

Future Nurse Executive



There is growing evidence in nursing about the impact of healthy work environment on organizational performance, improved patient outcomes, staff satisfaction, and retention. Institutions such as the American Association of Critical Care Nurses, the International Council of Nurses and the American Nurses Credentialing Center have outlined the criteria that can be used to characterize a healthy working environment.

The major coalition of all nursing coalitions in the USA, Nursing Organizations Alliance, outlined the following nine key elements to present a healthy work environment:

- » Communication rich culture.
- » The culture of accountability.
- » Collaborative practice culture.
- » Enough qualified nurses.
- » Good leadership.
- » Shared decision-making.

Encouragement of professional practice and continued growth/development.
Recognition of the value of nursing's contribution.
Recognition by nurses for their meaningful contributions practice. (Nursing Organizations Alliance, 2004).

Although there have been efforts to identify what needs to be done in healthy environments for the development and well-being of the nurses, the Nursing Organizations Alliance's key elements have remained to be challenging for many organizations due to the current turbulent in healthcare environments. The strong and proper establishment of healthy environments requires strong nursing leadership at all levels. Changes have occurred in the nursing practice and on the roles of the nurse manager over the past decades; they include staffing, multiple-unit management and increased responsibility on the budget and regulatory compliance (Shirey & Fisher, 2008). Therefore, nursing leadership needs enforcement at all levels. Since the healthy work environment is achieved at all levels, current and future nurses and nurse manager roles need mentoring and development to develop their leadership skills that are necessary for supporting and developing a healthy work environment.

1. Identification of Educational and Career Goals

The major changes in the U.S healthcare systems and practice environments require equal changes in the education of nurses both before and after receiving their licenses. The Nursing Organizations Alliance has set forth a vision of the health care systems that will depend on the transformation of the roles and responsibilities of the nurses.

Future Nurse Executive



Educational Goals

The primary goals of nursing education will always remain the same. The education of nurses is aimed to prepare the nurses to meet the diverse needs of patients, act as leaders in their various departments, and look for ways of benefiting the patients and other health professionals to deliver safe and quality patient care. Therefore, there is a need to transform the nursing education in different ways that will help the nurses to work collaboratively and effectively with other health professionals in the complex and continuously evolving health care environments. After successfully transitioning from undergraduate education, I obtained enough knowledge and experience during my work at Mount Sinai Roosevelt Hospital. I want to be registered as an advanced practice registered nurse and to be registered it requires one to have graduate programs that can prepare the nurse to assume the nursing roles in primary care, long-term care, acute care as well as other specialty practices.

Another goal of wanting to join the programme is the desire to contribute to the nursing research. Nursing schools should not only build the capacity of preparing students at graduate levels but do it in a way that will foster unified, a competency-based approach that maintains the highest possible standards. Joining this programme will help me acquire more knowledge and skills in the health and nursing sectors to enable me to contribute to the primary care of patients and be able to respond to any shortages in the nursing practice and education. In the research of nursing practice, I will be able to focus on improving the delivery of nursing care to improve the patient safety and quality of services offered.

Career goals

During my undergraduate studies, many group projects were required. I was always selected to lead my group. I found that I was able to recognize each of the members of my group's strengths and was able to utilize this to achieve good results. I work well as part of a team, communicate well, and have excellent attention to detail. I strive to offer the best customer service to patients and their families and always ensure safe practice on the job. My education and training provides me with the skills and experience necessary to excel as a nurse and my attention to detail and my ability to motivate others prepares me to become a nursing leader. To be an effective leader in today's organizations not only requires teamwork, but also more so it demands structure created to help transform organizations, change the status quo and lead new paradigms. Leading the development of organizational structure requires a deep understanding of what each team brings to the table – the value they can contribute, their willingness to learn and the desire to reach a higher level of performance through the sharing of best practices. Therefore, my overall career goal is to become an exceptional nurse leader

