LEADERSHIP INSIGHTS OF SENIOR NURSE EXECUTIVES

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Outline

- Historical Background
- Study Design
- Demographic Information
- Leadership Development
- Leadership Experiences
- Leadership Lessons
- Contextual impact on Strategies
Historical Background of Military Nurses and Military Nurse Leaders

- American Revolution: Congress approved one nurse for every ten patients in Continental hospital
- US military officially added 1,500+ contract nurses in 1898 (Spanish-American war)
- Congress authorized first Army Nurse Corps on February 2, 1901
- Congress authorized Navy Nurse Corps in 1908
- 1917: 403 Army and 160 Navy nurse on active duty; by end of the war over 22,000 nurses had served
- World War II...American Red Cross put out a call for 50,000 nurses to join Army and Navy Nurse Corps
  - 74,000 nurses served during the war, including some as prisoners of war
- 1942 Women’s Auxiliary Corps
- 1947 nurses in Army and Navy Nurse Corps finally granted permanent commissioned officer status
  - Received full rights, privileges and pay for rank for first time
Historical Background of Military Nurses and Military Nurse Leaders

- 1949 The Air Force Medical Service was created to include the Nurse Corps
  - Women and men’s promotion list were separate for all services except the Air Force
  - 1951 Truman authorized women to be discharged from military service for becoming pregnant
  - 1960’s women could remain in the military if married
  - 1970’s women could remain in military if pregnant

- First Chief of the Air Force Nurse Corps was Colonel Verena Marie Zeller (1949-1956)

- A total of 16 nurses have served as the Air Force Nurse Corps Chief. One is active duty.
  - 8 of the former AFNC Chiefs are living
Study Design

- Historical Narrative
- Semi-structured interviews based on 78 item modified survey
- Sample size: 8 former Air Force Nurse Corps Chiefs
- Verbatim transcription of audiotaped interviews
- Qualitative analysis to identify themes
- Interviews occurred over 13 months
Demographic Information

- 3/8 AFNC Chiefs had biological children
- 5/8 married while on active duty
- 2/8 parents were first generation immigrants
- Born between 1932-1959
- Majority started as diploma school nurses
- All obtained a masters degree in nursing
Leadership Development Themes

- Clinical experiences
- Opportunity to practice leadership skills
- Mentors
- Strategic placement to develop leadership skills
- Tough decisions

“I attribute my success to this – I never gave or took any excuse.”

— Florence Nightingale
Leadership Experiences

- Ineffective Leaders
- The Only Woman
- Balancing
- The Price
- Producing Growth
- Desire to Serve
- Integrity First
- Strategic
Leadership Lessons

- Leadership Matters
- Relationships
- Priorities
- Carnage of War
- Choose Battles Wisely
- Timing Important
- Understand Other Viewpoints
Context of Leadership

- Stove pipe system
- Wars
- Politics
- Healthcare Changes
- Think Forward

Our understanding of “good leadership” is evolving, and it’s changing the leadership relationship.

Linda Fisher Thornton
Effective leadership requires preparation and experiences to develop

Leaders are responsible for preparing the next generation of leaders

Character is a foundational requirement for an effective leader.

Leading is often very painful, but rewarding. It comes with a cost.

No leader ever arrives. Leadership requires constant learning, self-examination, and work.

Humility is a part of every successful leader. No successful leader got there alone.

Effective leaders know that it is not about me. It is about accomplishing something greater than myself.
Questions?