Action-logics and the Impact of Leadership Maturity in Nurse Executives to Support Speaking Up

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Communication Challenges

- Health care organizations typically have a hierarchical structure, with physicians dominant and nurses subordinate.
- The challenge to open and honest communication between doctors and nurses is real.
- Communication errors contribute significantly to undesirable patient outcomes.
Leadership Challenge:

- To lead transformation of health care organizations to support nurses to speak up and communicate all critical information.
Barriers to Speaking Up

• Existing culture of organizational silence

• Lack of personal, social, and structural supports for speaking up

• Conventional leadership maturity
Culture of Organizational Silence

- Staff, including nurses, see potential and actual safety concerns, but only 21% to 31% speak up directly to the offender.

- Strong emotion usually accompanies speaking up, although successful communication does not convey blaming or anger in the moment.

- Disrespect, incompetence and disregard for rules are the three most common concerns nurses experience that challenge them to speak up.
Personal, Social and Structural Support for Speaking up

- **Personal motivation and ability (S1&2)**
  - Staff members demonstrate their own commitment and skill to speak up.

- **Social motivation and ability (S3&4)**
  - The work group models and coaches team members on how to speak up effectively.

- **Structural motivation and ability (S5&6)**
  - The organization rewards speaking up and holds managers accountable to support speaking up.
Nurse Executives’ Support for Speaking Up

- Looked for patterns/information (S6)
- Listened to concerns (S3&5)
- Communicated speaking up important/safe (S1&3)
- Took personnel action (S6)
- Delineated a process (S4&6)
- Spoke up to COS/Executive Team (S1&2)
- Spoke up with COS to another (S2&3)

(actions in bold by Individualist)
Action-Logic: A Measure of Leadership Maturity

- Leaders demonstrate 7 action-logics

- Action-logics fall into three categories
  - Pre-conventional
    - Focused primarily on own personal gain, blames others for personal failure
  - Conventional
    - Focus on a stable reality through norms and social and power structures
  - Post-conventional
    - Focus on diversity and personal, social and societal transformation, integrating physical and spiritual concerns
### Leaders’ 7 Action-logics and their Corporate Success

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Least Successful</th>
<th>More to Most Successful</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pre-conventional</td>
<td>Conventional</td>
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<tr>
<td>Opportunistic</td>
<td>Achiever</td>
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<td>Conventional</td>
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<tr>
<td>Diplomat</td>
<td>Individualist</td>
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<td>Expert</td>
<td>Strategist</td>
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<td>Alchemist</td>
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Observed NE Action-logics

• Most were Achiever
  • Strengths
    • Implements strategy
    • Pulls teams together
    • Can keep multiple projects on track
    • Keeps it positive!
  • Weaknesses
    • Cannot hear/consider feedback that does not support their own views
    • Tends to blame failure to speak up on the staff
Observed NE Action-logic(s), cont.

- One Individualist
  - Strengths
    - Aware that diverse assumptions may complement one another for learning and for achieving goals.
      - Uses this awareness to deliver services ahead of schedule and under budget
    - Looks for patterns
      - Assumes that there are problems and good things happening and goes out and looks for them
    - Puts mechanisms in place to make it easier for staff nurses to speak up, over the objection of their managers
Observed NE Action-logics, cont.

- **Strengths, cont.**
  - Shows interest in the unique self-expression s/he sees in the work people are doing, **listening deeply** into their world
    - Then facilitates transformational change
  - Demonstrates an increased ability to self-reflect, listen, discuss failure.
  - Expresses a desire to learn from failure.

- **Dark side**
  - Sense of something unraveling
  - Decision paralysis
What have you experienced?

- With leaders with pre-conventional and/or conventional action-logics?
- How did they impact your professional nursing practice?
- How did they impact your ability to support speaking up?
What have you experienced?

- With leaders with post-conventional action-logics?
- How did they impact your professional nursing practice?
- How did they impact your ability to support speaking up?
How can I increase my action-logic and effectiveness?

- A coach that understands developmental theory and is at a higher action-logic can help you transform
  - Will require openness, vulnerability, and self-reflection
  - Write a personal autobiography of your career to discuss with the coach

- A small group in which members review specific failures for lessons learned

- Spiritual practice to increase self-awareness and ongoing presence in the moment
The people that awoke my desire to advance my leadership maturity

Questions?
References


