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LEADERSHIP IN NURSE MANAGERS: ESSENCE TO STILT THE PROFESSION

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ABSTRACT

Leadership is all about influencing others to accomplish common goals. Majority of the nurse administrators are deficient in managerial and leadership skills. Consequently, they are ruled by non- nursing professionals. This discourages the nurses at base and hence is one of the important cause of high attrition. So to upgrade the profession, inculcating leadership skills is a necessity. Nurse managers must be committed about organizational mission and goals and also make subordinates to focus on the same by making strategic plans and unit- based financial plans. Teach them on building interpersonal relationship with the patients and their attendants. Create a work culture, rewarding the employees, celebrating with them, nurturing leadership in them etc. Empowers them and promote team spirit.

INTRODUCTION

Leadership is the process of persuasion or showing by examples the way in which one individual induces others to act. It is an extraordinary quality of spirit that prompts one to aspire to lead. This quality may be in- born or learnt by experience.

Our aspirant nurses learn much about procedures, policies and techniques, but classes on nurse leadership is still not existing in basic nursing education programmes. Once they are in working world, they learn to be good leaders on a trial- and- error basis. Usually in India we see that in hospitals, nurse managers are not much aware, confident and empowered. Their decisions are taken either by medical officers or other non- nursing professionals. This demotivates the nurses at ground level.

Moreover, employees leave their boss/ manager, not the organization. Studies too have shown that nurse

managers have a great impact on retention. Nurse managers should understand that nurses at surface remember how they are treated. They should guide patients to wellness and away from disease and lead colleagues in the direction of growth and learning. So tapping into the leadership spirit and improving nurse managers' effectiveness as leader, by inculcating the following points, is essential for uplifting this noble profession [1].

Perseverance to Nobility- As a leader one must be committed and passionate about his mission and goals. Like many nurses are committed patient advocates, or employee advocates but the true test of commitment comes when, to achieve a goal, you do beyond what is expected and yet with a smile. So to inculcate this sense of devoir, nurse managers must establish priorities and commit to see them through. Obtain staff's insight on the priorities so that team will stay focussed and have a stake into the strategic plan.

Nurses at top management must set behavioural standards for all employees which are aligned with

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organization's values, mission and standards. Appreciate the initiatives of using standards. Use standards while conversing with staff. Convey to the team that patient safety and maintaining quality standards are way of life. Develop unit- and department- specific performance improvement strategies that the staff can articulate and implement in daily practices.

Financial Performance- Build unit- based financial plan for an year, based on annual budget including salary, expenses, supplies and capital requests. Use monthly financial reports to keep on target and share with RN's in staff meetings or newsletters. This will make nurses understand their vital role in financial management on a unit level.

Soft Skills- Educate staff to spend maximum time with patient and families. By this nurses will find empathetic links such as common interests, similar family characteristics, and the patient will become part of the unit culture. Moreover, if they are treated with personalized care and compassion, they will always come back [2].

Employee Engagement & Satisfaction- Along with patient satisfaction, measuring employee satisfaction also benefits the department and team. Develop realistic action plans, involve nurses at all levels, reassess at regular interval and, share and explain data to the employees often. Meet each employees at regular interval to measure their progress and opportunities for growth. Establish

relationship with each staff member, recognize, acknowledge and celebrate them. These are the key for employee satisfaction.

Recognizing and rewarding employees' success is cardinal attribute of superintendence. Do not wait until Nurses' Day/ Annual Day, that may be too late to retain staff. Frequent rewards encourage staff and foster enthusiasm and creativity [3].

Nurturing Leadership- This is also a responsibility of a leader. There is a saying, "If your unit can run without you, you have done your job." So superior nurses must develop and invest in succession plan. This further empowers the younger nurses and promotes team spirit.

In nutshell, nurses are the only one that consistently crosses healthcare sectors and are present on a 24/7 basis. Thus, they are key for transformative change or, alternatively, a force for inertia if they are not engaged in the change process. Conjointly, nurse managers have a unique role in patient outcomes, positive work environment, financial performance and nursing staff retention. So to be an efficient leader and a change agent, nurses must develop self- confidence, courage, growth, communication and appreciation. They may face many trials while blazing the trail of success. But if one has make up the mind that he/ she will stay committed and focussed and will build a team that will assist in meeting the goals and objectives in serving patients, community and employees, she/ he will definitely be successful.

"To move the world we must first move ourselves."

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