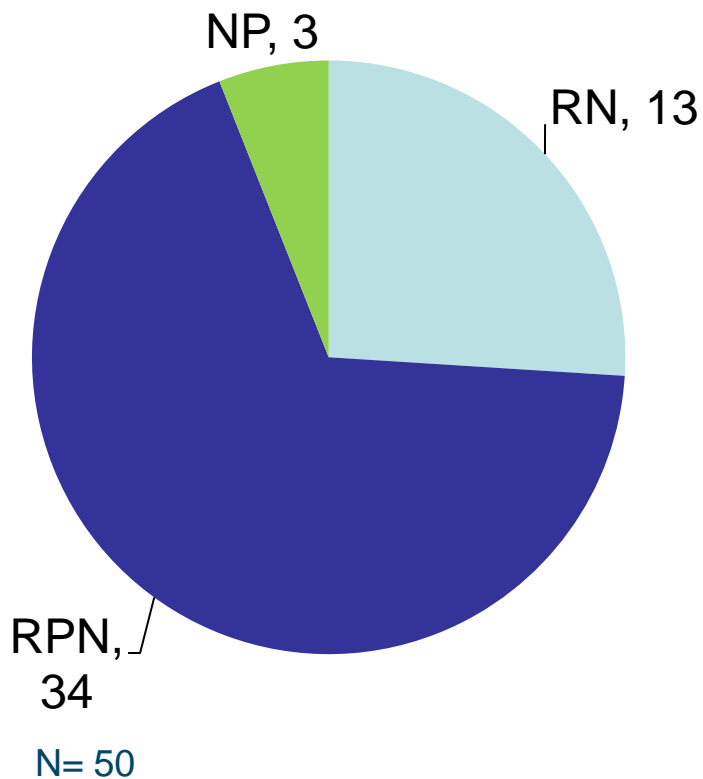
To determine if nurses are able to identify behaviours and characteristics that demonstrate accountability in professional practice

