Developing and Sustaining Nursing Leadership: Tips and Tools

Purpose:

This brochure is designed to describe evidence-based practices that nurses performing both formal and informal nursing leadership roles can use to enhance their skills. Leadership practices are relationship-based and are fundamental for transforming nurses' work settings into healthy work environments. These practices can apply to all nursing roles and levels of leadership. Point of care nurses who may not think of themselves as leaders will find meaningful examples of leadership at the point of care.

A leadership assessment tool is provided to assist with self-assessment. The information provided is based on the **RNAO Healthy Work Environment Best Practice Guideline:** *Developing and Sustaining Nursing Leadership, Second Edition.*

Why is this important?

- Effective leadership is important in all aspects of nursing

- Effective leadership practices help create a healthy work environment and can ultimately improve patient /client experiences and outcomes

- Nurses providing leadership at the point of care are a critical part of the future of patient care and organizations committed to providing high-quality care

- The most significant contribution for leaders today is to develop the leadership skills of others to support them to prosper and grow (Hendren, 2010, Kouzes & Posner, 2006)

Nurse Leaders include:

- Point of care nurses providing exemplary care and sharing professional knowledge

- Educators and researchers mentoring nurses, researchers, and students

- Administrators responsible for budgets, strategic planning, and providing guidance to staff

- Those who provide direction and support to practice through policy development

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INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS & BEST PRACTICE GUIDELINES

RNAO

Registered Nurses' Association of Ontario
L'Association des infirmières et infirmiers autorisés de l'Ontario

THE FIVE PRACTICES OF TRANSFORMATIONAL LEADERS

1. Building relationships and trust
2. Creating an empowering work environment
3. Creating a culture that supports knowledge development and integration
4. Leading and sustaining change
5. Balancing the complexities of the system, managing competing values and priorities

1. Building relationships and trust

Relationships include those formed between individual nurses, teams, patients and partnerships with other organizations.

- Demonstrate respect, be friendly and supportive
- Utilize participatory decision-making
- Learn about conflict and how to manage it
- Keep commitments
- Aim to influence a person's performance in a positive manner
- As a leader, provide support to your patients and colleagues in a way that is meaningful to them
- Be a visible leader
- Accept responsibility for your mistakes
- Assume responsibility for the patients in your care
- Give credit willingly and seek opportunities to acknowledge daily work

2. Creating an empowering work environment

- Communicate clearly, openly and honestly
- Listen, without passing judgment; focus on the person in front of you; separate your views of the person from what he or she is saying
- Seek clarification
- Seek and provide opportunities to learn and grow
- Support and understand professional autonomy
- Understand and contribute to the vision for your work environment
- Provide support to colleagues and patients
- Practice reflection by keeping a personal journal

3. Creating a culture that supports knowledge development and integration

- Encourage a sense of belonging based on values of dignity, honesty, fairness and integrity
- Participate in mentorship and coaching
- Share knowledge with team members and others through presentations and writing for publication
- Give and accept feedback
- Participate in professional team activities
- Join quality improvement committees
- Apply evidence-based practices at the point of care
- Maintain currency of nursing knowledge

4. Leading and sustaining change

- Recognize your own and others emotional reaction to changes
- Develop a plan and timeline for the change
- Identify the time and resources required for the change
- Identify stakeholders who can facilitate or hinder change
- Participate in benchmarking and implementing changes to facilitate best practices
- Contribute your ideas for change
- Seek input about the proposed change
- Get involved in all phases of a planned change
- Demonstrate a commitment to the change
- Participate in reviews and evaluations of the change

5. Balancing the complexities of the system, managing competing values and priorities

- Separate personal values from professional responsibilities
- Be sensitive to multiple pressures
- Develop and utilize flexible practices to respond to changing priorities
- Facilitate sessions for debriefing
- Monitor outcomes of decisions
- Utilize ethical frameworks to assist with decision-making
- Seek input from health-care partners
- Practising and collaborating with colleagues, patients/clients and families in a way that fosters respect, trust and understanding
- Understanding their individual roles and expertise, reflecting on their practice, being confident in their abilities and expertise, knowing the standards and boundaries of their practice and recognizing when it's time to turn things over to other team members
- Developing communication and conflict-management skills

" If your actions inspire others to dream more, learn more, do more and become more, you are a leader. "

John Quincy Adams

Leadership self-assessment

Building Relationships and Trust

	Rating (1 lowest, 5 highest)
I demonstrate and model integrity and fairness.	1 2 3 4 5
I demonstrate care, respect and personal concerns for others.	1 2 3 4 5
I create a sense of presence and accessibility.	1 2 3 4 5
I communicate effectively.	1 2 3 4 5
I manage conflict effectively.	1 2 3 4 5
I build and promote collaborative relationships and teamwork.	1 2 3 4 5
I demonstrate passion and respect for the profession of nursing, its values, knowledge and achievements.	1 2 3 4 5
I demonstrate role competence.	1 2 3 4 5
TOTAL SCORE:	

