POWER IN NURSING EDUCATION

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ABSTRACT

Nursing Professionals recognize themselves and use their power tactics, more apt to achieve personal and professional goals, both at the individual level and for the nursing profession. The most important aspect is that the knowledge can give nurses greater power to take action and take of knowledge can leave nurses powerless. All nurses have a significant amount of power and influence. Recognizing and utilizing them often the challenge. Be a role model of an empowered nurse and assist staff in building their own personal power base. Hutson (2006) stressed about the five driving forces to increase Nursing power base – Right timing, size of the nursing profession, Increasing knowledge base and education for nurses, Nursing unique perspective and desire of consumers and providers for change.

KEYWORDS: Power, Personal and Professional Goals, Empowered Nurse, Power Base

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INTRODUCTION

Power is a widely used concept in both the physical and social sciences, and as a result, there are many definitions. In the physical sciences power refers to the amount of energy transferred per unit of time. Electricians work to provide and restore this type of power as a matter of course. Mathematicians have a different notion of power in mind when they talk about a numeral to the second (or third) power. Sociologists describe power as the ability to impose one's will upon others, and savvy researchers conduct power analyses before they begin their experiments [T. Panyton 2009].

Power has been defined as having control, influence, or domination over something or someone. Another definition views power as "the ability to get things done, to mobilize resources, to get and use whatever it is that a person needs for the goals he or she is attempting to meet. Power includes caring practices by nurses which are used to empower patients. Power may also be viewed as a positive, infinite force that helps to establish the possibility that people can free themselves from oppression

Some researchers have described types of power, such as legal, coercive, remunerative, normative, and expert power. Of particular interest to nursing is the concept of expert power, which has been defined as "the ability to influence others through the possession of knowledge or skills that are useful to others". Benner (2001) has described qualities of power associated with caring provided by nurses such as transformative and healing power. Transformative and healing power contribute to the power of caring, which is central to the profession of nursing (Benner, 2001).

Power is necessary to be able to influence an individual or group. Nurses need power to be able to influence patients, physicians, and other health care professionals, as well as each other. Powerless nurses are ineffective nurses, and the consequences of nurses' lack of power has only recently come to light. Powerless nurses

are less satisfied with their jobs, and more susceptible to burnout and depersonalization. Lack of nursing power may also contribute to poorer patient outcomes.

Power and Nursing Informatics

The study of Nursing Informatics can be viewed through a number of different lens. The most common ones include the standard areas of nursing: Nursing Practice, Nursing Education, Nursing Research and Nursing Administration. Nursing Informatics can also be viewed through the sociological lens of hegemony, empowerment, dialogue, synthesis and creative expression: It is imperative that nurses, who are dedicated to the support, protection, and empowerment of their clients to consider as we incorporate technology more and more into nursing care. These are the lens of antithesis, artifact, utility, technique, agency, networking, and power (Nursing informatics Resources, 2013)

NURSING INFORMATICS AND POWER

Over the past four decades, the field of informatics has become the focus of a large body of research, theory development and scrutiny across most disciplines. As this review was conducted, several emergent themes became clear. Each theme contributed to a wide angle lens of the implications, barriers, benefits, processes, and danger signs that accompanied the adoption of information technologies into nursing and other disciplinary arenas. These themes have been fashioned into a conceptual framework that focuses on seven significant perspectives of informatics: antithesis, artifact, utility, technique, agency, networks, and power. All seven of these views present an unique yet interwoven body of analysis that helps to shape the experience and adoption of nursing informatics when applied to the context of nursing practice, education, research, and administration (June Kaminshi, 2005).

Figure 1

Properties of a Powerful Professional Nursing Practice

Nurses who have developed a powerful nursing practice...

- Acknowledge their unique role in the provision of patient and family centered care
- Commit to continuous learning through education, skill development, and evidence-based practice
- Demonstrate professional comportment and recognize the critical nature of presence

- Value collaboration and partner effectively with colleagues in nursing and other disciplines
- Actively position themselves to influence decisions and resource allocation
- Strive to develop an impeccable character; to be inspirational, compassionate, and have a credible, sought-after perspective (the antithesis of power as a coercive strategy)
- Recognize that the role of the nurse leader is to pave the way for nurses' voices to be heard and to help novice nurses develop into powerful professionals
- Evaluate the power of nursing and the nursing department in organizations they enter by assessing the organization's mission and values and its commitment (Janie B. Butts, 2005).

TYPES OF POWER

Seven types of power exist in nursing leadership that a nurse manager may utilize in supervising of subordinates. They are personal, positional, reward, coercive, legitimate, referent and expert power (Garcia, 2009).

Personal power is used when there are personal relationships built through experience or age.

Positional power solely lies on the fact that the nurse is titled a manager or supervisor and therefore must conceive this role.

Reward power is created by the ability of the nurse supervisor to offer rewards for specific behavior desired. Rewards given should never be for normal job duties but for extra exertion or exceptional emergency response.

Coercive power is the understanding that the nurse manager can and will take away privileges or impose penalties if subordinates' work does not meet required standards.

