

Nurse leaders, whether at the unit or organizational level, play a pivotal role within any given organizational structure in creating a healthy, motivating work environment. These environments are ones that encourage workers to perform their best and continue to develop professionally. The underlying belief about motivation is that the behaviors and actions of individuals are driven by internal and external factors. They possess these in varying degrees and are not the same for everyone. Motivational theory provides the foundation for creating strategies for motivating people to perform well and be satisfied in their jobs.

Consider this scenario:

You are the nurse administrator of a medium-sized health system with a multigenerational workforce. Over the past year, there has been a noticeable decrease in employee satisfaction scores, the presence of low morale, and attrition has begun. Attrition has not met the critical point, and you are taking action to prevent it from getting worse.

What is your approach to solving this problem?

Using a specific motivational theory, describe how you would create a healthful work environment within that organization.

Describe at least three theory-based strategies you will use to create this environment you described.

The initial approach to effectively handling this problem will be to do a root cause analysis, which is a structured framework that works to find the cause of any number of issues in healthcare and across different industries. A root cause analysis (RCA) will allow the leadership staff at the facility to look at different areas of the facility and identify the core issues that are causing low morale and attrition. (UC Davis PSNet, 2024). Any attempts at correcting issues or attempting to raise overall morale will be futile if the basic causes are not first identified.

The Herzberg two-factor or motivation-hygiene theory states that each person has the intrinsic desire to succeed in their position (motivator factors), but there are also extrinsic factors and concepts that prevent or deter employees and staff from being completely motivated to succeed (hygiene factors). Herzberg theorized that by identifying and removing the hygiene factors that create dissatisfaction, employees will be more likely to be happy and motivated in their roles. However, this theory requires regular reassessment and employee assistance to meet the goals. (Buyukbese et al., 2023).

One strategy to help create a healthier work environment would be to compare the average salary in the area to current employee salaries with similar experience. It would not be beneficial to compare a long-time nurse and a baby nurse, but finding similar experienced staff and assessing any salary disparities would help to raise morale and lessen attrition. A common