Creating an Empowering Work Environment

	Rating (1 lowest, 5 highest)
I understand and practice the concepts and principles of empowering behaviours.	1 2 3 4 5
I optimize nurses' opportunities for autonomy and personal and professional growth.	1 2 3 4 5
I optimize access to and use of data and information required to function effectively.	1 2 3 4 5
I create the conditions for nurses to access and use support, feedback and guidance from superiors, peers and subordinates.	1 2 3 4 5
I facilitate nurses' access to and appropriate use of resources – the materials, money, supplies, equipment and time necessary to fulfill their roles.	1 2 3 4 5
I enhance the meaningfulness of nursing work.	1 2 3 4 5
I enable the participation of others in decision-making.	1 2 3 4 5
TOTAL SCORE:	

Creating a Knowledge Friendly Environment

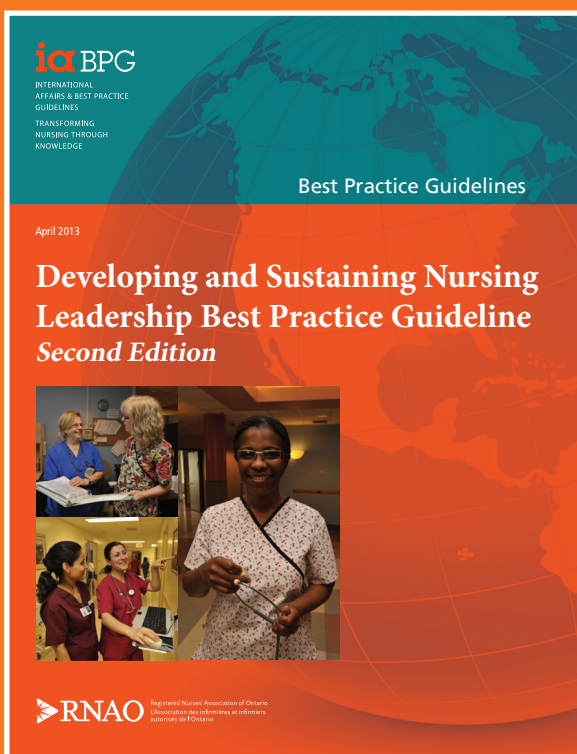|	Rating (1 lowest, 5 highest)
I foster norms and practices that support broad participation in knowledge development, sharing and dissemination.	1 2 3 4 5
I provide technical, informational, and educational infrastructure to support learning.	1 2 3 4 5
I create an environment of open communication and teamwork and valuing of the contribution of others.	1 2 3 4 5
I instill a learning approach for continuous quality improvement.	1 2 3 4 5
I establish mechanisms for continuous monitoring of organizational process and changes.	1 2 3 4 5
TOTAL SCORE:	

Leading and Sustaining Change

	Rating (1 lowest, 5 highest)
I create a shared vision for ongoing change with stakeholders and experts.	1 2 3 4 5
I engage others by sharing the vision for ongoing change.	1 2 3 4 5
I involve stakeholders and experts in planning, designing and redesigning the change.	1 2 3 4 5
I negotiate for the required budgetary support for the educational processes, decision support and other resources required to achieve the goals of the change initiative.	1 2 3 4 5
I provide ongoing communication throughout the change process.	1 2 3 4 5
I develop and implement mechanisms for feedback, measurement and redesign during the change.	1 2 3 4 5
I support, coach and mentor others to succeed with the change.	1 2 3 4 5
I sustain attention to the change initiative throughout all stages of the change.	1 2 3 4 5
TOTAL SCORE:	

Optimizing Competing Values and Priorities

	Rating (1 lowest, 5 highest)
I identify and acknowledge my values/priorities, and those of others.	1 2 3 4 5
I acknowledge and incorporate multiple perspectives in decision-making.	1 2 3 4 5
I help others to understand conflicting perspective and decisions.	1 2 3 4 5
I employ strategies to advance priority initiatives while maintaining other valued initiatives and perspectives.	1 2 3 4 5
I provide the necessary resources to accomplish goals and objectives.	1 2 3 4 5
I demonstrate accountability and take responsibility for outcomes.	1 2 3 4 5
TOTAL SCORE:	**OVERALL SCORE:**

Leadership Score Ratings

Excellent: 136 – 170
Good: 102 – 135
Fair: 68 – 101
Poor: 34 – 67

Total your scores and reflect on what score you have given yourself. If you have mainly "fair" scores in any particular domain, these domains may be areas you wish to develop further. Having completed your self assessment, we would encourage you to discuss your results with your mentor or trusted colleague. You may find it helpful to ask your mentor or colleague to use this assessment to rate you against some or all of the categories. Coming together and comparing those ratings can provide valuable insight into your leadership behaviour. You may also wish to develop a personal action plan using SMART (Specific, Measurable, Action oriented, Realistic and Time specific) to assist you to reach your goals.

Best Practice Guidelines

April 2013

Developing and Sustaining Nursing Leadership Best Practice Guideline
Second Edition

Link to the full version of this guideline

Developing and Sustaining Nursing Leadership, Second Edition BPG
www.RNAO.ca/bpg/nursingleadership

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