Future Nurse Executive



2. Program Objectives

Master of Arts Degree

- a. Evaluates the contribution of knowledge from related fields to the development of nursing science. This will help the students to have a clear understanding of how they can use knowledge from other fields to develop themselves and contribute to the development of nursing practice.
- b. Engages in the application and evaluation of nursing theory to education and practice. It fully explains the nursing theory and proposes the frameworks of integrating it into the nursing practice and its importance.
- c. Uses both inductive and deductive strategies in examining the relevance of nursing science to nursing practice and education. It formulates strategies for the examination of the importance of nursing science to the practice and education of nursing; this helps the nursing students to have extensive knowledge on the nursing.
- d. Formulates nursing research questions from practice situations. Graduates education for nurses is aimed at preparing them to contribute to nursing research. This will equip them with the skills required for research in nursing.
- e. It uses insights from the nursing theory to investigate the education and practice of the profession. It equips the students with knowledge and skills that will enable them to carry out investigations into the nursing practice and education to discover the existing gaps that require remedies.
- f. Evaluates the findings of research to advance the profession. Students are equipped with the knowledge and skills of how they will use the findings of their research to develop nursing practice and education.
- g. Draws knowledge from other disciplines for a greater understanding of the profession. Different disciplines are brought together and their knowledge applied to the roles of the nurses in their departments.
- h. Analyzes nursing issues in historical, political, social, and economic contexts. The issues that are in the nursing practice and education are analyzed in the programme providing the students with knowledge and skills of how they will address them in their field of practice.
- i. Develops a plan for translating knowledge acquired in the program into future practice. The programme helps the students to develop plans that will enable them to translate what they have learned and acquired during the course into general practice in their departments.
- j. Articulates selected career role within a theoretical body of knowledge. Incorporates knowledge from related disciplines into inquiry methods in nursing.

At the end of the programme, the students will have some of the following skills:

- a. Leadership skills in healthcare environments- the course prepares professional nurses to demonstrate organizational and systems leadership skills by synthesizing the leadership

Future Nurse Executive



principles and management theories, organizational science, professional communication and informatics. The theories used in the course are applied considering the evidence-based practice, customer service and personnel management.

Financial, regulatory and legal management- the programme equips the professional nurses with the skills of managing the ethical, legal and regulatory issues that the nursing practice faces and be able to participate in the fiscal management of healthcare organizations.

Nursing administration- the programme enables professional nurses to participate in designing care delivery systems within the health work environments in the society.

3. Projected Plan

The importance of nursing leadership in the healthcare environments is faced with many challenges such as an increase in the aging population, hazardous healthcare work environments, a large number of retiring nurse leaders and a shortage of nurses. The independent accrediting body for a healthcare organization, Joint Commission, hold that “the future state of nursing is inextricably linked to the strides in patient care quality and safety that are critical to the success of America’s health care system, today and tomorrow” (Joint Commission, 2010). As follows, effective leadership is needed to build healthy work environments that promote patient safety and to recruit and retain competent committed staff. The major aim of this part of the paper is to create a strategic plan to address the development, implementation, and support of our future nursing leaders and to discuss how they can impact meaningful change.

There are a number of recommendations that have been suggested in enabling to reform the nursing profession. One of such recommendations is that the nurses should be provided opportunities to gain leadership skills and apply them in their practice. The key question is how the disciplines create sustainable frameworks of transforming what the students acquire in class into practice.

To be an effective leader in today’s organizations not only requires teamwork but also more so it demands structure created to help transform organizations, change the status quo and lead new paradigms. Leading the development of organizational structure requires a deep understanding of what each team brings to the table – the value they can contribute, their willingness to learn and the desire to reach a higher level of performance through the sharing of best practices (Faila & Stichler, 2008).

Every leader has his own style of leading people, for the last few decades servant leadership style has taken momentum in many organizations. Servant leaders are believed to have the ability to influence and motivating other members by building good relationships and developing their skills. The leader ensures that the needs of everybody in the organization are addressed. Through servant leadership, all the members of the organization are involved in

Future Nurse Executive



decision-making process based on the values and ideals of the institution. Nurse leaders need this style of leadership to be successive and create a team that will be devoted to respond to the ever-changing health work environments. One cannot be told that he is a servant leader but the characteristic he possesses defines whether he is one. Such characteristics include:

- » Listening to others.
- » Being aware of things.
- » Being persuasive.
- » Accepting things.
- » Has a vision.
- » Committed to the growth of others
- » Build a community within the institution

Servant leadership style is somehow similar to transformational and democratic leadership styles. These leaders have the charisma of communicating the vision of the institution, inspire and respect others and they have mastered the art of helping other people to do things that they were not sure whether they could have done.

Every nursing department in a healthy work environment is composed of nurses who work in a variety of roles that are aimed to satisfy the needs of the residents. In a nursing department, there are LPNs, RNs and CNAs and their names appear on the same schedule and are assigned to work in particular areas but this does not mean that are a team. The nursing staff can be divided and headed in different directions, or they might have common goals that will prompt them to act as a team to realize their goals. The level of success in achieving their goals depends on the strengths and weaknesses of the nurse leader and his ability to influence others.

