

Leadership Skills for Nurses



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Opinion

Nursing is a vital part of the health care. Nursing professionals are involved in all aspects of health care; promotion of health, prevention of ailments and care of diseased persons [1]. Health care is a team work which is lead by health professional, administrators, clinicians, public health professionals, nurses and health managers. Nurses are leaders right from day one of their professional life; leading paramedical staff, ward boys, cleaners, patients and their attendants. For a better health care, nurses have to lead from the front. In this capacity they must also be involved in various governing and administrative bodies in hospitals as well as in health programs and departments.

The important question is how can nursing professionals imparted leadership skills. The current syllabus of BSc Nursing in India has included 'leadership' in the chapter 'nursing services and administration'. And this is expected to assist the student to develop an understanding of leadership skills. However, the curriculum is not helping the students in building the leadership skills much, as the chapter is covered in a theoretical manner and does not give them any skills of leadership. It mainly deals with role of nurses in hospital administration which is different from leadership. Even the MSc Nursing curriculum does not cover leadership. There is a gap between theory and practice when it comes to the leadership skill in the nursing curriculum. International Institute of Health Management Research (IIHMR), Delhi is one of the few institutions offering leadership for nurses in academics and Health Programs [2].

There are hardly any in-service training programs for imparting leadership skills to nurses in India. The Trained Nurses' Association of India (TNAI) is a national organization of nurse professionals working at various levels in the health system both public and private in India. The organization does not conduct any programs to build leadership skills among Nurses. The newly inaugurated International Training Centre under TNAI give new hope in building leadership skills among nurses [3]. If we compare with other countries, India has to go a long way in developing leadership skills for the nurses. For example, Australian College of Nursing's prestigious Emerging Nurse

Leader (ENL) program is one of them. The program empowers current and future nurse leaders to achieve their aspirations through personal and professional development. The nine-month program allows participants to develop their skills and confidence through a blend of formal education, self-reflection, mentoring and action-based learning. ENLs receive invaluable opportunities to make connections within the profession and profile themselves as nurse leaders the industry should keep an eye on [4].

Three Domains Model for Leadership Capacity Building among Nurses

There are various approaches which can be need for developing leadership to the Nurses. One of the approach is 'three dimensional' approach [5]. Which is a simple and easy to adapt method for any health care professionals. This model will help the nurses to build a framework for structuring training to develop leadership skills. The first domain of this approach will help the nurses in managing self-skills. Second domain is team and organizational skills and the third is the skills to mobilize external environment to improve health outcome. The three domains are helpful in capacity building and achieving the organizational skills. The individual skills or the skills of the leader will help her/him in learning new skills or changing environment in health and related factors. This will help the leader to manage individuals and teams within the organization and adapt to change. In order to became an effective leader, s/he should update his/her knowledge and skills for identifying the gaps and finding the proper solution for the emerging problems.

Essential Leadership Skills for Nurses

A nurse plays multiple roles in providing health care. Nurses working as Clinical care providers, Nursing care provider, Administrator, Programme and Facility Manager. In all these positions s/he is a leader. Nurse should have many skills to play these roles in health sector. Five essential skills required for nurses in their role as leaders are:

Active Listening as Main Communication Skill: Good communication between nurses and patients is essential for the

successful outcome of health care of each patient. To achieve this, however, nurses must understand and help their patients, relatives and team members demonstrating courtesy, kindness and sincerity and respond to the needs as a leader [6].

Emotional Competencies: Emotional competencies are more important for success in professional life than intellectual intelligence. There is a considerable body of research suggesting that a person's ability to perceive, identify, and manage emotions provides the basis for the kinds of social and emotional competencies that are important for success in almost any job [7].

Conflict Resolution: It is important for nurses as team leader to encourage team members to bring in different opinions to enrich the work of the team. Their role as leaders is to ensure that these differences are dealt with in a healthy manner and do not lead to conflict. A conflict brings down the productivity of the team and vitiates the environment preventing members to put in their best [8]. At an organizational level, the process of conflict resolution is an opportunity for growth and change in a work environment [9].

Networking: It is necessary for Nurses to have networking skills. Networking is the exchange of information or services among individuals, groups, or institutions; specifically: The cultivation of productive relationships for employment or business [10]. Ability to network is becoming more and more important. Maintaining good relations fosters trust and fidelity commitment [11].

Managing Difficult Colleagues: One always comes across people who are difficult to deal with. A leader must get work done from all his team members, hence must deal with such people effectively. A difficult person is anyone who causes anyone else irritation, upset, stress or anxiety. so, a good leader should have skills to manage difficult colleagues for the better outcome [12].

Conclusion

Leadership skills among Nurses doesn't receive adequate attention in nursing curriculum an in-service training. And the

essential skills of nurses and how the nursing curriculum support building leadership skills for nursing students. The three-domain model, based on leadership theories, gives a good insight into areas requiring attention in learning leadership skills. And this concluding article covers leveraging your contacts to achieve your goals and other skills such as listening, emotional competencies, networking, conflict resolution and managing difficult people. A good Nursing leader can provide good quality of care and it can help in better outcome of the organization and this will lead to the betterment of the society.

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