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Lean Management: Time & Cost Saving by Applying 5S Practice in a Male Psychiatric Informal Admission Ward

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Introduction

5S is a practical management tool to excel clinical service. It is also a way of providing systems and process with attached roles and responsibilities to improve work flow. Applying 5S practice into ward operation can increase staff efficacy; ensure safe, healthy and structured environment, and facilitate smooth and cost-effective ward operation. To take advantage of ward renovation, this program had been initiated in a male psychiatric informal admission ward in March 2015.

Objectives

To review the cost-effectiveness of applying 5S practice in psychiatric in-patient setting.

Methodology

A 5S workgroup had been set up in March 2015. The major components of the program were cultivation of staff's attitude, infrastructure improvement and software enhancement. To ensure staff having better understanding on 5S, briefing sessions on 5S had been given to nursing and clinical supporting staff in May 2015. Meanwhile, three comprehensive 5S notice boards had been made to enhance staff awareness on 5S practice. Besides, tailor-made storage spaces with specific containers and storing devices were used to make storage in a structured and tidy manner. Visual aids like index cards & photos were fully utilized for easy identification. For software enhancement, three newly built computer systems: "document retrieval system", "furniture/ inventory flow system" and "minimum stock order system" were developed to facilitate easy access and on-hand stock control to save cost and prevent unnecessary wastage. Questionnaire and semi-structured interview were used to evaluate the program outcome.

Result

Applying 5S practice had been proved to be successful. Nearly 80% and 95% of ward staff considered their work efficiency improved in 3rd quarter of 2015 and 3rd quarter of 2016 respectively. Over 95% responded that their understanding on 5S increased. More than 90% believed integration of 5S could be successfully and sustainably

implemented. Around 90% considered the culture of 5S could be cultivated and showed willingness to support in 5S work. The concerned staff also claimed around 50% saving in time for document retrieval, stock taking and ordering. The items were easily accessed and no overstock yielded. According to the consumption report, around 20% of the cost had been reduced after applying 5S. Besides, WISER panel members had paid visit to the index ward in November of 2016 with positive feedback and the index ward had been successfully granted the title of WISER Model Unit in February 2017. To conclude, the vast majority of ward staff welcome integration of 5S into working setting as they could all witness obvious improvement both in infrastructure and daily operation as well as appreciate substantial benefits like time and cost saving.