Legitimate power carries the position that subordinates believe the manager has the "right" to power. Legitimate and positional powers are very similar in nature.

Referent power is formulated by how the subordinates feel about the manager. Subordinates that look up to the personality and qualities of the manager have a sense of longing to perform similarly.

QUALITIES OF A POWERFUL NURSE LEADER

Have a Large Vision

People want to be part of an organization or group that has an exciting positive vision for change. Small visions attract a small response. Large visions attract large numbers. Whatever your vision for change or growth may be, you must articulate it well and be clear on the process of attaining that vision, but most importantly it must be a vision that can inspire.

Break the Large Vision into Easily Understood Goals with Deadlines

As the old saying goes, "The journey of one hundred miles begins with the first step." A large vision will inspire people, but unless there is a plan to achieve the vision, the inspiration and excitement will soon dissipate. Completion of a large vision happens by accomplishing numerous smaller goals. Each goal and step builds on the one preceding it. Have a clear and workable plan that everyone can understand.

Focus on the Big Picture but Work Daily on the Little Picture

Become goal oriented. It is through the accomplishment of thousands of smaller goals that the final accomplishment is achieved. Ask yourself, “What can I do today?” and then do it. The next day ask yourself again, “What can I do today?” and then do it. The same the day after. Focusing on what can be done today and accomplishing that is one of the secrets of success.

Love the Process, Not Just the Final Result

As the mystic Gurdjieff said, “Don’t think of results, just do.” Live life one day at a time. Life is a journey, not a destination. Each day enjoy the process of the people you meet, the challenges, the surprises, the victories and yes, the failures too, for they also teach us. When you dedicate yourself not just to the end result but to the process, good fortune and synchronicity come to your aid. When you can embrace the process as a means and end unto itself, and appreciate the process as a journey within the journey to be mastered and enjoyed and appreciated, you will be in harmony with the deeper currents of life.

Ask for and Expect Others to Help You

If you are dedicated to your vision and you believe that the accomplishment of this vision will help many, you can expect others to become enthused as well, and want to help you. This is not to say that every single person you meet and share your vision with will want to help. Some will be too busy or committed to other projects. Others may disagree or argue with your vision, as is their right. However the law of averages works in such a way that if you ask many to help, some will respond. Carry no animosity or ill will towards those who do not share your vision, but embrace and work closely with those who do. These people will help you immensely. A group of individuals committed to a shared vision can accomplish the impossible. It is these people that you are destined to be with, learn from, and work with. Fortune favours the bold, and unless you share your vision, how will others know of it?

Leaders See More in Others than Others See in Themselves

Most of us are in many ways our own greatest enemy. It is a very common human trait to feel unworthy and to put ourselves down. Often latent talents never get noticed. A successful leader will always bring out the best in people. He/she will encourage people to live up to their potentials, and praise them when they do. Encouragement, praise and recognition on a regular basis will inspire those that you work with. Successful leaders understand this and spend time developing the talents of others. Leadership is not only in harnessing others to achieve a vision, but in changing and empowering every person it is your privilege to come in contact with.

Leadership is Service

Service to a vision. Service to others. Service to a greater good. Always lead with humility and respect for the position you find yourself in. Never be arrogant or full of ego. Leadership is about stewardship and you are simply a steward of the vision. Serve it well. A leader must also anticipate chaos and be prepared to work through temporary failure and disappointment. Numerous challenges and tests go with the territory of leadership, so do not let them surprise you or throw you off course when they inevitably happen.

Your Ability to Serve Others Starts with Mastering Yourself

Successful leaders have spent much time developing the character traits and working habits that are necessary for success. You must learn to be a good follower before you become a leader. You must know how to overcome procrastination and inertia. How to set goals and achieve them. How to be honest, creative, intuitive, How to manage both the micro and macro situations. You must know how to listen, how to inspire, how to bring the best out of others and yourself. Understanding that personal growth never stops, a good leader will never stop working on him/herself. In a leadership role, you must expect twice as much from yourself as you expect from others.

Realize that We Live in a Real World, Not an Ideal One

Allow for the fact that we live in an imperfect world. Your vision must allow for this. Nothing is one hundred percent black or white. Trying to change everyone and everything is unrealistic. Your vision must inspire and be a great vision, but not an unrealistic, impossible vision. Do the greatest good you can and make a difference to the world by achieving that which is possible.

Have Fun and Celebrate Your Successes Regularly

Do not become so serious and fixated upon your goal and vision that you lose the spontaneity of fun and joy. The joyful path is more effective than the fanatical one. Joy, compassion, love, empathy, fun and success all go hand in hand with one another. Enjoy each day amidst the busyness, and remember to celebrate each victory and success no matter how small. A joyful atmosphere will attract more people and be more productive. Look for ways to celebrate success and improvement wherever you find it.

CONCLUSIONS

Nurses who recognize and use their power are more apt to achieve personal and professional goals and help the nursing profession meet its goals of serving society and advancing nursing practice, education, and research. Developing a power base requires time, but the process can be helped along by experienced colleagues who are willing to serve as role models and mentors

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