



BACKGROUND

Orientation

- Research shows proper orientation is one way to alleviate stress, improve patient safety, and decrease the rate of staff turnover (Powers et al., 2019)
- During the first year of clinical practice, training and one-on-one support are necessary in order to develop new nurse competencies and the confidence to practice independently (Sherrod et al., 2020)
- Ways to improve preceptorships have been studied due to the lack of consistency between units and institutions (Kennedy, 2019)

Preceptors

- Individuals who assist in bridging gaps between textbook knowledge and clinical practice (Haggerty et al., 2012)
- Introduce staff to unit and institution culture (Haggerty et al., 2012; Powers et al., 2019)

Preceptor education

- Effective education occurs when they initially take on the preceptor role and continues as they function in the role (Martínez-Linares et al., 2019)
- Varies depending on the institution and can include traditional classes, workshops, and virtual learning (Kennedy, 2019)

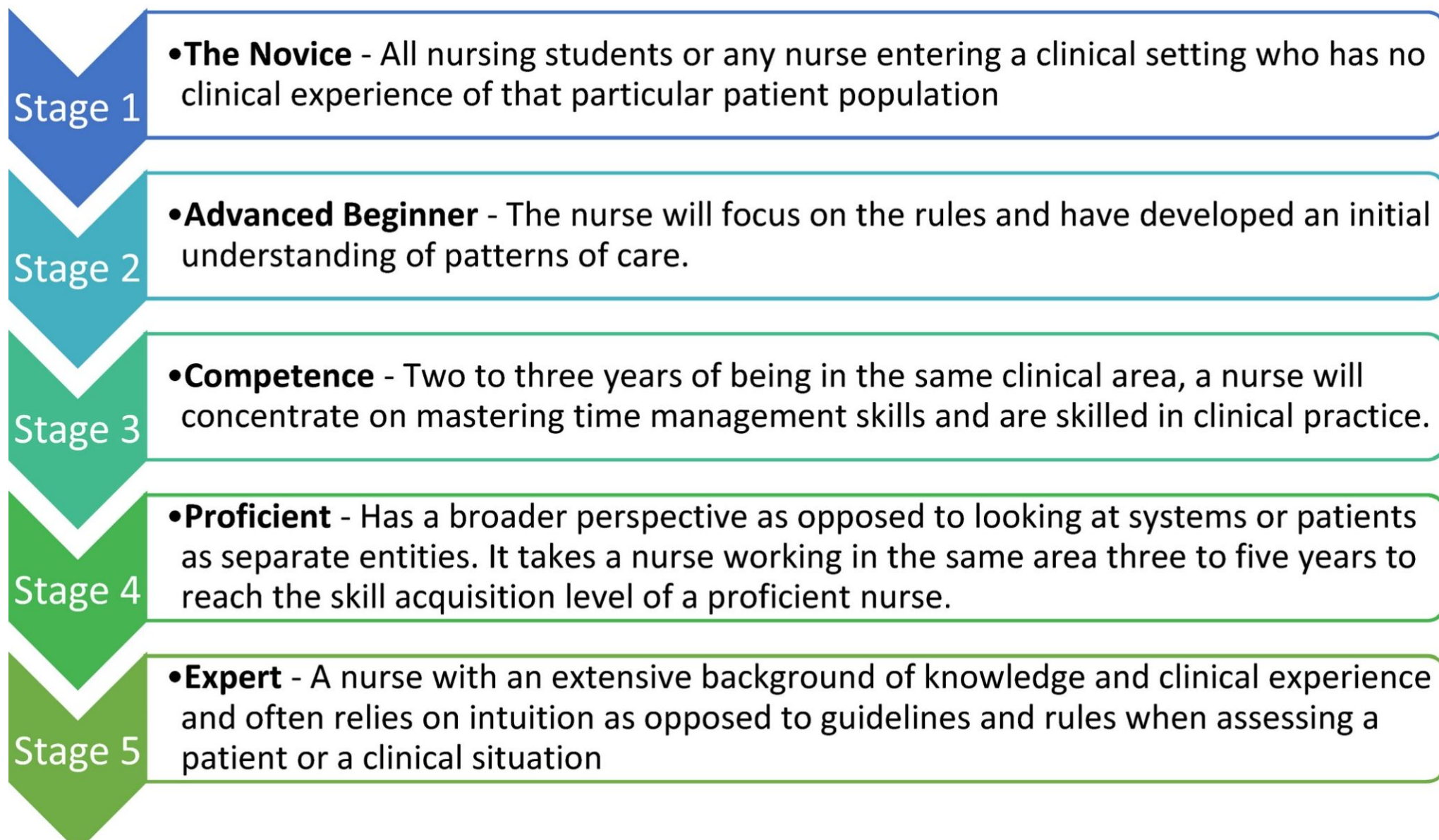
NURSING THEORY

Benner's *From novice to expert*

- States there is a difference between knowing information (practical knowledge) and knowing how to apply information (theoretical knowledge) (Bennett, 2017)
- Clinical exposures develop theoretical understanding from practical knowledge gained in nursing school (Ozdemir, 2019)
- Learner's observe preceptors correctly modeling care in the clinical environment to move beyond the stage of novice (Bennett, 2017)
- The preceptor shares expertise with new staff, moving the advanced beginner from task-oriented work to individualized care (Bennett, 2017; Murray et al., 2019; Ozdemir, 2019)

Figure 1

Benner's Novice to Expert Model



Reprinted from *Benner's model and Duchscher's theory: Providing the framework for understanding new graduate nurses' transition to practice* (vol.34., p.201), by M. Murray, D. Sundin, & V. Cope, 2019, Nurse Education in Practice.

ASSESSMENT

In the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit (NICU) at Cincinnati Children's Hospital Medical Center (CCHMC):

- 100 nurses hired and trained in the last two years
- 17-bed expansion to a Critical Care Building (CCB) in November of 2021

The volume of nurses hired to work on the unit requires many staff members to act as preceptors to newly hired employees.

Preceptor Preparation

An email containing the orientation schedule and the preceptor handbook and some preceptors take part in a voluntary 8-hour housewide course that is not unit-specific

PURPOSE

Evaluate the effectiveness of an educational offering aimed at:

- Improving guidance offered to preceptors through education
- Improving overall orientation experience
- Addressing the lack of preceptor preparation for orientation

CHANGE THEORY

Lewin's Change Theory

Two forces influencing an environment:

