

# Oncology Nurse Engagement

## The impact of a management education program

Jemilat Siju, DNP, MSN, RN, ANP-BC, OCN®, and Mary L. Johansen, PhD, NE-BC, RN



**BACKGROUND:** Previous studies have demonstrated that a predictor of nurse engagement is a supportive work environment. Organizations that promote employee engagement have higher retention rates compared to their counterparts. The role of the nurse manager is critical to nursing engagement, and the principles of nurse engagement are teachable.

**OBJECTIVES:** The aim was to measure the impact of a nurse manager engagement education program on oncology nurse engagement.

**METHODS:** The oncology nurses (n = 20) who report to the nurse managers (n = 3) completed a pre- and postintervention nurse engagement survey to assess the effectiveness of the nurse manager education program on engagement. Descriptive statistics were used to analyze the results.

**FINDINGS:** The results of the postintervention nurse engagement survey demonstrate that merely teaching nurse managers the principles of engagement is not enough to engage nurses. Further strategies are needed to improve nurse engagement.

### KEYWORDS

nurse engagement; nurse manager support; nurse manager education

### DIGITAL OBJECT IDENTIFIER

10.1188/19.CJON.E39-E45

**EMPLOYEES WHO ARE ENGAGED ARE ENTHUSIASTIC**, fully immersed in their work role, and eager to give their best performance to their employer, resulting in better customer and organizational outcomes (Bhuvanaiah & Raya, 2015; Gupta & Sharma, 2016). Worldwide, 87% of the workforce is not engaged or is disengaged (Gupta & Sharma, 2016). Fifteen percent of nurses in the United States are disengaged, costing healthcare organizations an average of \$22,000 per year for each disengaged nurse (Dempsey & Reilly, 2016). A self-report survey study completed in 2013 by Brunetto et al. reported that 510 randomly selected nurses from Australia hospitals and 718 nurses from U.S. hospitals perceived management support as a predictor of nurse engagement.

Oncology nurses are likely to be disengaged because the role of providing end-of-life care to patients with cancer places a high emotional demand on them; this, in turn, affects engagement (Dempsey & Reilly, 2016; Poulsen, Khan, Poulsen, Khan, & Poulsen, 2016). When employees believe that their organization is supportive, they are likely to respond by attempting to fulfill their obligations to the organization by becoming more engaged (Dempsey & Reilly, 2016). Nurse engagement increases when employees experience nurse leader support.

In the current healthcare environment, the need to retain high-performing, qualified nurses is crucial and a priority; the pressure to do so lies mainly on the nurse manager (Brown, Fraser, Wong, Muise, & Cummings, 2013). Nurse manager support makes a difference in the way nurses respond to the organization, and nurse managers need clear guiding principles if they are to effectively practice supportive leadership behaviors (MacPhee et al., 2014).

The overall purpose of this project was to measure the impact of a nurse manager engagement education program on oncology nurse engagement in a multisite National Cancer Institute (NCI)-designated cancer center. The following were the objectives of this project:

- Develop an evidence-based education program based on the four engagement principles outlined by Harter, Schmidt, and Keyes (2003).
- Increase nurse manager knowledge of nurse engagement using a variety of knowledge translation interventions and strategies.
- Measure the impact of the nurse manager engagement education on oncology nurse engagement.