

Leadership Education for Staff Nurses: Shortcomings, Barriers, & Future Directions

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Objectives

- Describe the staff nurse leadership role
- Identify benefits of & barriers to pursuing a staff nurse leader role
- Examine shortcomings in staff nurse leader education & training
- Propose potential educational opportunities for staff nurse leaders in alignment with QSEN core competencies



Who is a staff nurse leader?

- Roughly 3 million registered nurses in the U.S. (U.S. Department of Labor, 2016)
- Nearly 70% are staff nurses (U.S. Department of Labor, 2016)
- Most staff nurses hold diploma, associate, & baccalaureate degrees (U.S. Department of Labor, 2016)
- Many titles
 - Charge nurse
 - Team leader
 - Shift leader
 - Staff nurse leader



Literature Review

- PubMed & CINAHL – 18 articles considered
- Staff nurse leaders supervise daily unit operations & ensure things run smoothly, safely, & efficiently
- May apply for, volunteer for, or be appointed to these positions
- Can be formal or informal
- Most staff nurse leaders are insufficiently prepared (Dearmon, Riley, Mestas, & Buckner, 2015)
- Literature clearly demonstrates that effective nursing leadership is instrumental in improving staff retention, safety, & patient outcomes (Mendes & Fradique, 2014)



Benefits



- Tangible rewards
 - Increased pay
 - Improved benefits
 - More desirable work hours
 - Formal title change
- Increased sense of purpose, responsibility, & control
- Greater team engagement
- Improved confidence/empowerment
- Increased job satisfaction
- Opportunities for lifelong learning
- Stepping stone



Barriers

- **MOST COMMON** - Inadequate leadership training/education
- Stress & burnout
- Decreased self-confidence
- Decreased job satisfaction
- Increase in workload without compensation
- Increase in responsibility without authority/autonomy



What do staff nurse leaders want?

- Education

- **MOST COMMON** – Communication
- Conflict management
- Engaging/motivating/empowering staff
- Team building
- Transformational leadership theory
- Ethics/legal issues
- Organizational skills/delegation
- Work-life balance/stress management
- Self-awareness/self-reflection



- Format

- **MOST COMMON** - Asynchronous online educational modules & webinars
- Face-to-face
- Case studies
- Simulation with debriefing
- **MOST HELPFUL** - Mentoring



QSEN Core Competencies

1. Teamwork & Collaboration
2. Evidence-Based Practice
3. Quality Improvement
4. Safety
5. Patient-Centered Care
6. Informatics



Future Directions



- Need for improved leadership education targeted at staff nurses
- Priority for nursing & hospital administration
- Flexible, online education options
- Free or low-cost
- Offered by professional organizations &/or employers
- Required educational competencies for staff nurse leaders



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