Restraining - prevents change and maintains the current state

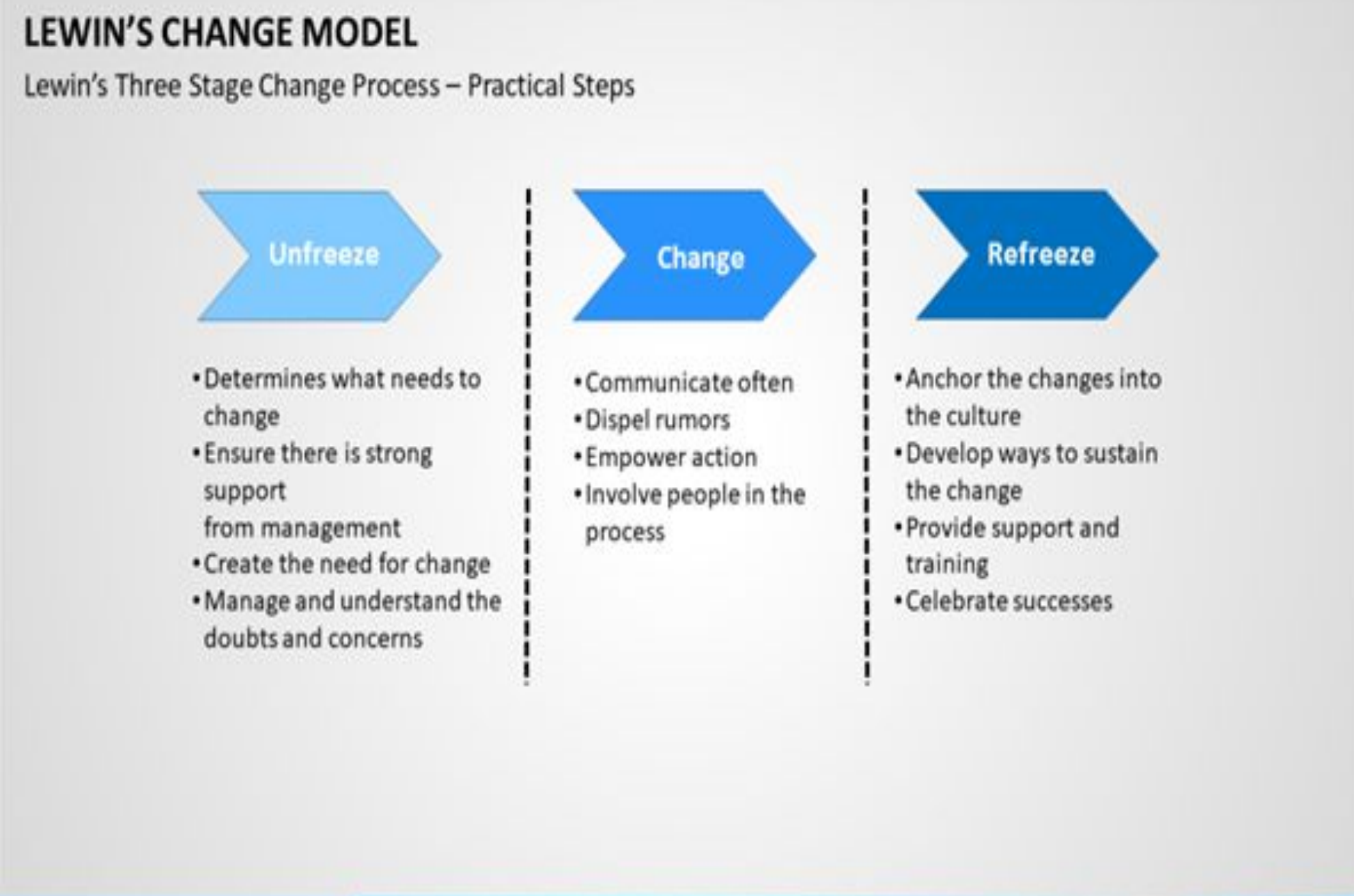
Driving - encourages change

Results in equilibrium that allows for nothing to change (Shirey, 2013; Wojciechowski et al., 2016)

Steps must be taken to overcome restraining forces and allow driving forces to propel change:

Figure 2

Lewin's Model for Planned Change



Reprinted from *A Case Review: Integrating Lewin's Theory with Lean's System Approach for Change* (Vol. 21 No. 2, Manuscript 4), by E.Wojciechowski, P. Murphy, T. Pearsall, E. French, 2016, The Online Journal of Issues in Nursing.

NICU Leadership took steps to overcome restraining forces and allow driving forces to propel change:

- *Unfreezing* - identifying a need for preceptor education, educating leadership and staff regarding the program's need
- *Changing/Moving* stage - creating the educational offering, communicating the benefits of the program and program design - Preceptors went through the educational offering
- *Refreezing* - preceptor educational offering is the new standard - Each preceptor will go through the course

IMPLEMENTATION

Content Presentation:

PowerPoint and Discussion covering: Goals of Orientation, Preceptor Role in the NICU, Resources

Available to the Preceptor, Phases of New Nurse Orientation

For Preceptors: Virtual Sessions

- to ensure social distancing
- 2 hours in length
- via Zoom
- 4-8 participants per session
- Sessions one to two weeks prior to preceptorship

For Orientees: Information incorporated into orientation

Objectives:

- Preceptors and orientees can identify phases of nurse orientation by the end of the session
- By the end of the session, locate preceptor handbook, experience check off, and roles of the preceptor resources on the NICU eChirp site
- At the end of the session, preceptors can verbalize appropriate assignment progression for nurses in orientation

EVALUATION

- **During:** Discussions allowed for participant vocalization of desires from continued education and improvements that could be made to the current course
- **After:** Surveys were sent to participants via email

Post-preceptor education survey

