



PRINCIPLES OF STRENGTHS-BASED NURSING LEADERSHIP FOR STRENGTHS-BASED NURSING CARE: A New Paradigm for Nursing and Healthcare for the 21st Century

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This article elaborates on eight principles of Strengths-Based Nursing Leadership that complements the Strengths-Based Nursing Care approach which aims to mobilise, capitalise, and develop a person's strengths to promote health and facilitate healing.

Some features of Strengths-Based Nursing Care:

- Is person/family-centred care;
- Empowers the person/family to achieve their own health goals and find new meaning in their lives;
- Provides holistic/personalised care; and
- Is a collaborative relationship between the person/family and the healthcare provider.

Principles of Strengths-Based Nursing Leadership

1. Works with the whole while appreciating the interrelationships among its parts

- Communicates and imparts the leaders' vision to help others understand how their actions contribute to the whole; and
- Understands how his/her institution fits within the larger system and leads accordingly.

2. Recognises the uniqueness of staff, nurse leaders and the organisation

- Understands staff's unique strengths and limitations and brings together people with the right mix of strengths to meet patient/family needs;
- Respects and values the individual, treats them with dignity and provides positive

feedback on their performance and improvements; and

- Has self-knowledge, surrounds his/herself with a team that complements their own strengths and compensates for their limitations.

3. Creates work environments that promote nurses' health and facilitates their development

- Puts in place structures to empower nurses by encouraging autonomy and positive professional relationships, especially with physicians;
- Provides opportunities for nurses to perform their best, grow and realise their potential; and
- Encourages relationships and creates experiences that bring out the best in nurses and makes them feel physically/emotionally safe and secure.

4. Understands the significance of subjective reality and created meaning

- Encourages a diversity of viewpoints and finds common ground in differences, while making a concerted effort to consider multiple viewpoints which may lead to innovative solutions.

5. Values self-determination – the ability to choose without coercion

- Creates conditions to develop staff's skills of autonomy, competence and relatedness by providing positive/meaningful feedback and opportunities to exercise choice; and
- Offers staff opportunities to act in accordance with their own values and beliefs to meet personal and professional goals.

6. Recognises that people and their environment are integral and that nurses function best in environments where there is a "goodness of fit" (capitalises on their strengths)

- Places nurses in positions that align with their passions and skills, and provides them with support and resources to perform well and realise their potential.

7. Creates environments that promote learning and recognises the importance of readiness and timing

- Understands the need for well-educated, dedicated, compassionate and knowledgeable nurses;
- Encourages self-reflection and mindful practice to promote self-knowledge/improvement; and
- Dedicates resources to encourage staff's continuous learning.

8. Invests in collaborative partnerships

- Builds partnerships based on negotiated goals, shared power, openness and respect, brings to the table each partner's respective talents and expertise to meet goals and work meaningfully with purpose and intention.

Conclusion

Strengths-Based Nursing Leadership provides a model to enable nurses and nursing to move forward and create a more holistic, humanistic and integrated health-based healthcare system for the 21st century by focusing on what is best, works and has potential.

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