

# Connecting Again: Optimizing and Improving Nurse-Resident Relationships in a Post-COVID World

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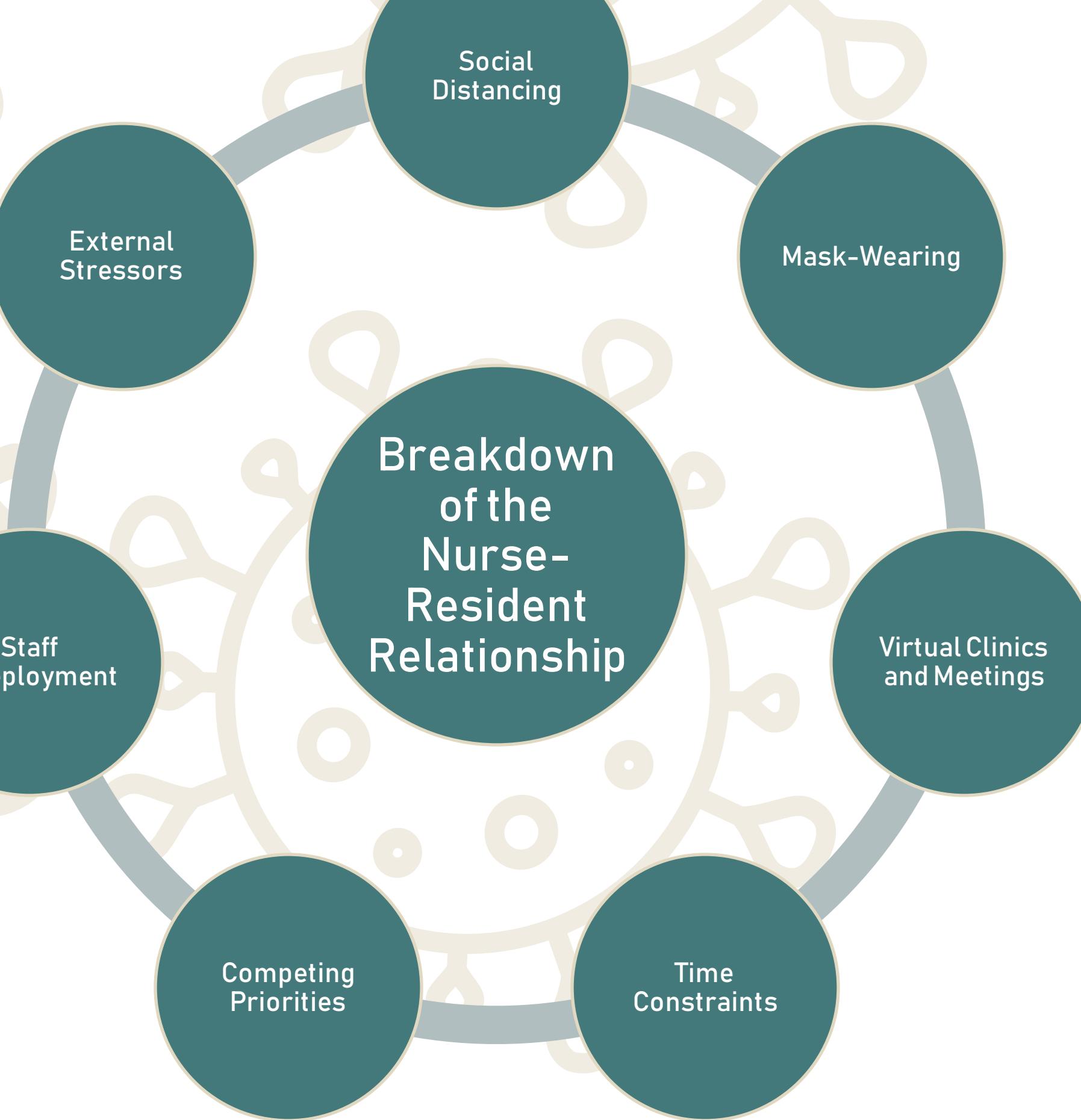
Toronto Western  
Family Health Team  
Garrison Creek  
Bathurst

## The Problem

Primary Care nurses are placed in a key position to foster inter-professional collaboration and teamwork for family physicians in training, leading to enhanced patient outcomes. During the pandemic at the Toronto Western FHT, this established relationship was eroded secondary to multiple factors highlighted below, such that the relationship was no longer collaborative.