- 1) After the course do you feel like you have a better understanding of your role as a preceptor?
- 2) After the completion of the course do you feel you have a better understanding of the phases of orientation?
- 3) Could you identify appropriate assignments for each phase of orientation?
- 4) Would you be able to locate resources for you as a nurse preceptor?
- 5) After the completion of the course what questions do you still have?

OUTCOMES

8 participants:

- 3 had preceptor experience
- 5 were precepting for the first time the following week
- Experience: 18 months to 9 years
- 100% approval rating
- Supported formal education to prepare preceptors

Participant 5 had never been a preceptor, and their post-survey question one response mentions a more thorough understanding of all the preceptor roles and how this will empower them when working with their orientee

Participant 2 had previously functioned as a preceptor and responded that the session's most helpful components were the discussions regarding phases of orientation and appropriate assignments in each phase

(Anonymous, 2021)

CONCLUSION

- There is a need for initial and maintenance preceptor education
- Upon meeting objectives and completing post-survey assessments, participants report a better understanding of orientation and an increased drive to work with new nurses
- Preceptor education will continue at CCHMC to enhance the orientation experience for the orientee and preceptor

IMPLICATIONS

Future Preceptor Education at CCHMC:

Initial Education:

- Virtual sessions will become in-person sessions (gatherings of 10 people or less are approved)
- Current preceptors will be educated 1-3 weeks prior to taking on an orientee
- Improved post-surveys will be incorporated to assess the quality and impact of the education sessions
- Additional content regarding adult learning styles and teaching strategies will be incorporated

Maintenance Education:

- One-on-one follow-up discussions to address individual learner needs
- Orientation documents on NICU Education website
- Opportunity for one-on-one preceptor education prior to taking another orientee
- Reeducation every two years