A nurse leader should grasp the fact that, 'no one can achieve significant outcomes alone.' Behind every successful institution or department, there is a team of individuals who have been inspired and influenced by their leader and they support him paving way success. Any leader who will take the responsibilities in the organization to his hands and does not involve other members in decision-making will be perceived as a dictator and does not value other members and their ideas. Although this style of leadership exposes the strengths of the leader, it displays the weaknesses that might have been avoided if they were working as a team. Therefore, the nursing staff will achieve its goals if its members function as a team (Shirey & Fisher, 2008). Those leaders who do not grasp the fact that people achieve more when they act as a team is often hampered by the following factors:

- » Ego- they do not admit or accept the fact that there are things they cannot do on their own.
- » Insecurity- when they feel that are threatened by other members, they are likely to draw

Future Nurse Executive



the strength of the team.

- » Temperament- they do not consult others.

In translating what I will acquire from the programme, I will have to adopt the Management by Walking Around (MBWA) leadership style since as a nurse leader I will be on the move. I will be responsible for checking on clinical issues and ensure that the environment is looking homelike. This type of leadership gives nurse leaders the opportunity of:

- » Observing other nurses while interacting with the residents and families.
- » Letting the staff know that their leader has their interests and work.
- » Evaluating the quality of care that is being delivered.
- » Demonstrating their interests in daily operations.
- » In addition, this style of leading helps the leaders to find out what is going on through purposeful listening, teach values, and influence others to achieve positive outcomes.

Therefore, to transform what I acquired in class, I will have to do the following:

- » Do it for everyone- since I will be spending less time with those report directly to me, I will have to spend more time with other members of the team since power comes from the frontline team members.
- » Do as many times as I can- MBWA will reveal my interests in all levels of the department and enable me to keep in touch with what is going on.
- » Go by myself- walking alone will encourage open and honest dialog with members of the team since some of them like one-on-one attention. This makes one look approachable.
- » Do not circumvent the subordinate managers- some members may take advantage of this style and bypass their supervisors. I will have to remind them to discuss their issues with their supervisors.
- » Ask questions- I will have to inquire about their work and needs in an interested tone and not an intrusive one.
- » Watch and listen- this will help in discovering what motivates my team and whether the staff and residents are satisfied or not
- » Share my visions with other members- I will have to discuss with them what my visions are and how they fit to the picture of our department. This will motivate them to come and share theirs too and invest in change and improvement.
- » Try out their work- I will be selecting a member and following him for some time in the week to try what he does. This will enable me to discover the barriers they face.
- » Announce any good news when they arrive- this will increase their confidence and outlook.
- » Have fun with them- this will bring them closer to their leader.

Catch them in the act of doing something right and applaud them. (Harris & Ott, 2008)
MBWA will motivate members of the institution to achieve the goals, increase my ability to

Future Nurse Executive



create a culture change and build team spirit within the health work environment. At the end, I will be able to reinforce my own commitment of wanting to make a difference in the lives of others.

The future of nursing leadership is a long-term quest that needs proper planning and action. The programmes that foster leadership skills in professional nurses should ensure that they acquire those skills and competencies that will help them to be successful. They will be able to develop healthcare work environments that are responsive to ever-changing needs and settings in health care workplaces. The leading scholars in business fields believe that the most important thing current leaders can do for the future is to ensure that future leaders will adapt, grow and prosper in their fields. Therefore, it is important for the nursing leadership to start grooming the future leaders of the profession. These emerging future nursing leaders will replace the current leaders in the future and continue the very crucial task they are doing in improving the healthcare work environments and the outcomes of the patients (Sherman et al., 2007). It is important for all nursing leaders to start now to groom our future leaders.

By introducing a strategic plan that supports the transmission and maintenance of knowledge with measurable outcomes we will be able to transform healthcare by improving work environments and most importantly patient outcomes. If effective some benchmarks can be set which could be replicated across all healthcare institutions and be used to improve the leadership skills of nurse managers. Without a good strategic plan, the nursing leadership and the whole nursing profession is at stake.

References



- Faila, K.R., & Stichler, J.F. (2008). Manager and staff perceptions of the manager's leadership style. *Journal of Nursing Administration*.
- Harris J., & Ott, K. (2008). Building a business case for the Clinical Nurse Leader role. *Nurse Leader*.
- Nurses Organization Alliance. (2004). Principles and elements of a healthy practice/work environment. Available online www.aone.org/aone/pdf/PrinciplesandElementsHealthfulWorkPractice.pdf
- Sherman, R., Bishop, M., Eggenberger, T., & Karden, R. (2007). Development of a leadership competency model from insights shared by nurse managers. *Journal of Nursing Administration*
- Shields, C. M. (2010). Transformative leadership: Working for equity in diverse contexts. *Educational Administration Quarterly*.
- Shirey, M.R., & Fisher, M.L. (2008). Leadership agenda for change toward healthy work environments in acute and critical care. *Critical Care Nurse*.