Improving Discharge Planning: Implementation of an NICU Discharge Road Map
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Purpose of Project
Develop and implement a visual guide for use by staff and families to
• Promote understanding of expectations of NICU
• Identify baby’s progress
• Provide clear explanation of the steps required for discharge
• Accountability for nursing team to prepare baby/family for discharge

Background/Significance
Discharge Preparation
Evidence shows that mothers report experiencing high levels of stress related to infants’ discharge from the NICU. (1-5)

Family Involvement
The greatest stress in the NICU is the alteration of parent roles (1-5)

Physiology of Stress on Knowledge Retention
Parental stress related to discharge negatively impact the parents’ ability to learn and retain discharge education. Thus, this negatively impacts developmental care outcomes (1-5)

Conceptual Model

Sample and Setting
• Preterm babies born less than 36 weeks gestation
• English speaking families

Setting:
• 23 bed Level 3 NICU in West Allis, WI

Methods/Application to Practice
• Nurse Residency group developed the NICU Discharge Road Maps
• Staff survey of discharge planning satisfaction and revision of road maps to follow based on feedback
• Road maps presented and approved at unit shared governance meeting
• Road maps were rolled out via staff education binder
• Road maps hung at each baby’s bedside.
• Dry erase markers used to mark off baby’s progress.
• Post-survey distributed to staff and further revision of road maps based on staff feedback

Findings/Results/Outcomes
Staff Surveys:
• Nurses reported more tasks being done prior to discharge
• Variance in usage of discharge road maps by nursing staff
• Identified need for consistent place to hang at bedside

Implications
• Create forms in languages that represent the NICU population
• Continuing education for NICU Nurses on discharge planning, utilization of the discharge road maps and communication with families on plan of care.
• Obtain parent feedback on forms to improve
• Propose use of these tools at a system level

References

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