

# Research paper on nursing leadership

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Leadership is an important component that influences the success of any organization. In the nursing profession, situations and various medical conditions are changing while new ones develop. Nurses are constantly facing new and complex challenges while attending to their duties. These situations require competent individuals who need to direct and guide others to ensure people's lives are not at risk. Nursing is a field that experiences shortages in terms of staff. Therefore, nursing leadership assists hospitals to benefit tremendously in terms of performance. Leaders help to instill confidence, and when nurses feel comfortable and confident in the execution of their duties, performance is increased. This helps to reduce problems that accompany the impending nursing shortages in most hospitals. While performing their duties nurses experience different scenarios where some may even be traumatizing. As a leader in the nursing profession, one needs to ensure that the nurses are motivated enough to perform their duties despite the challenges they face. This is particularly valuable to the young nurses who have just begun their jobs in this field.

This paper provides an overview of what leadership is from a nursing perspective and gives a description of the characteristics and leadership style that are crucial in the nursing profession. One of the main leadership styles that are crucial in the nursing profession is the servant leadership style, which will be discussed in this paper.

## **Nursing Leadership Definition**

According to Daniels (2004), leadership involves a process where individuals are motivated and guided for the purposes of achieving certain goals.

Nursing leadership entails the ability of any individual to be able to guide

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and influence the nursing staff positively for purposes of ensuring adequate delivery of health care to patients.

## **Leadership Characteristics**

Critical leadership characteristics include effective communication, credibility, collaboration, critical thinking, and delegation (Daniels, 2004).

## **Effective Communication**

Leaders should be able to communicate their ideas clearly to the individuals they lead. According to Daniels (2004), an effective nurse leader listens attentively to other nurses. This allows the leader to be able to make decisions and be able to convince others why a certain approach is the best in a certain situation.

## **Credibility**

Leadership requires a certain degree of credibility. Credibility assists a leader to influence others positively. Daniels (2004) argues that the power of influencing and inspiring beliefs in others comes from the competency of the leader. Competent leaders show confidence. People will less likely follow a leader that does not have confidence.

## **Collaboration**

Nursing as a profession involves various multi-disciplinary aspects. This brings up the need for collaboration in the delivery of health care (Daniels, 2004). Nurse leaders are required to form task teams that will address different medical situations. An important component of the teams is trust,

which the leader needs to develop. Where there is no trust, collaboration is futile.

## **Critical thinking**

Different situations arise in health care situations that demand critical thinking. A nurse leader should be able to think critically on the best course of action if human lives are to be saved. The nurse leader should be able to know and assess, which situations demand more nurses to provide adequately nursing care (Daniels, 2004). For instance, the nurse leader should be able to inform administration when there is inadequate nursing staff. This helps in reducing crisis in the health care facility.

## **Delegation**

Delegation forms an essential part in leadership. Effective delivery of health care requires nurse leaders to delegate duties and responsibilities effectively. Important aspects of delegation include conflict resolution, communication, feedback, and evaluation (Daniel, 2004). One of the benefits of delegation in nursing is that it helps in developing skills among the nurses.

## **Servant Leadership Style**

Servant leadership is a form of leadership where a leader places the interest of others ahead of his interests (Herman, 2010). This leadership style is characterized by valuing and developing people for the sole purpose of doing good to a community. Servant leadership is not guided by the desire for power or money. The need to help people is what drives servant leadership. According to Trompenaars and Voerman (2010), employees, in their work, are interested in more than just money. Purpose has become an essential

component in most of the workforce. Application of the servant model by leaders ensures that the employees are satisfied and when they are satisfied, the clients are satisfied (Trompenaars & Voerman, 2010).

According to Herman (2010), employees tend to realize their full potential when working for something in which they have a passion, and when they are of service to others this provides a feeling of meaning and purpose in their lives.

## **Leadership Nursing Theory**

Congruent theory of leadership in nursing can be seen in situations where the actions of a leader are guided by the leader's beliefs and values concerning nursing care (Stanley, 2008). Based on this theory, the leader's beliefs and values are more powerful than the aspect of where the leader is directing them. According to Stanley (2008), congruent leaders tend to be inspirational, effective communicators, organized and relationship builders. These aspects provide some of the characteristics that make an effective leader in the nursing profession. Leaders who are in managerial positions tend to provide managerial functions rather than leadership functions. Most leaders that promote congruent leadership tend not to be in managerial positions (Stanley, 2008). Nursing requires people who have a passion for caring for people. According to the congruent theory, leaders tend to be guided by compassion for people and passion for what they do (Stanley, 2008). Congruent leaders live by their principles no matter the cost and empower others. Congruent leadership provides a foundation through which effective leaders can be able to begin their profession. This ensures that the core value of patient care in nursing is maintained (Stanley, 2008).

## **Leadership in Action**

### **Creating Vision**

As a leader, a nurse should be able to inspire and develop core values that will form the essence of patient care. The values expressed in a vision are what brings the nurses together and promote teamwork.

### **Building Teams**

The nursing profession works together in conjunction with other professions in the provision of health care. Quality patient care requires collaboration of various team members, which includes nurses and physicians (Garber, Madigan, Click & Fitzpatrick, 2009). Forming such a team requires trust, which a nursing leader will require to cultivate. This will ensure that the teams are effective.

### **Dealing with Team Conflict**

Working in teams forms an essential component in the nursing profession. Because of the differences among different people based on culture, conflicts are bound to arise. A nurse leader should be able to understand different people for purposes of addressing issues that may arise between them when working together.

### **Acting Ethically**

Ethical situations, which challenge a nurse's moral ground arise in the course of the profession. A nurse leader needs to ensure that all actions done are ethical in nature for purposes of safety of the patient and to prevent legal sanctions.

## **Spiritual Leadership**

Spiritual leadership forms a core aspect in when dealing with patients and nurses, as well. Spiritual leadership helps to develop compassion and trust among the nurses and patients. This increases the effectiveness of delivering health care services.

## **Conclusion**

Effective leadership in the nursing profession is attained through servant leadership. Nurses can be able to be effective leaders, which promote patient care delivery through the application of principles of congruent theory. A nurse that portrays characteristics such as effective communication, critical thinking, and delegation skills has some of the important qualities that define an effective leader in the nursing profession.

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