Demographics – Practice Setting

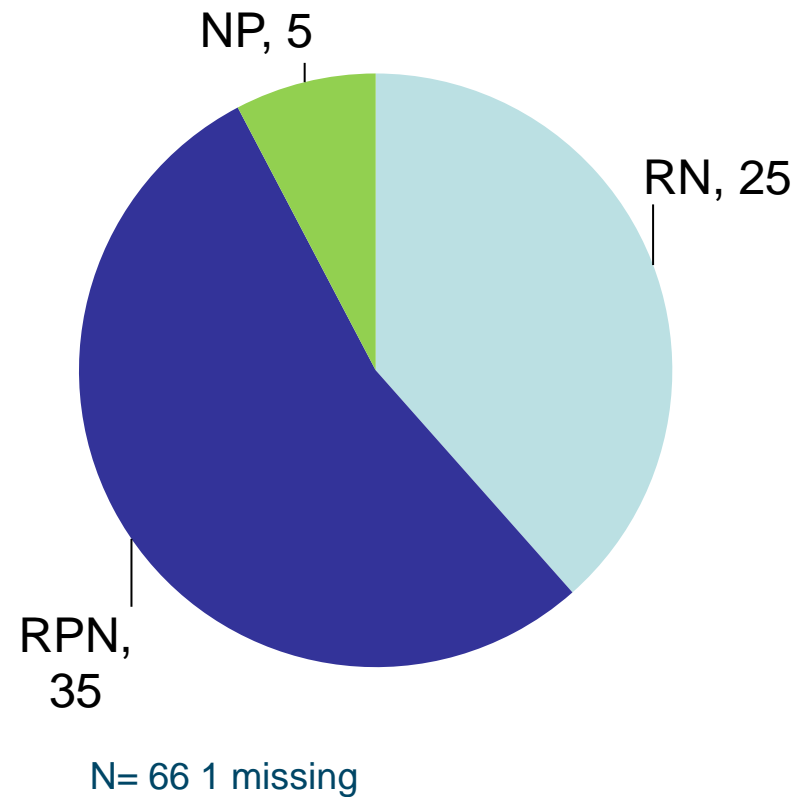


Demographics - Role

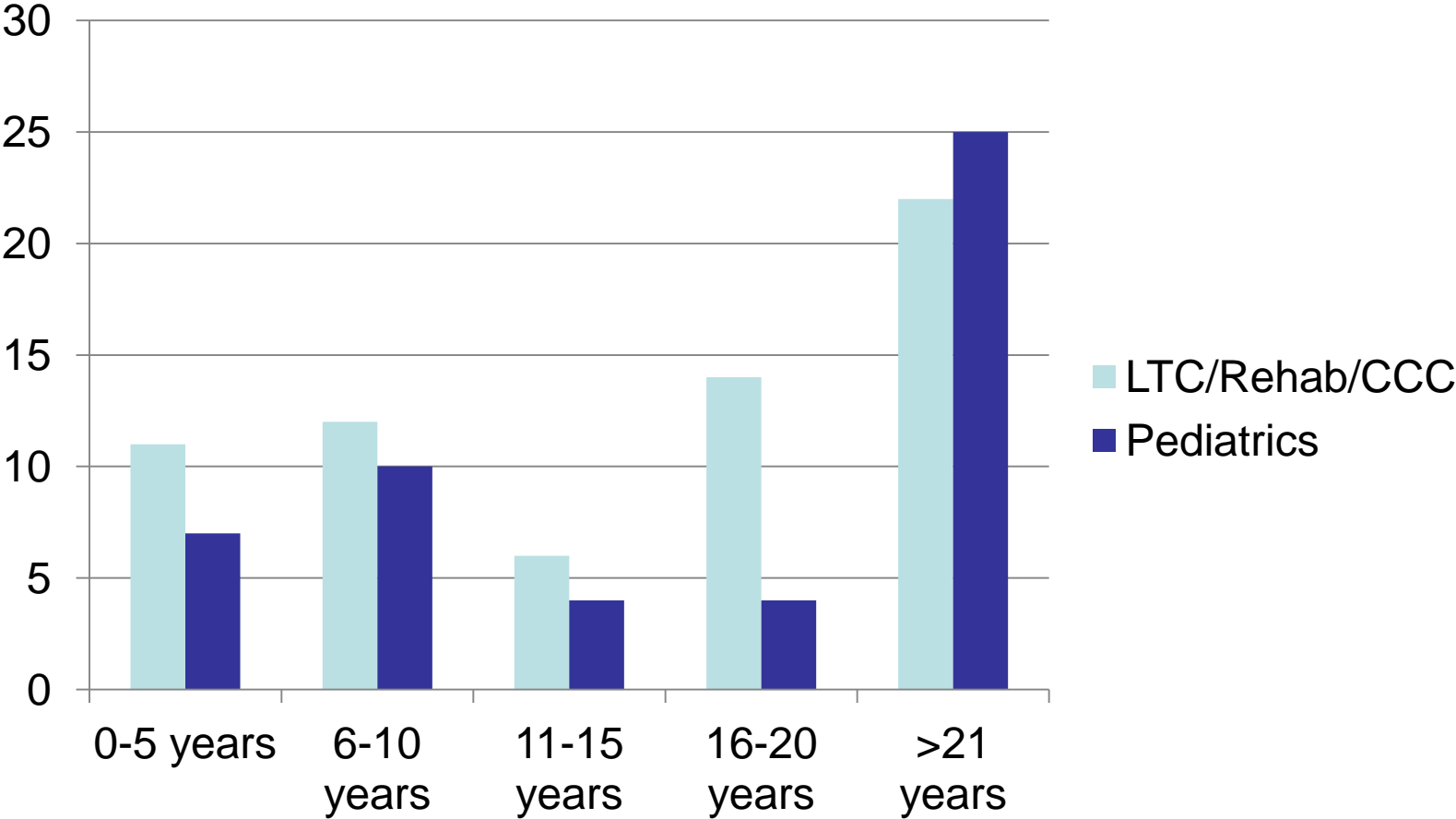
Paediatrics



LTC Rehab CCC



Demographics- Years of Practice



Pre-Focus Group Survey

- Completed at beginning of session
- Allowed 5-10 minutes to complete
- Informed no right/wrong answer
- Purpose to give us a understanding of nurses knowledge and perception of accountability

Pre Survey Results

Describe What Accountability in nursing means to you.

