Building nursing leadership skills supports the novice nurse to address the opportunities and challenges in the current healthcare environment. Effective nursing leadership is key to ensuring safe, quality patient care and supporting healthcare team members.

Consolidation of our previous research in simulation, curriculum and supporting students for NCLEX-RN success has identified essential skills to foster nursing excellence. These key skills include self-efficacy, leadership, professional development, interprofessional practice and self-care. This innovative project, *Becoming a Nurse*, seeks to support students entering the nursing program through to their first years as a registered nurse. In simulation, we have leveled a cardiac simulation across a four-year Bachelor of Science in Nursing (BSN) program. The final simulation provides the students with a six-bed unit scenario that allows them to demonstrate assessment, prioritization, clinical reasoning, teamwork and communication. The final year of study and practice again clearly links the application of theory to practice and the valuing of clinical reasoning, professional skills, ethical comportment and the value of being a lifelong learner. Evidence-based practice and leadership theory form the foundation of senior leadership practice. The Nursing Student Leadership Conference shares this work in posters and presentations. Nursing students across the four years of the baccalaureate program, international nursing students, clinical practice participants and community members attend the conference and provide the learners with an opportunity to use their nursing voice and disseminate their scholarly work.

Newly graduated nursing students need to establish gainful employment, successfully register as nurses and begin their professional career. In the current healthcare environment, newly graduated nurses quickly move into leadership roles that require a strong set of skills in order to provide excellent communication, safe quality nursing care, and support to the healthcare team. Early integration and clear links from theory to practice supports students to develop and value these skills. A program to develop, consolidate and build leadership is key for newly graduated nurses to meet current requirements in today's healthcare environment and become future visionary nursing leaders.

This research informs the design of the workbook “*Becoming a Nurse*”, introduced in the first year of nursing education and threaded through the program to support and enforce these essential skills. The workbook will also provide connections and support to prepare for high stakes exams and transitions into practice. The workbook will be beneficial to learners in a variety of nursing programs in North America and support students preparing to write the NCLEX-RN exam and enter into practice.


Canadian Association of Schools of Nursing, (2015). *Practice Domain for Baccalaureate Nursing Education: Guidelines for Clinical Placements and Simulation.* Ottawa, Ontario: CASN


**Abstract Summary:**
This innovative project supports novice nursing students through to newly graduated registered nurses. Key skill development include self-efficacy, leadership, professional development, interprofessional practice and self-care. This research informs the workbook Becoming a Nurse to support nursing students across North America to prepare for high stakes exams and transition into practice.
Introduction

Building nursing leadership skills supports the novice nurse to address the opportunities and challenges in the current healthcare environment. The workbook *Becoming a Nurse* will be a practical tool for students to use throughout their program and into the first year of practice.

1. **Key Skills**
   1. Consolidation of our previous research identified essential skills to foster nursing excellence.
      - self-efficacy
      - leadership
      - professional development
      - interprofessional practice
      - self-care

1. **Curriculum and Design**
   1. This innovative project, *Becoming a Nurse*, will support students entering the nursing program through to their first years as a registered nurse.
      1. **Simulation**
         1. A leveled cardiac simulation across a four-year Bachelor of Science in Nursing (BSN) program.
            - The final simulation provides the students with a six-bed unit scenario that allows them to demonstrate assessment, prioritization, clinical reasoning, teamwork and communication.
      2. **The final year of study and practice**
         - Evidence-based practice and leadership theory form the foundation of senior leadership practice.
         - Links the application of theory to practice and the valuing of clinical reasoning, professional skills, ethical comportment and the value of being a lifelong learner.
      3. **The Nursing Student Leadership Conference**
         - Concurrent posters and presentations.
         - Attended by nursing students across the four years of the baccalaureate program, international nursing students, clinical practice participants and community members.
         - Provide the learners with an opportunity to use their nursing voice and disseminate their scholarly work

4. **Transition to Practice**
   1. In the current healthcare environment, newly graduated nurses quickly move into leadership roles.
   2. Newly graduated registered nurses must provide:
      - excellent communication
      - safe quality nursing care
      - support to the healthcare team.

Conclusion
A program to develop, consolidate and build leadership is key for newly graduated nurses to meet current requirements in today's healthcare environment and become future visionary nursing leaders.

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**Author Summary:** Sue is a registered nurse, educator, mentor and applied research innovator. She is committed to student success and transitioning to the roles and responsibilities of newly graduated nurse, especially in rural communities. Her extensive background in nursing leadership support her students to learn first hand about the opportunities for nursing in the future.