Nursing Leadership

Not for the faint of heart

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Objectives

- To analyze lessons learned
- To apply practical strategies and approaches nursing leaders can use effectively
- To describe methods for cultivating nurse leaders and ensuring leadership succession
What is a leader?

- What is the difference between a leader and a follower?
- Which one are you?
Challenges facing nurse leaders

• Fewer staff doing more work
• Nurses are aging and retiring
• New nurses are often un- or under-prepared
• Inadequate funding for nursing education/workforce
• Technology replacing some nurse work
• Substance use crisis
More Challenges

- Increasing globalization; always so much to learn
- Fewer nurse educators
- Survival of colleges due to changing financial environment; fewer people going to college
- Emphasis on educational innovation
- Lack of diversity among nurses
What are your challenges as a leader?

- Talk with your neighbor about a leadership challenge you’ve had
- If you are not in a leadership position, then discuss a challenge you faced with a supervisor or manager
- As a group, list these challenges
Expectations of Leaders

- Courage, resilience, adaptability
- Risk taking; innovative
- Creating a shared vision and seeing it through
- Being an anticipatory thinker
- Encouraging and supporting innovation
- Supporting diversity of people and opinions
- Being calm and clear headed during crises
Expectations of Nurse Leaders

• Being all things to all people
What’s important to you in the work that you do?

- Tell your neighbor
- Your neighbor writes it on an index card
- Switch
- Keep this card to remind you- as you face leadership challenges
Leadership Buzzwords- what do they really mean?

- Transformative
- Transparent
- Engagement
- Human analytics
- Lean
- Game changer
- Articulate a vision
Lessons learned

- Surround yourself with people who have the skills and abilities you don’t have
- Be decisive
- Be responsive to people and issues
- Build in time to think and reflect
- Don’t keep doing the same thing if it isn’t working
Lessons Learned

• Gather your data
• Be a good “schmoozer”
• Keep notes on the people with whom you work
• DOCUMENT interactions
• Don’t interpret negative comments personally
• Develop leaders- establish succession from the start
Lessons Learned

- Don’t expect to be liked
- Don’t expect everyone will agree with every decision
- Understand that rumors and complaining are part of processing change
- Be a good listener
- Be organized
- Run an efficient meeting, don’t waste time
- Don’t make promises you can’t keep
- Don’t be afraid to say no
Lessons Learned

- Know your organization and its policies and rules
- Keep an open door
- Practice shared governance
- Praise/reward a job well done, no matter how small- thank people well and often
- Wait to hear something three times before you pass it down the line
Lessons Learned

- Encourage low risk “test and learn” rapid experiments
- Encourage radical candor
- Don’t seek just to change things; always think about the future
- Try to predict what you do not yet know
- Be able and ready to pivot
- Cultivate KNOWLEDGEABLE contrarians
Implementing Change

- STAR model (Wharton School)
  - Be SPECIFIC (S)
  - Take small steps (T)
  - Alter the environment to move people in a direction (A)
  - Be a realistic optimist (R)
Support Innovation

- Provide challenges and offer opportunities for involvement
- Provide freedom to think differently
- Provide idea time
- Provide idea support
Support Innovation

- Encourage positive agitation, conflict & debate
- Encourage playfulness and humor
- Encourage trust and openness
- Encourage risk-taking
- Provide the resources to innovate
Barriers to Innovation

- Identifying the wrong problem
- Aborting too quickly
- Stopping with the first good idea
- Failing to identify a potential antagonist
- Obeying rules that do not exist
- Only paying attention to what you want to hear
Other Barriers to Change

- Bandwagon effect
- Base rate fallacy
- Clustering illusion
- Confirmation bias
- Curse of knowledge
- Framing effect
- Gambler’s fallacy
Others…

• Hindsight bias
• Illusions of control
• Loss aversion
• Normalcy bias
• Optimism bias
• Ostrich effect
• Status quo bias
Practical Strategies

- First, Think critically
  - Ask the right questions
  - Take a hard look at the answers
  - Guard against biases and logical fallacies
Logical Fallacies