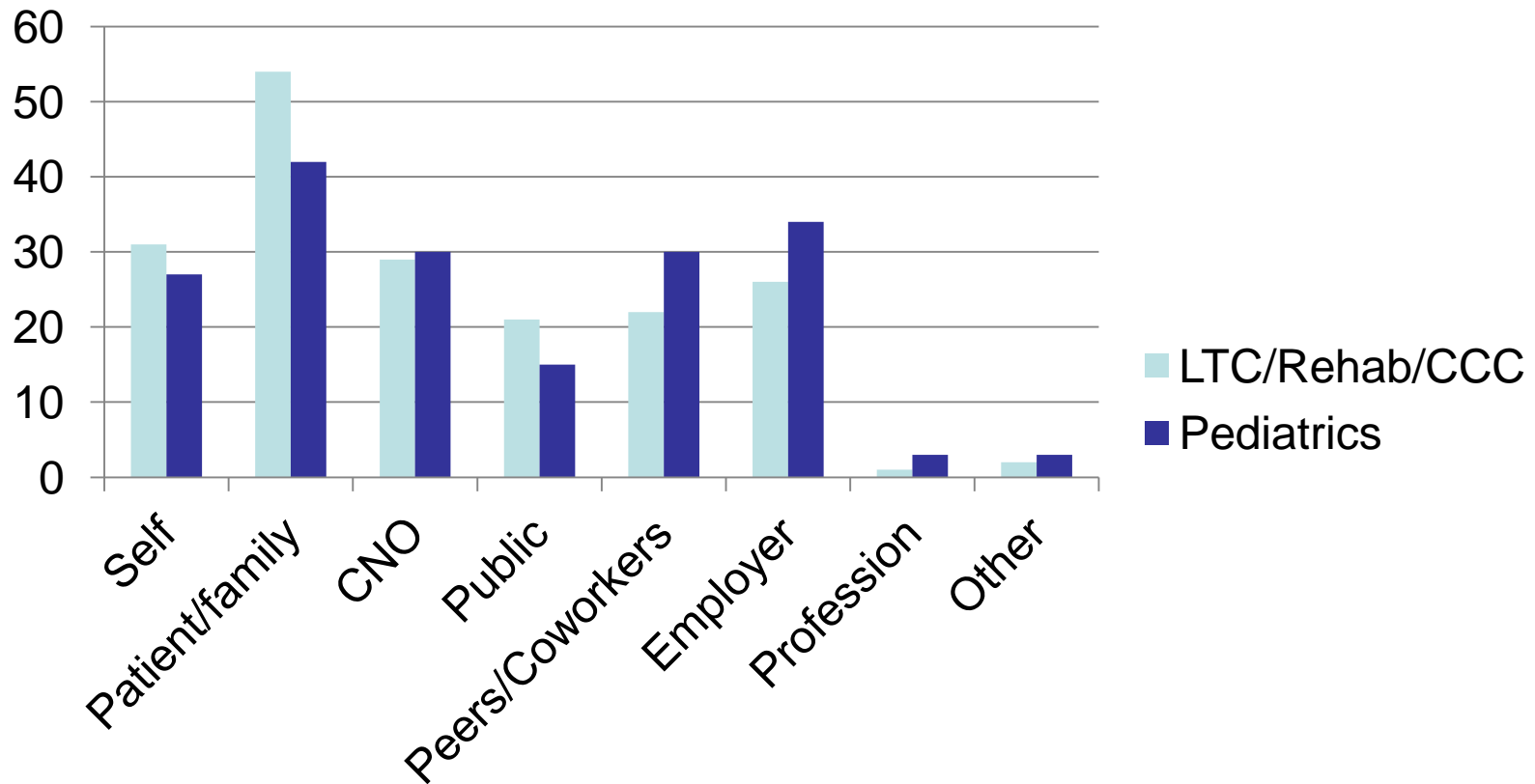
Overriding Theme: Responsibility/Responsible

Subthemes:

- For actions/lack of actions
- Care of patients / families
- Follow CNO Standards
- Own knowledge, skill and judgment
- Maintaining competence

Pre Survey Results

As a nurse who are you accountable to?