To improve inter-professional care and relationship building, we proposed the implementation of an informal Nurse-Resident Mentorship Program.

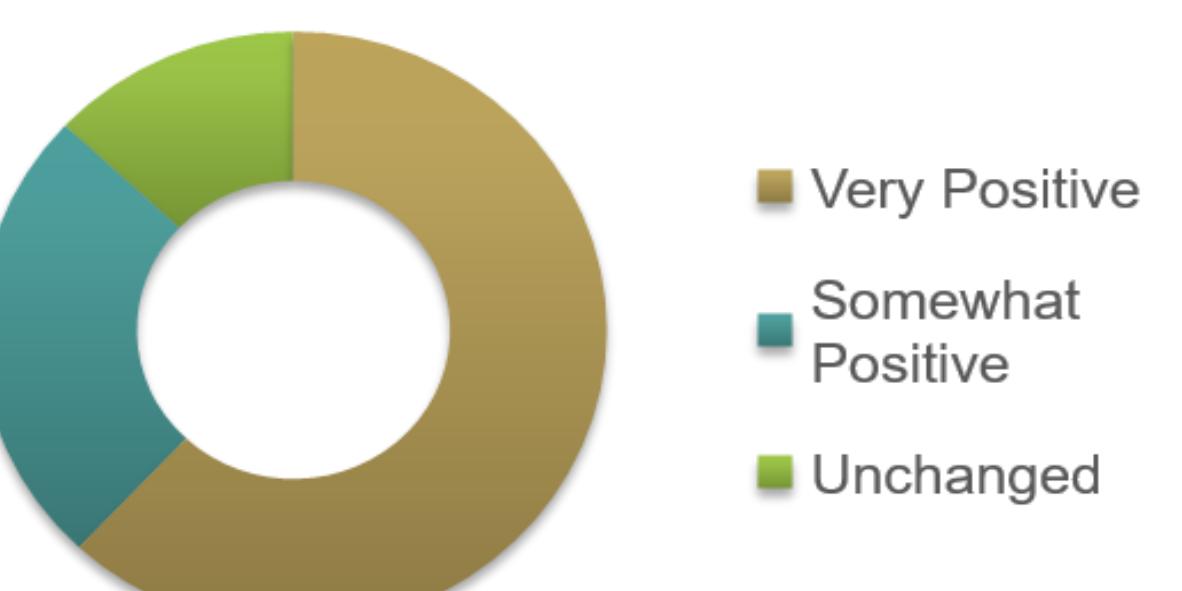
This program provides an opportunity for the nursing team to share primary care expertise with residents and foster a sense of safety and trust. This will in turn improve patient care and develop team-based skills that are essential in the developing health care environment.



## Results

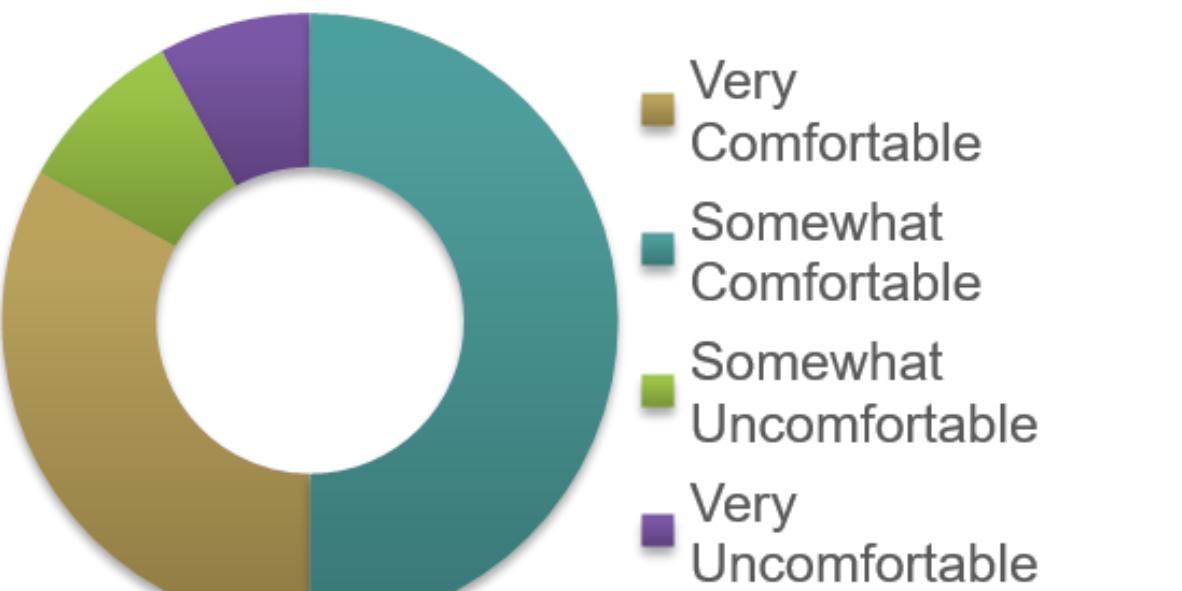
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Nursing Survey: How do you find the overall relationship between nurses and residents since the implementation of the buddy program? **62% Very Positive, 25% Somewhat Positive**



