Development of an Instrument to Characterize Nurse Leader Communication Behaviors

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Background

- In the clinical setting, communication accounts for 62-84% of total nursing time.1-5
- Poor communication is linked to medical errors.6-7
- Effective communication fosters collaborative relationships.8
- Leaders’ failure to communicate effectively is linked with poor performance.9
- In contrast, effective nurse leader communication skills have been linked to effectiveness of the nursing unit.10

Purpose

- To describe communication behaviors within the hierarchic structure of military nursing
- To describe the potential impact of communication behaviors on nurse psychological empowerment

Specific Aims

- Develop an instrument to measure staff nurses’ perceptions of nurse leader communication behaviors
- Explore the relationship between nurse leader communication behaviors and staff nurse psychological empowerment

Status

- Currently testing the instrument concurrently with Spreitzer’s Psychological Empowerment Scale (PES)*
- 38 responses to-date

Instrument Development Steps11

Step #1: Construct Identification
- Literature review (a priori construct identification)
- 4 Focus Groups (n=16); staff nurses and nurse leaders

Step #2: Item Generation
- Qualitative data analysis
- Comparison to literature
- Construct definitions
- Initial 208 items developed

Step #3: Content & Face Validity
- Expert panel review (n=4); reduced to 125 items
- Sample target population review (n=4); reduced to 108 items

Step #4: Evaluating Construct Validity
- Test administration of instrument (108 items)
- Population total of ~ 210 staff nurses
- Descriptive data analysis
- Exploratory factor analysis
- Item evaluation and reduction of items

Step #5: Evaluating Criterion-Related Validity
- Psychological Empowerment Scale (12 items)
- Concurrent administration with developed instrument
- Descriptive data analysis
- Correlation with developed instrument items

Communication Constructs Identified

- Comprehension — 11 items
- Manner — 15 items
- Verbal Transparency — 24 items
- Feedback — 6 items
- Respect — 6 items
- Behavioral Integrity — 7 items
- Emotional Intelligence — 8 items
- Empathy — 10 items
- Nonverbal — 14 items
- Paralanguage — 7 items

Challenges

- Focus group scheduling, especially for nurse leaders
- Communication behaviors are extensive and challenging to reduce to single items
- Many of the original items reflected leadership qualities rather than pure communication behaviors

Discussion

- May be used to provide feedback to nursing leaders regarding strengths or improvements
- May be integrated into leader specific training for Army nurses, such as the Clinical Nurse Officer in Charge/Noncommissioned Officer in Charge (NCOIC) Course or Entry Level Nursing Executive Course

References


All others available upon request

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