PREFACE

This book was written to foster the development of leadership skills that create and sustain positive work cultures. Cultures are the shared values and beliefs that guide thinking and behavior (Eades, 2018). Current evidence suggests that many nurses work in cultures that at best are not supportive and at worst, toxic. Indeed, the expectation that nurses will receive the same care and kindness in the workplace that they give to their patients is often not the case.

That's because positive work cultures don't happen by accident. They exist because of the hard work of many people, but especially individuals who hold both formal and informal leadership roles in that culture. The fact is, leaders must constantly work to shape positive work cultures because they are often responsible for them.

This book, then, is about strategies leaders can use to actively create and then sustain positive work cultures. It describes what a positive workplace culture looks like, why it is needed, and how to achieve it. Emphasis is placed on the leader's role in making that happen as well as the challenges that arise when values are in conflict or when individual needs and wants supersede those of the team.

"Culture is everything to a team, and while everyone on the team plays a part in the ongoing development of the culture, it's the leader's responsibility to create and mold it."

—John Eades

Many of the chapters include personal insights gained from my own leadership experiences, and I have purposefully shared situations where other people or I encountered frustration or failure as a leader. My hope in sharing these stories is that readers will recognize that leadership is a journey and not a destination—and that although missteps occur, leaders who are authentic and create atmospheres of mutual respect, trust, and appreciation can positively impact the work cultures of others.

Chapter 1 begins with a discussion about characteristics of positive work cultures, why leaders matter in creating positive work cultures, and the challenges of creating a shared vision and goals when subcultures are present.

Chapter 2 focuses on the importance of establishing a climate of mutual respect and civility, suggesting that the responsibility for dealing with incivility lies with both frontline staff and the organization because zero tolerance must be the expectation.

Chapter 3 examines why leaders must establish boundaries to separate their responsibility from what belongs to others—and to eliminate as much confusion as possible about their role as "boss" versus that of friend or colleague. This chapter also presents boundaries as a space that allows leaders to separate their beliefs and actions from others—because the leader cannot always control how others feel or behave.

Chapter 4 suggests that avoiding micromanagement is critical to the establishment and maintenance of positive work cultures. Instead of micromanaging, leaders should macromanage and empower workers to be innovative and creative in identifying new ways to solve problems or complete delegated tasks.

Chapter 5 observes that in positive work cultures, managers address organizational problems as soon as they occur. Often, these problems are related to interpersonal or team conflict, but they may include the need for employee disciplinary action or behavior modification.

Chapter 6 examines the importance of effective teams in building positive work cultures. Building trust by establishing genuine relationships with workers, exhibiting integrity, being transparent, and demonstrating competence also further team-building efforts. In addition, leaders must be effective communicators and role-model excellent communication skills for teams to flourish.

Chapter 7 focuses on the importance of leaders addressing and reducing workload stress for employees whenever possible. Dynamic change is a significant part of most contemporary organizational cultures. Thus, leaders must first assure that change is happening for a good reason and then help

workers understand how changes will impact their lives. Leaders must also support employees during these changes and give them as much control as possible over working conditions. Finally, leaders must always assure that the workload is reasonable.

Chapter 8 suggests that showing appreciation and rewarding desired behavior are critical in building positive work cultures. Often, this is as simple as leaders recognizing workers for a job well done, but it also may include providing other types of incentives or rewards that have value to those they are leading.

Chapter 9 addresses the importance of authentic leadership in creating positive work cultures. This requires leaders to be transparent, to demonstrate consistency between stated values and actions, and to be self-aware about the values that are driving their actions.

Finally, **Chapter 10** speaks to the importance of vision, passion, and purpose as tools leaders can use to promote positive work cultures. When leaders continually look to the future, embrace change, create an action plan to achieve their vision, and inspire followers with passion, organizations become ever-renewing.

"We are what we repeatedly do. Excellence, then, is not an act, but a habit."

—Will Durant