Purpose:
1. The purpose of this presentation is to describe a strategy for leaders who supervise teams and who
would like to build stronger working relationships, trust, and understanding with colleagues two levels
down from them. A step-by-step process for conducting engaging and purposeful skip-level meetings will
be detailed.

Keywords:
1. Skip-level meetings, 2. Building a foundation of trust and 3. Open lines of communication

References:
Claiming the Corner Office. Sigma Theta Tau International, Indianapolis, IN Fisher, B. (2016). Listen to

Abstract Summary:
Skip-level meetings are held between the academic or clinical nurse leader and those who directly report
to one of their managers without the manager being present. It is an opportunity to gain unfiltered
perspectives on particular topics, build trusting relationships, and ensure open lines of communication.

Learning Activity:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>LEARNING OBJECTIVES</th>
<th>EXPANDED CONTENT OUTLINE</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. The learner will be able to describe the purpose, value, and benefits of conducting skip-level meetings.</td>
<td>The purpose of skip-level meetings is to provide an opportunity to gain unfiltered perspectives from colleagues about particular topics. The leader creates a solid foundation of trust by allowing for open and honest dialogue. Valuable feedback on new initiatives, colleague motivators, process improvement strategies, professional development needs, and mentoring opportunities are possible outcomes of developing stronger relationships with team members.</td>
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<td>2. The learner will be able to implement the six-step process in leading skip-level meetings.</td>
<td>A six-step process is used to ensure a productive, beneficial skip-level meeting. Focus questions are prepared prior to the meeting with the intent to address the major meeting topics.</td>
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**Abstract Text:**

As a nursing leader, developing collaborative and engaged teams is a priority in achieving strategic goals. Skip-level meetings are geared towards any leader who supervises teams and would like to build stronger working relationships and understanding with colleagues who report to the leader’s direct-report managers. The purpose of skip-level meetings is to provide an opportunity to gain unfiltered perspectives from colleagues about particular topics. The leader creates a solid foundation of trust by allowing for open and honest dialogue. Valuable feedback on new initiatives, colleague motivators, process improvement strategies, professional development needs, and mentoring opportunities are possible outcomes of developing stronger relationships with team members.

There are two types of skip-level meetings: leader/colleague meetings and leader/team meetings. The type of meeting conducted varies with the outcome and benefit the leader plans to achieve. Leader/colleague meetings are best implemented when the goal is to know colleagues and their individual’s perspectives. Leader/team meetings are best planned to understand how a team functions and challenges the team is managing. In conducting both leader/colleague and leader/team meetings, a six-step process is used to ensure a productive, beneficial skip-level meeting. Focus questions are prepared prior to the meeting with the intent to address the major meeting topics.

In describing the goals and benefits of skip-level meetings, it is also important to recognize areas to avoid. Discussions related to the manager’s performance, venting frustrations about colleagues and their manager, and probing for problems are not the intent of skip-level meetings. Leaders should use this opportunity to gain a more global perspective of the individual or team’s experience.

It is important for leaders to understand that managers may feel threatened by the skip-level process. Open door discussions with managers are designed to discuss their questions, alleviate concerns, and reconfirm the purpose of the skip-level meetings. It is critical for leaders share feedback from the meetings with managers and discuss strategies to act upon the main issues and concerns. Feedback can be provided in a way which is categorized by topics and themes, without associating the colleagues to the information.

The goal of skip-level meetings is to increase engagement, establish trust, and improve communication between leaders and their direct reports’ team members. The honest and open dialogue that occurs as a result of skip-level meetings can greatly accelerate a team’s productivity. Skip-level meetings should be implemented as a standard leadership strategy.