Pre Survey Results

Think of your colleagues and describe the actions or behaviours you recognize in your colleagues that demonstrate accountability

- Themes
 - Collaboration
 - Client focused care
 - Documentation
 - Professionalism
 - Communication
 - Continuing Competence
 - Errors/reporting

Pre-Focus Group Survey

- Thinking of your colleagues describe actions or behaviours that you recognize in your colleagues as not demonstrating accountability?
- Which legislation guides your practice in relationship to accountability?
- Is there anything that you would like to learn or share about accountability in nursing?

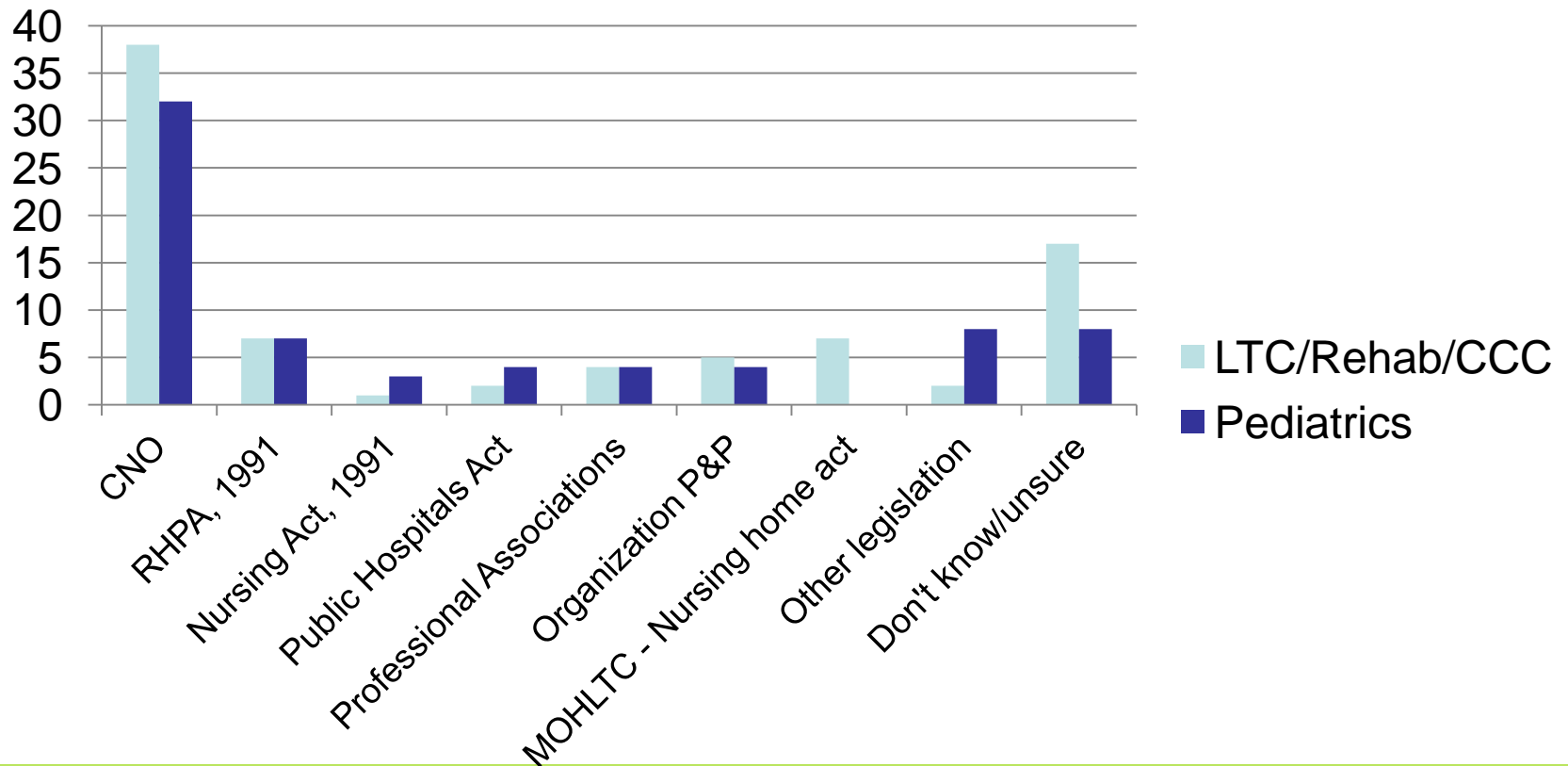
Pre Survey Results

Thinking of your colleagues describe actions or behaviours that you recognize in your colleagues as NOT demonstrating accountability

