Innovative Strategies to Reduce Aggression in Behavioral Health Patients using the Dynamic Appraisal of Situational Aggression (DASA) Tool

Behavioral Health - Charlotte, Kings Mountain Behavioral Health Unit, Behavioral Health – Davidson, Stanly Psychiatric Unit, NorthEast Senior Medical Behavioral Unit and Blue Ridge Behavioral Health Unit

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Background
There was no current method to proactively identify a patient’s risk for aggression/violence throughout the Behavioral Health (BH) service line. A process for measuring this would improve both the patient and teammate safety, as well as the teammate’s perception of safety in the workplace.

Goal
The goals of this project:
1). To identify and implement an evidence-based tool to measure and communicate the risk of patient aggression/violence to teammates and providers.
2). Reduce the number of assaults and the need for restrictive interventions (RI) by tracking the following metrics a). patient assaults on teammates, b). patient on patient assaults, c) Number of RI events, and d). Total time in restraints.

Improvement Process
The team used the Model for Improvement with Plan-Do-Study-Act (PDSA) cycles as a framework to drive the improvement work. The team initiated an eight-week pilot using the DASA evidence-based tool on two inpatient BH inpatient units. Following the pilot, the remaining inpatient BH units began using the DASA August 31, 2018.

Results
From January through April 2019, the DASA tool has had the greatest impact on the safety of our teammates and patients in our seven BH inpatient units. DASA increases the awareness of teammates to potentially aggressive patients which allowed for earlier interventions or de-escalation strategies to help reduce assaults, assault-related injuries, and the need for restraints. As illustrated below restraint minutes results went from 4,872 to 3,571 resulting in a 27% reduction in restraint minutes and restraint events went from 84 to 76 resulting in a 10% reduction in restraint events.

![Restraint Minutes Graph](image1)

![Restraint Events Total Graph](image2)