

Onboarding process effectiveness for new Infection Control Practitioners (ICP) at the Scarborough Health Network (SHN)

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Background Information

The Covid-19 pandemic has brought significant changes to the Infection Prevention and Control (IPAC) department at SHN. Like many other healthcare facilities, our IPAC department has experienced a significant shortage of qualified ICP during the pandemic. In addition, the SHN IPAC department has had to resource the IPAC Hub which led to the mass hiring of new staff to cover the three SHN hospitals and the IPAC hub which has forty long term care homes, retirement homes, group homes, and shelters.

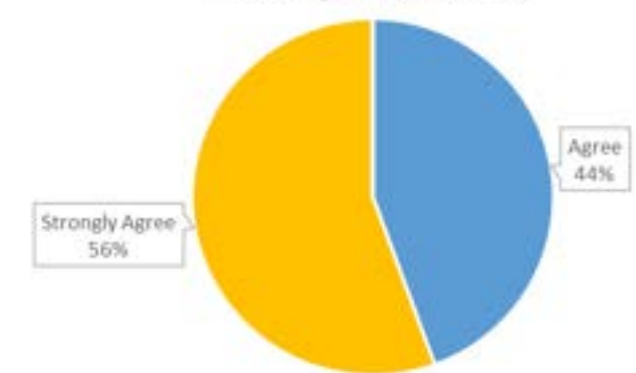
There were two major challenges our department had to overcome. The first challenge was not having a well-defined IPAC orientation and onboarding program to successfully integrate the new staff. The second challenge was hiring staff who came from a range of backgrounds with varying experience as some staff were new to IPAC, some had minimal experience, and others had Certificate of Infection Control (CIC) designation. The overarching goal is to tailor the training of the new staff based on their level IPAC experience and using adult learning principles.

SHN Hospitals

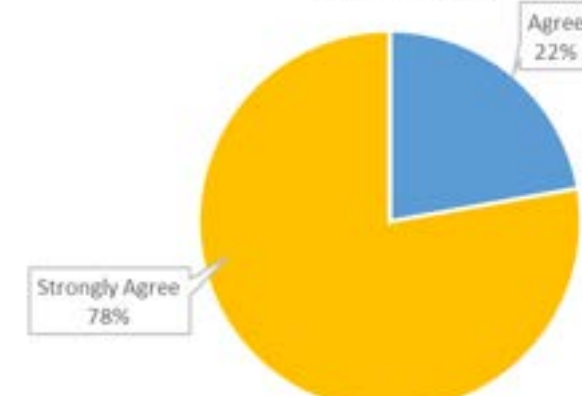


Birchmount Hospital (BIR) Centenary Hospital (CEN) General Hospital (GEN)

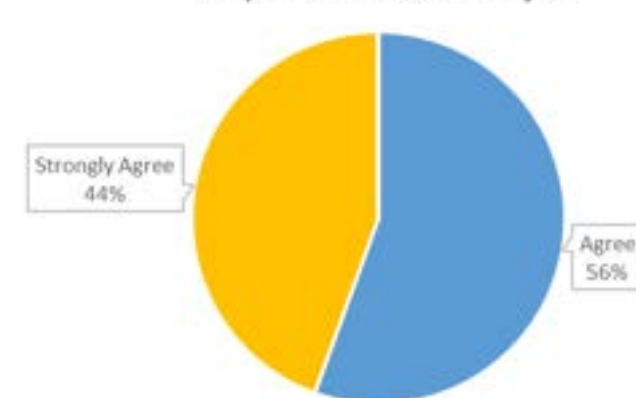
I found that completing the ICP Self-Appraisal tool has given me a good idea of what my future learning needs will be



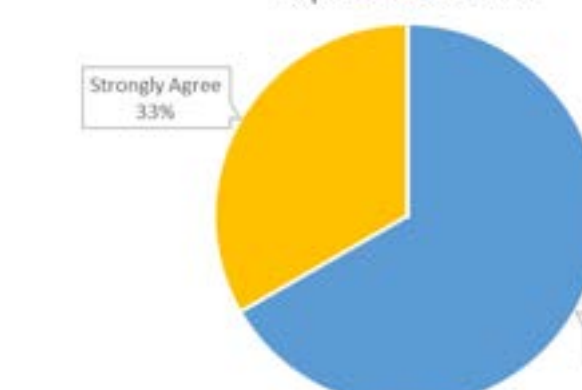
I am satisfied with my decision to join the IPAC team at SHN



I understand my role including the responsibilities of the job



The onboarding process has met my expectations so far



Methods

The onboarding content is tailored to each new staff's learning needs, knowledge, and past experiences and includes a deep dive into internal practices, protocols, standard work, and online resources. It also has a secondary purpose of providing training material relevant to the new staff's pursuit of a CIC designation. Aside from onboarding resources, a mentor-mentee relationship was established so that the new staff could access practical knowledge from someone successful on the job and gain the confidence that is needed for independent practice. Finally, all new staff, whether novice or experienced, were required to complete the IPAC Canada Self-appraisal tool to have an inventory of skills and to guide future learning goals. Once the onboarding process is complete, the new recruits completed a survey which is used to identify areas for process improvement.

Results

Survey results showed that majority of participants found that the onboarding process prepared them in their new role as an ICP. They expressed satisfaction in the process while highlighting that they never had this type of onboarding experience and level of support before. Participants also highlighted that completing the IPAC Canada Self-appraisal tool has opened up a new level of desire that includes future career planning, learning and skill development.

Conclusions

Having an organized onboarding process that is tailored to each recruit is crucial to their success in the workplace, especially in the context of the increased need for IPAC staffing due to the pandemic. While our new onboarding process has proven to be successful, we will continue to seek feedback to ensure we are meeting the needs of our new staff members.