- Themes
 - Unprofessional
 - Ignoring patient care issues
 - Not following policies and procedures
 - Opting out of continuing education/QA
 - No collaboration/not a team player
 - Ignoring practice issues
 - Ignoring professional standards

Pre Survey Results

Which legislation guides your practice in relationship to accountability?



Focus Groups Questions

- Would you like to share your definition of accountability with each other?
- We will now consider some scenarios that demonstrate the concept of accountability in nursing practice.

Scenarios: (1 – 4)

- Explain what the difference is between responsibility and accountability in nursing
- Are there any barriers or facilitators that impact on accountability in your nursing practice?

Scenario 1

A colleague witnessing verbal abusive behaviour by another colleague

- Themes
 - Protect the client
 - Stop the behaviour of the nurse
 - Reporting
 - Give feedback/support the nurse

“there are so many variables that could be affecting how they are treating the child whether or not it is right it is not our job to be pointing fingers but rather to be making sure that the client is in a safe and caring environment so whatever needs to happen for that whether it’s that the nurse needs to go and take her break or whether its something bigger.....”

Professional Standards, revised 2002

Accountability

- Advocating on behalf of clients
- Taking action in situations in which client safety and well-being are compromised
- Reporting to the appropriate authority any health care team member or colleague whose actions or behaviours toward clients are unsafe or unprofessional, or indicate physical, verbal and emotional abuse

Scenario 2

Issues about a nurse not reporting a medication error because it was innocuous, friend outside of work, many of the other nurses do not like this particular nurse

■ Themes

- Report incident
- Collegial relationships
- Medication error
- Patient safety
- Telling family
- Knowledge gap

Professional Standards, Revised 2002

Accountability

- Taking responsibility for errors when they occur and taking appropriate action to maintain client safety

Leadership

- Role modeling professional values, beliefs and attributes

Professional Relationships

- Using a wide range of communication and interpersonal skills to effectively establish and maintain collegial relationships

Accountability vs. Responsibility

Accountability	Responsibility
Legal ramifications	Actions of doing or not doing
“being outward”	“being inward”
Is extension of responsibility	Soft skills like social skills
Using my knowledge skill and judgment	To do tasks and skills
Is one step further than responsibility	You won't be in as much trouble
The Result	The Action
Broader term of what you should be doing	Is the how of what you should be doing
“big umbrella”	Providing safe care to my clients
Is knowing what needs to be done	Getting the work done
Accountability is formal, more people involved	Responsibility is just you

Accountability vs Responsibility

Accountability

- focuses for the most part upon all of the elements of duty after the decision is made
- There is an authority which holds you to how an action is completed
- Suggests imminence of retribution for unfilled trust or violated obligations

Responsibility

- focuses for the most part upon all of the elements of duty up to the point of decision
- There is a duty to see an action through to fruition
- You have a role or position which requires actions or behaviours

Facilitators

- Team work
- Processes and systems in place
- Positive culture – no blame
- Positive environment
- Positive relationships with colleagues
- Electronic documentation

Barriers

- Lack of information
- Lack of resources
- No input from staff or nursing on changes that impact practice
- Electronic documentation
- Culture of blame
- Workload and sick time

Summary

- Top three themes of the accountability scenarios are:
 1. Patient Safety
 2. Knowledge Gap
 3. Collaboration with the team (interprofessional)

Summary

Observations:

- Articulating the difference between responsibility and accountability is difficult for many nurses
- Lack of understanding of what guides nurses' practice in terms of legislation.
- Role modelling accountability is very important for nurses

Future Plans

- Develop strategies to assist nurses in promoting accountability in professional nursing practice
- Articulate the difference between responsibility and accountability
- Communicate to nurses what guides their practice in terms of legislation

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