Transformational Leadership Has Its Place in Mental Health Nursing

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Leadership

• is fundamental in health care organisations
• is a process of influence between the leader and the follower to achieve common goals
• not only provides a clear vision and direction but can also create an environment for acceptance of organisational change and for better qualitative practice i.e. evidence-based practice (Aarons 2006)
Why Mental Health Nursing?

• the mental health care system is currently facing challenges as it introduces change;
• budget targets
• the National Mental Health Reform goals (Rosenberg et al. 2009)
• a national shortage of health care professionals including mental health nurses (Davidson et al. 2006)
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• Previously, leadership in mental health nursing was subordinate, passive and directive (Blegen & Severinsson 2011)

• It is time for a change, mental health nurses are now recognised as competent and play an important role in professional leadership to affect an improvement in the quality of care (Seed et al 2009)
Why Transformational Leadership (TL)?

• TL is a process that develops the leadership capacity of all team members by inspiring, motivating and effectively engaging them to achieve outstanding outcomes (Rolfe 2011)

• TL enables staff to find meaning in their work, empowering them to communicate their ideas, participate collaboratively in a team and work towards effective change (Walker et al 2011)
Transformational leaders and their characteristics

• TL focuses on supportive relationships that makes it a most effective leadership approach
• TL empowers the team to use their creativity, communication skills in working towards effective changes in the quality of care (Walker at al 2011)
• TL inspires, is visionary, and identifies the need for change (Rolfe 2011)
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- TL contributes to job satisfaction, retention of nurses and better patient outcomes (Tomey 2009)

- TL style is learnt slowly on a daily basis, and consequently builds the style through personality, experience and leaning about leadership (Sellgren et al 2006)
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• TL changes nursing culture in a respectful, confident, competent and committed workforce that values continuous learning (Bamford-Wade & Moss 2010)

• Characteristics of TL are seen to be respect, influence, creativity and support (Sellgren et al 2006); self-acknowledge, expertise, authenticity, flexibility, vision, charisma, shared leadership, and ability to inspire and motivate followers to achieve organisational goals (Rolfe 2011)
Incorporation of TL in Mental Health Nursing Care

• TL makes nurses feel more engaged, empowered and more likely to be viewed as valued employees in a transformational environment (Salanova et al 2011)

• TL can positively influence the work environment and nursing performance through; autonomy, working relationships, access to resources, individual nurse characteristics, and leadership practices (Brady-Germain & Cummings 2010)
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• Blegen and Severinsson (2011) incorporated a Bass’s TL model (Bass 1985) into mental health nursing approaches including understanding, support and knowledge to reduce and resolve mental health problems for consumers
Bass’s 4 characteristics of TL related to mental health practices

• **Idealised influence** ➡ Relation-orientated and moral responsibility in creating positive attitudes and advanced skills in caring for consumers

• **Inspirational motivation** ➡ Motivating and energising through the use of communication skills to convey positive outcomes for consumers
• **Intellectual stimulation**  Making use of natural authority by involving and engaging consumers in challenges to identify their goals and factors that motivate them to change

• **Individualised consideration**  Coaching and providing recognition, individual support, acknowledgment and confirmation through interpersonal relationship to obtain rapport and trust
Implementation of Evidence-Based Mental Health Nursing Leadership for Quality of Care

- Evidence-based nursing leadership is defined as ‘a process whereby clinical nurses and midwives critically appraise, and incorporate tired and tested management and leadership frameworks and concepts into clinical practice, and decision-making in order to improve the quality of patient care’ (Alleyne & Jumaa 2007, p. 233)
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• Provision of quality care is an organisational priority, and nursing leaders are expected to, and are responsible for developing a positive climate that promotes high level quality service delivery outcomes (Tomey2009) by implementing sustainable evidence-based practice (Everett & Sittering 2011)
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• Aaron (2006) examined the association between leadership and mental health providers’ attitudes towards adopting EBP.
• Supervisors, who used a TL style, were able to change attitudes and create willingness amongst their subordinates to be more open to changes, and to adopting new technologies and practices.
• This style was also found to lead to improvement in the level of trust between the supervisor and supervisee
Meerwilk et al (2010) developed innovative nursing guidelines of care for suicidal patients with schizophrenia by modifying evidence-based guidelines. This innovation aims to enhance mental health nurses competencies by establishing rapport, discussing suicidality, assessing suicide risk and selecting and performing appropriate nursing interventions.
In short...

• ‘Everyone can be a leader’ and can become a leader in your workplace.

• TL is one of the leadership styles that demonstrates raised morale and facilitates positive relationships across entire teams (leaders, followers and team members).

• Mental health nurses can take on leadership roles through adopting appropriate TL characteristics of influence, vision, confidence, competency and respect for others. Hence, mental health leaders can facilitate best leadership practice that also seeks to achieve the best possible outcomes for consumers.
References


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