



Congruent Leadership Defined



David Stanley*

University of New England, Australia

Submission: August 15, 2017; **Published:** August 18, 2017

***Corresponding author:** David Stanley, University of New England, Australia, Email: dstanle5@une.edu.au

Introduction

The following paper is an outline of the theory of Congruent Leadership. The aim is to offer an insight into this new leadership theory.

Background

Congruent leadership

Interest in the issue of clinical leadership is relatively new, with initial literature in this area of research dating back only to the late 1990s. At this time the author of this paper worked as a Nurse Practitioner in the English Midlands. He had clear leadership responsibilities and little to no authority to bring about change. He managed no one and yet was expected to lead across two community hospital sites and in the large Worcestershire Community Healthcare Team. Initially he turned to the literature to help guide him in his clinical leadership role and found precious little about leadership that did not have its origins in the managerial paradigm and almost nothing related to clinical leadership. As such, further information was sought to explore the topic though research into the area of clinical leadership.

This led to a doctoral research study which led, in part, to the identification of a new leadership theory, called “Congruent Leadership.” This theory grew from the initial data analysis that indicated that clinical leaders were identified as such because they matched their values and beliefs about care and followed this up in their actions. Their clinical colleagues recognised the match between the leaders’ values and beliefs, and their actions and identified them as clinical leaders. As such the theory of Congruent Leadership was initiated.

The initial doctoral study was followed up with four other research studies. Each was funded and all secured ethical approval. While the initial study took place with nurses in the UK, the follow up studies all took place in Western Australia with either paramedics, nurses in an aged care facility, ambulance volunteers, and a range of other health professionals (excluding doctors). These subsequent studies employed similar research methods (interviews and questionnaires) and were scrupulously analysed. They also pointed strongly to clinical leaders being recognised because they demonstrated the attributes and

characteristics of Congruent Leaders. An integrative literature review was also undertaken that focused on the topic of Congruent Leadership and aimed to gain an understanding of this new leadership theory.

Eleven papers were located, with eight offering an insight into how Congruent Leadership is defined [1-8]. The remaining three offered general insights in to congruent practices in healthcare [9-11]. In each of the eight articles, Congruent Leadership is defined as, “where the activities, actions, and deeds of the leader are matched by and driven by their values and beliefs about (in this case) care and nursing” [2]. Stanley adds that, “Congruent leadership is based on the leader’s values, beliefs and principles and is about where the leader stands. Congruent leaders (clinical leaders) are followed because their values and beliefs are matched (congruent with) their actions” [4].

Congruent leaders are described as “motivational, inspirational, organized, and effective communicators and relationship builders. Congruent leaders are often found throughout an organization’s structure and they are commonly not in managerial positions” [6]. Congruent leaders may be visionary, but it is not for this attribute that they are seen as leaders or followed. It is because they put their beliefs and values into practice. They stand by their values, this is noted by others and it is for this reason they are followed [12]. Congruent leaders are defined by, “the values and beliefs they held about care, nursing and respect for others” [9] and are recognised by others because their actions are a reflection of their values and beliefs.

It is significant that the leadership theory developed by Stanley is dominant in the literature and not unsurprising. However, it is pleasing to note that [9] had in effect independently verified the attributes of congruent leadership in nurses in the palliative care area. As such, recognising congruent leadership as a valid leadership theory in the clinical domain is supported by significant research and literature into clinical leadership.

References

1. Stanley D (2006) In command of care: clinical nurse leadership explored. *Journal of Research in Nursing* 11(1): 20-39.

2. Stanley D (2006) In command of care: Towards the theory of congruent leadership. *Journal of Research in Nursing* 11(2): 134-44.
3. Stanley D (2006) Role conflict: leaders and managers. *Nurs Manag* 13(5): 31-37.
4. Stanley D (2006) Recognising and defining clinical nurse leaders. *Br J Nurs* 15(2): 108-111.
5. Stanley D (2008) Congruent leadership: values in action. *J Nurs Manag* 16(5): 519-524.
6. Stanley D (2010) Multigenerational workforce issues and their implications for leadership in nursing. *J Nurs Manag* 18(7): 846-852.
7. Stanley D, Sherratt A (2010) Lamp light on leadership: Clinical leadership and Florence Nightingale. *J Nurs Manag* 18(2): 115-121.
8. Johansson G, Sandahl C, Andershed B (2011) Authentic and congruent leadership providing excellent work environment in palliative care. *Leadership in Health Services* 24(2): 135-149.
9. Stanley D (2009) Leadership: behind the mask. *Autumn* 22(1): 14-20.
10. Stanley D (2014) Clinical leadership characteristics confirmed. *Journal of Research in Nursing* 19(2): 118-128.
11. Ungerleider JD, Ungerleider RM (2011) Improved quality and outcomes through congruent leadership, teamwork and life choices. *Progress in Cardiology* 32(2): 75-83.
12. Stanley D (2017) Clinical leadership in nursing and healthcare: Values into action. National Library of Australia.



This work is licensed under Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 License

Your next submission with Juniper Publishers will reach you the below assets

- Quality Editorial service
- Swift Peer Review
- Reprints availability
- E-prints Service
- Manuscript Podcast for convenient understanding
- Global attainment for your research
- Manuscript accessibility in different formats
(Pdf, E-pub, Full Text, Audio)
- Unceasing customer service

Track the below URL for one-step submission
<https://juniperpublishers.com/online-submission.php>