- Ad hominem attack
- Appeal to age or tradition
- Appeal to emotion or fear
- Appeal to popularity
- Appeal to novelty
- Appeal to questionable authority
Logical Fallacies

• Using weak evidence to support an argument thinking correlation implies causation
• Hasty generalizations
• Middle ground (assuming compromise between two extremes is the best option)
• Oversimplification
• Straw man- distorting or exaggerating an argument in order to make it easier to attack
Dissect the argument

• Does the argument address the real problem?
• What is the point of view of the person making the argument?
• Are there hints of bias?
• Does the argument include logical fallacies?
• How good is the evidence to support the argument?
• What information is missing?
Dissecting the argument

- Is the argument based on intuition or a gut feeling?
- Are there rival causes or other plausible hypotheses?
- Could a different conclusion be drawn from the same evidence?
- What are the implications of accepting the argument as stated?
Red Teaming—Embrace Change

- Using analytical tools to question arguments/assumptions that often go unquestioned
- Using imaginative techniques to figure out what could go wrong/right- to expose hidden threats/opportunities
- Using contrarian thinking to challenge the plan and consider alternative perspectives
Red Teaming

- Get rid of group think
- Take nothing for granted
- Question the unquestionable
- Think the unthinkable
- Look to the future
- Examine the box itself
Red Teaming is not:

- A challenge to leadership
- A substitute for planning
- An excuse for inaction
- Fortune telling
- Cynical
- A panacea
Red Teaming Models

- Informal or formal
- Leadership team or ad hoc committee or by dedicated red team
- Led by in house expert or outside facilitator
Creating the team

• 5-11 people

• Need a diversity of perspectives

• Assemble the right mix of talent, experience, personality

• Good analytical and critical thinking skills, attention to detail, ability to think innovatively, intellectually honest, able to resist organizational politics, self-aware, open-minded.
Think-write-share

- At your table
- Think about a problem or question
- *List possible solutions (a plan)*
- No one speaks twice until everyone speaks once
- Leader puts together list of problems/questions
Possible issues/problems

• short staffing- being asked to do more with less
• inadequate/insufficient resources
• not enough diversity in students or staff
• not enough classroom space
• low student admission rates
• poor communication among providers
1-2-4-All

- How could this plan fail?
- What is the weakest link/issue?
- What is the biggest threat to the success of your strategy?
- Think silently, write answer in as few words as possible.

- Pair up and share responses
TRIZ

- Group exercise
- What can you do to ensure the plan will FAIL
- Be detailed
- Then examine list item-by-item
- Is there anything the organization is doing or thinking about doing that remotely resembles this list?
Pre-Mortem Analysis

- Assess the chances of failure
- Assume the plan has failed, determine the cause(s)
  - Review the plan/strategy
  - Assume disaster has happened
- Why did it happen? Write down all possible causes of failure
- Consolidate the list
Devil’s Advocacy

- Take an assertion or belief
  - Robots can’t replace nurses
  - More health screening means better health
  - Access to care is the most important factor in health
- Make a compelling case that the opposite is true
Cultivating Nurse Leaders

- Build depth- ensure succession
- Add junior staff to your executive team, rotate them on and off
- Give junior staff projects with clear deliverables and deadlines; regularly review progress
- Teach senior staff to mentor, not to suppress
Replacing Yourself

- Start junior staff in low risk leadership positions
- Include junior staff in meetings and projects they have not traditionally been assigned
- Create a culture—everyone has something to learn from everyone else
- Go beyond “the usual suspects”
- Practice humility
Assist Senior Staff too

- Help senior staff accomplish their goals
- Help them design realistic goals, then give them the resources to accomplish them
- Don’t feel threatened when they want to move on so they can accomplish their goals
- Write good references
Conclusions

• Nursing leadership is hard- not for the faint of heart
• Not everyone is or should be a leader
• Examine your own goals and characteristics- is leadership the answer?
• Invite contrarian thinking
• Cultivate succession
Resources

- Wharton School of Business