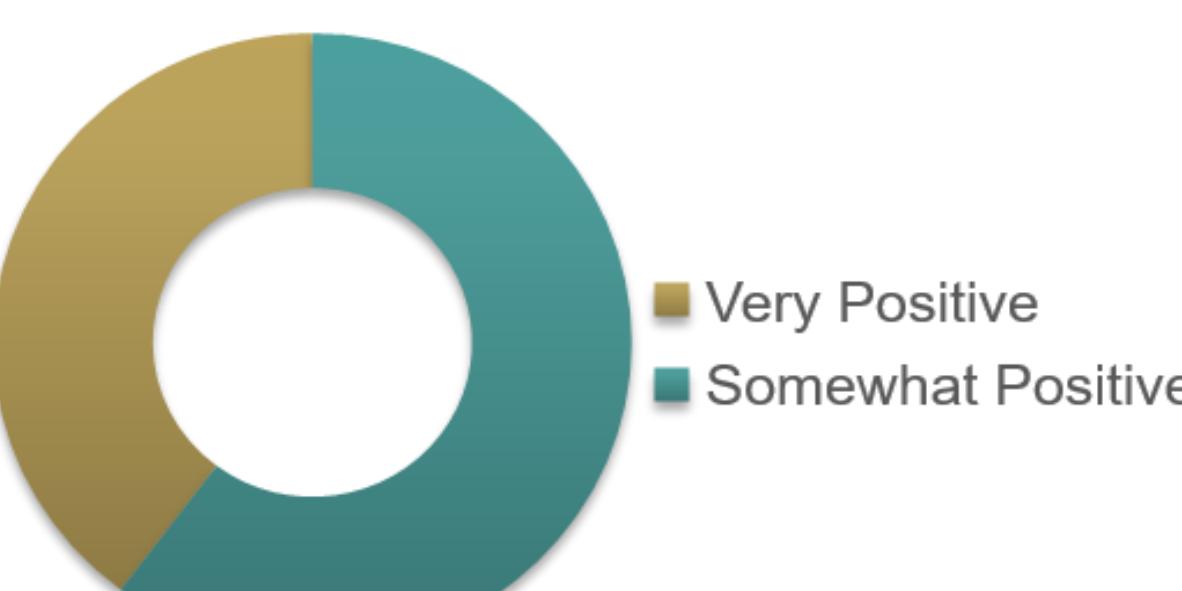
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Resident Survey: How comfortable do you feel approaching the nursing team for help or advice? **33% Very Comfortable, 55% Somewhat Comfortable**



