

Coaching and Mentoring Framework for Nursing Leadership Development

Executive Summary:

Coaching and mentoring are important tools for workforce development and enhancing innovation and quality practices at the point of care. York Region Public Health began its journey to build capacity among nurses for leadership development through a Nursing Directors' mentoring program. To further promote nursing leadership across all levels of our organization, we decided to design a leadership development framework based on principles of coaching and mentoring. Our evidence is drawn from a synthesis of literature search findings and public health nurses, managers and directors views of formal and informal coaching relationships that currently exist in our organization. Findings from this initiative are applicable across different practice settings and the framework outlines effective ways for incorporating coaching strategies that transcend across the organization.

The literature states that leadership development for nurses using a coaching approach occurs in a staged process. Initially, novice nurses gain knowledge through clinical preceptorship with the next phase involving a practical leadership experience supported by a mentor or coach. Also, important components of a coaching model include relationship building, problem definition, problem solving and transformation.

We build on the literature by using our data to present a framework that describes the critical elements of a positive coaching and mentoring relationship. To put our framework into practice, we recommend at the top level that nursing directors in our organization continue to offer the mentorship program to nurses seeking management roles. Next, nurses can form a coaching relationship with managers and explore leadership development concepts such as emotional intelligence and its influence on others, and fit of personal style with organizational culture. At the peer to peer level, through the nursing student placement program, experienced nurse preceptors will coach novice nurse preceptors.

One of my key learnings through the fellowship was the advancement of my own coaching skills and expertise and becoming well-versed in the LEADS for a Caring Environment Framework. I found this tool to be very relevant when coaching my team for leadership development and I found that as a coach I could have effective conversations using the various Domains of LEADS. I have therefore proposed LEADS as part of the coaching and mentoring framework in my final report . The LEADS Domains are identified as key links that support both the coach and coachee by providing a broad range of evidence-based concepts on leadership development that can be discussed in coaching conversations. A key need identified by our nurses in their coaching experiences is to have flexibility in identifying their own areas of exploration and leadership learning goals in the coaching discussions. The LEADS Domains thus provides a variety of topics for discussion and at the same time facilitates use of a common language that connects the coaching dyad. In addition, the LEADS Domains and Capabilities covers key concepts such as emotional intelligence, organizational culture, integrative and systems thinking, which have been identified as critical elements of several coaching curriculums identified in the literature.