

Editorial

Leadership in the changing healthcare scene in our country



The constant changing of the healthcare scene in our country remains one of the biggest challenges for nurse leaders. During uncertain times, nurses look to their leaders and the signing of the National Health Insurance (NHI) bill by the president left many nurses (and other healthcare professionals) uncertain about their future and the future of health services in the country. Although nurses accept the desperate need for access to quality comprehensive health services that is efficient, effective and appropriate to the country, the concerns about the ability of the public health service to render these services are leaving nurses unprepared for the future.

The changes and challenges awaiting the healthcare services with the development and implementation of the NHI environment now need to be addressed by the nurse leaders of today and tomorrow. How can the nurse leaders be prepared to cope with the changes and to take a lead and encourage nurses to be part of the success of healthcare delivery in the future?

The dedication of our nurses to patient care, advocacy for the nursing profession, and commitment to improving healthcare outcomes have set a standard to follow in addressing challenges and changes. Many nurse leaders of yesterday have paved the way for advancements in nursing education, research, and practice. They have advocated for higher standards of care, improved working conditions for nurses, and increased recognition of the valuable contributions that nurses make to the healthcare system.

To lead the profession to the successful implementation of a national health system, nurse leaders must be equipped to build a cost-effective, efficient, quality and comprehensive healthcare system where nurses play a key role in patient advocacy, providing holistic care, collaborating with interdisciplinary healthcare teams, and promoting health promotion and disease prevention.

By practising a more open form of leadership in nursing, the nurse leaders can create a positive and empowering work

environment that promotes collaboration, communication, and professional growth among team members. This can ultimately lead to improved patient outcomes and a more fulfilling and rewarding experience for everyone involved.

An open form of leadership in nursing involves fostering a collaborative and inclusive environment where ideas and opinions are valued, communication is open and honest, and decision-making involves input from all team members.

The shift to a more open form of leadership is happening in all organisations because circumstances demand it.¹ "Today's leaders must master complex issues such as digital transformation, inflation, disrupted global supply chains, scarce talent, a lack of diversity, cybersecurity, and climate change as well as an awakened search for purpose among employees."¹

Nurse leaders must realise that an open form of leadership is essential to lead the profession in an ever-evolving healthcare environment.

Leaders who have mastered the art of human connection, and are able to take inspired, connected nursing teams to conquer the challenges, are essential. A few human leadership competencies that will equip nurse leaders for the future:

- *Self-awareness*: Nurse leaders should strive to enhance their self-awareness by reflecting on their own beliefs, values, and biases. This will enable them to be more empathetic and understanding towards others.
- *Emotional intelligence*: Developing emotional intelligence is crucial for nurse leaders to effectively connect with and inspire their team members. This includes being able to recognise and manage their own emotions, as well as understand and influence the emotions of others.
- *Leading by example*: Demonstrate the values of openness, transparency, and respect in your interactions with team members. Nurse leaders should model the values and behaviours they expect from their team members. By demonstrating integrity, accountability, and compassion, leaders can inspire others to follow their example.
- *Relationship building*: Nurse leaders should prioritise building strong relationships with their team members based on trust, respect, and open communication. This will foster a supportive and collaborative work environment.
- *Coaching and mentorship*: Nurse leaders can utilise coaching and mentorship techniques to empower and develop their team members. By providing ongoing support and guidance, leaders can help individuals reach their full potential.
- *Encouraging feedback and participation*: Nurse leaders should create opportunities for team members to provide feedback, share ideas, and participate in decision-making processes.

Create a culture where team members feel comfortable sharing their thoughts, ideas, and concerns. This will help foster a culture of transparency and collaboration.

- *Embrace diversity*: Value and respect the unique perspectives and backgrounds of team members, recognising that diversity of thought and experience can lead to more innovative and effective solutions to challenges in nursing practice.
- *Continuous learning and growth*: Nurse leaders should commit to ongoing professional development and skill-building to enhance their leadership abilities. This may include attending workshops, seminars, and leadership courses, as well as seeking feedback and guidance from mentors.

Ultimately, human leadership is about creating a shared vision, inspiring others to work towards it, and supporting their growth

and development along the way. There is no better time for nurse leaders to switch from traditional leadership styles to a human leadership approach to lead the nursing professional in these challenging times.

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Editor: Professional Nursing Today

References

1. <https://www.mckinsey.com/capabilities/people-and-organizational-performance/our-insights/the-inside-out-leadership-journey-how-personal-growth-creates-the-path-to-success?cid=other-eml-shl-mip-mck&hlkid=22d0df1aeaeb4618a5d54ad1bef21b03&hctky=12905309&hdpid=8d59edf7-8e38-4c92-9870-75104eca8059>.