

Nurse leadership and advocacy essay examples

[Business](#), [Management](#)



Current reforms are calling for the greater participation of nurses in redesigning health care. At the policy level, boardroom and frontlines of care, much is expected of nurses whose clinical input and leadership are needed to promote the quality and safety of patient care. However, nurses cannot effectively assume their role without the necessary knowledge and skills. Achieving competence necessitates a cycle of learning and practice which builds on what is already known (Jackson & Thurgate, 2011). Using a leadership assessment tool, such as the Nurse Manager Skills Inventory facilitates the process of self-reflection and the setting of professional goals for personal and professional growth.

The inventory focuses on many content areas that show the extensiveness of the leadership role. The science of leadership and management calls for developing knowledge and skills in financial and human resource management, strategic management and performance improvement among others (Nurse Manager, 2006). The art of leadership requires abilities in shared governance, influencing behaviors and managing diversity. All these need to be learned and professional accountability can serve as motivation to introspect on strengths and weaknesses and seek further learning (Fleet et al., 2008). This is why I feel that content areas relating to creating a leader in myself are crucial to success.

Personal and Professional Accountability

Many of my strong points are in this area. By obtaining a BSN and now seeking an MSN, I responded to the IOM's call for nurses to advance their education which generates readiness for broader roles. Moreover, my facility and my certification require completion of CE units and compliance brings

me up-to-date with knowledge in nursing and my specialty. I am more confident that the care I provide is consistent with current knowledge in the profession. Further, I am also a member of my state's nursing association. My professional organizations regularly hold conferences where I network with other participants and become aware of issues, new standards and best practices. There are also opportunities for advocacy at the state and community level.

During annual self-assessments, I strive to be truthful. I optimize the activity to reflect on my progress and I do my best to set realistic goals. Meeting my goals is a source of self-fulfillment which is why I try hard at this. However, I consider compliance with standards as one of my weak areas in the sense that I am limited to the standards adopted in my workplace. When there is a gap between current standards and practice, systems and processes facilitating full adherence are often not in place. Without an organizational commitment to quality, it is often difficult to initiate change but I integrate the standards in individual practice as best I can.

Career Planning

I pride myself in always trying to be my best which makes me a good role model. I consider it my strong point when I make every effort to fulfill what is expected of me in my job role. To do so, I often review my job description and think about whether I am giving 100% on the job and whether I am exemplifying the role. My weakness, however, is in positioning myself. Often, I get too caught up in the present that I do not stop to think how changes in healthcare are bringing about new or evolving career opportunities. Thus, I

tend to follow the trends rather than anticipate future careers and prepare myself.

Personal Journey Disciplines

My lack of experience in managing councils is a weakness although I have a good understanding of shared leadership and its benefits. Regarding action learning and reflection, I do pause for a moment at the end of the day to think about whether I did things right, did the right things and if I would do things differently the next time. This gives me peace of mind by assuring me that I did my job. However, using action learning and reflection models foster a more systematic way of learning from experience. Reflective Practice

Reference Behaviors

I feel I live up to integrity, openness to diversity, constant learning, considering various viewpoints before making decisions and nurturing the self. I strive to be fair and honest, respecting others who are different from me and also seeking new knowledge. I can also say that I use knowledge more than emotions during decision-making and I solicit the advice or input of others in times of doubt. On the other hand, I feel I need to focus on making commitments to myself and learning about stress management is one of them. I also have to learn to accept ambiguity as a reality instead of always feeling frustrated about it.

Using Leadership for Advocacy

Leadership is influencing others to take a course of action that leads to change (Tomey, 2009). Knowledge regarding standards and best practices puts me in a position to communicate to others the need for change.

Effective communication combined with being a role model will lend me the credibility to convince the staff that a gap exists between optimal and current performance and motivate them to act on it. My openness to diversity and multiple perspectives will help me engage others to possible solutions and implement them.

Personal Goal for Leadership Growth My goal is to develop skills in shared governance as this is one way nurses can participate in setting the direction of the organization. To achieve this goal, I will have to attend workshops focusing on skills development and take short courses or webinars to deepen my knowledge. I will also approach a more senior nurse who has been successful in this role and request to be mentored. **Conclusion**

There is an urgent need for nursing leadership. While every nurse has the potential to be a leader, development is the only way this potential can be harnessed and is consistent with professional accountability. Leadership is a science and an art but can only be mastered with willingness. Action learning is an effective strategy for developing leadership. Using self-assessment tools to reflect on practice, nurses can chart the direction they need to take and the steps to get there.

References

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