



Highly Informative Tips (HITs) for Implementation

Rapid Response Teams (RRT)

Personalize the patient stories. Reinforce at the floor level by sharing stories, both positive, AND what could have been avoided. Check charts for situations that could have been RRT calls earlier, and use those as educational opportunities.

To gain trust with staff, make sure the team of responders follows the five “musts”.

1. Always respond quickly;
2. Always be respectful;
- Always use the opportunity to teach;
4. Always include the bedside nurse; and
5. Always include the primary team.

Praise and educate the person who activated the team. Use the calls as an educational opportunity and praise the caller for activating the system. Stress that calls are important for the care of the patient, not any type of judgment of skills. Response teams should make sure they involve the staff member that called since he/she is still their patient too.

Customize your Rapid Response Team. Staffing at hospitals can be a challenge when creating Rapid Response Teams. Rural hospitals have to be especially creative when determining coverage on nights and weekends. Take a look around to see who’s available during these lean times. You may be surprised to find availability where you thought there was none.

Test your RRT system through simulation. If you’re just developing an RRT, take the time to run through a few simulated calls. If you have an RRT in place, use simulations at annual employee competency skills evaluations to make sure employees still think of the team when faced with a sign of decline.

Create redundancies. Does your hospital have a back-up plan for RRT in case the system fails (pager doesn’t go off, for example)? Creating redundancies in the process will help ensure the patients get the treatment they need, no matter what.

Openly recognize and celebrate staff calls. Reward staff that make valuable calls to the RRT by showcasing their efforts. Some examples include giving a small “call of the month” award to a deserving employee, or having the CEO send a personal thank you to callers.

Evaluate RRT data to identify areas for system improvement. RRT data is rich with opportunities for system improvement, and these improvement processes will enhance the care of all patients in the facility. Upon review of the data, every effort should be taken to identify any system failures. Failure-to-rescue opportunities may include the following:

1. **Failure to Recognize:** Vital signs deteriorating over time with no response by caregiver.
2. **Failure to Communicate:** Delay in physician response to a call for assistance; inadequate communication between caregivers.
3. **Failure to Plan:** Deterioration of patient while “awaiting an inpatient bed” while in an ED or PACU.