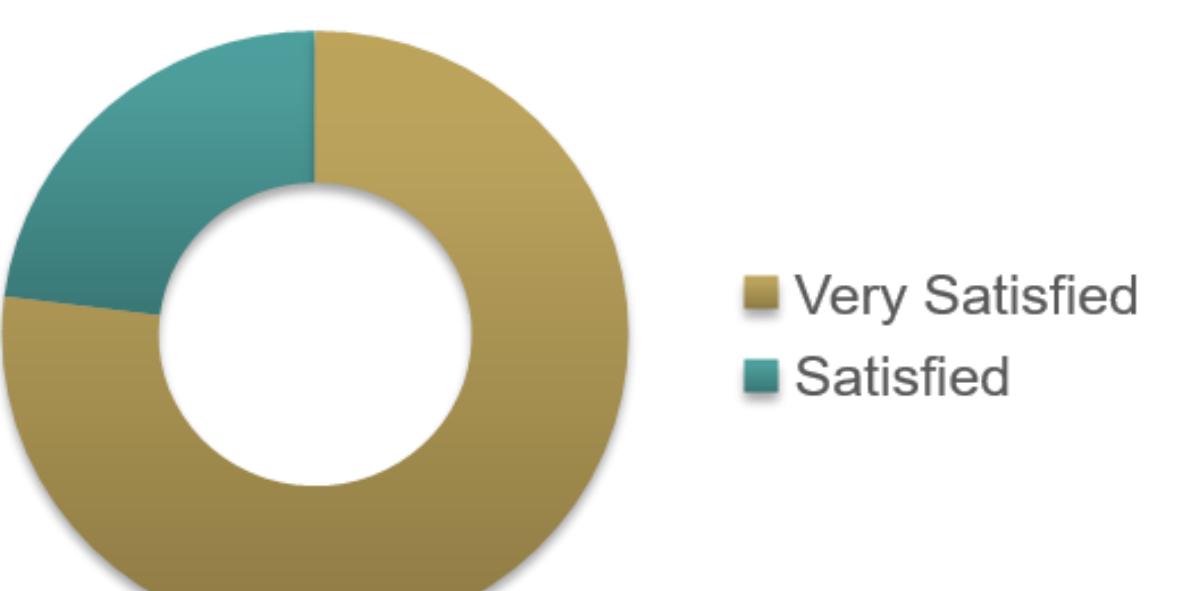
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Physician Survey: How do you find the overall relationship between nurses and residents since the implementation of the buddy program? **70% Very Positive, 30% Somewhat Positive**



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Resident Skills Lab Survey: Please rate your overall satisfaction with your skills lab experience. **77% Very Satisfied, 23% Satisfied**



## Future Directions

Conduct surveys specific to each year in order to find out what they will find most helpful and beneficial in residency



Survey second year residents earlier for their feedback prior to the implementation of this new initiative within the FHT



This may result in a modified approach for first vs. second year residents in the upcoming years



## What We Did



Each nurse was assigned 2-3 resident buddies (mix of both first- and second-year residents) to assist with clinic navigation. A framework was developed to establish responsibilities and role clarification



A dedicated nurse was assigned to assist with resident urgent care clinics. Assignments were switched as scheduling allowed so that each resident could work with their nursing buddy whenever possible

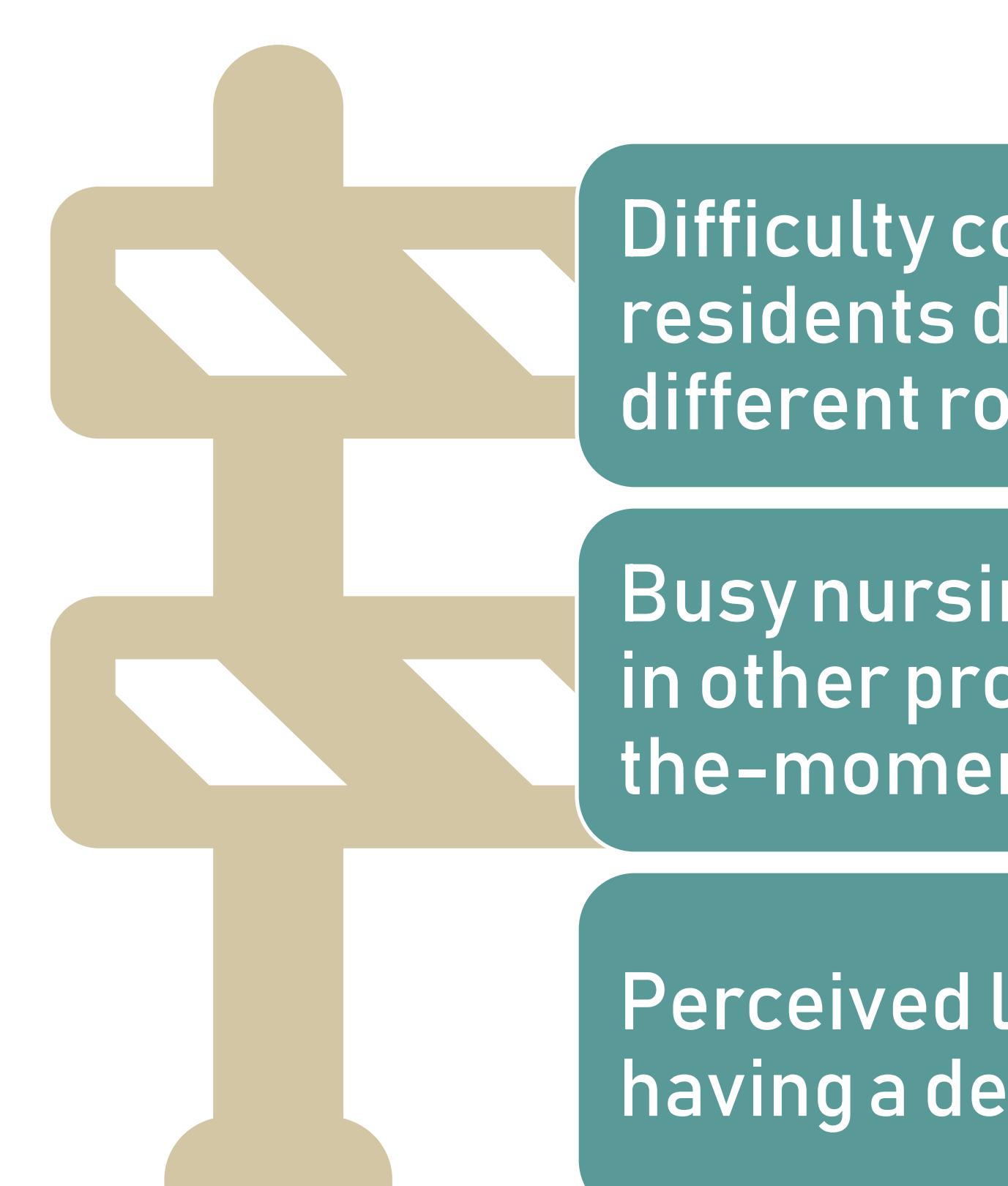


Implementation of a skills lab for first year residents with positive anonymous feedback from a survey and positive informal feedback from residents

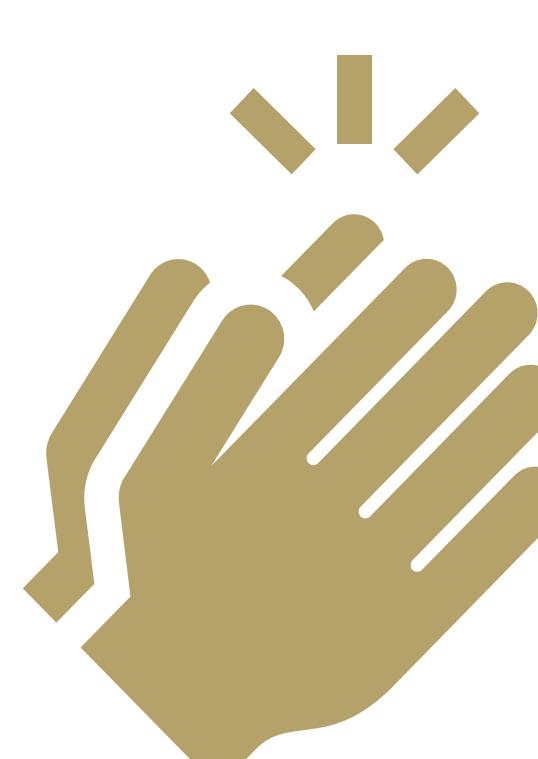


Nursing-led education sessions for all residents during academic half-days on topics of nursing expertise such as immunizations and Diabetes Mellitus management

## Barriers



- Difficulty connecting with second year residents due to being away from clinic for different rotations, teaching practice, etc.
- Busy nursing schedule due to involvement in other programs, charge nurse duties, in-the-moment requests, etc.
- Perceived lack of interest from residents in having a designated nursing buddy



"Increased confidence in residents. Better relationships. Improved morale overall. Residents are open to asking questions, feel comfortable. Nurses seem happier" – First Year Residency Program Director

"Residents have a greater understanding of what is within the nursing scope of practice, and are also able to collaborate with them better because they have a personal relationship with them" - Staff Physician