

Preparing Nurses for Future Health Care Challenges Through Innovation and Leadership



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Nursing innovation involves the use of new methods, concepts, or technologies that lead to higher-quality patient outcomes and more efficient use of resources in health care. Innovation is essential to meet the challenges posed by our increasingly complex health care system, including an aging population, rising costs, and a growing need for improved patient outcomes. Current trends in nursing innovations include the adoption of digital health tools, telehealth, and the use of robotics and artificial intelligence in health care.

The above innovations will change how nurses provide patient care and lead to a more tailored and effective delivery of services. For example, telehealth allows nurses to provide patient care remotely, improving access for patients in rural and low-income areas, while robotic systems can assist nurses with routine tasks, allowing them to spend more time on complex patient interactions (Badr & Dankar, 2022).

As we begin to see greater integration between the existing nursing practice and nursing innovations, it becomes clear that leadership will play a critical role in driving this change. Nurse leaders who effectively lead their teams in implementing these nursing innovations will foster an innovative culture within their organization. The creation of an innovative culture will create an environment that welcomes new ideas and ultimately improves patient care outcomes and the overall health care system. The relationship between nursing innovation and effective nurse leadership will allow us to understand how effective nurse leadership can support the acceptance and use of nursing innovation in clinical practice (Ali & Rahman, 2019).

Leadership is the ability to influence people's performance through power. Leaders are individuals who hold a position of authority because they have the ability to

influence others' behavior. They have been entrusted by their employers to lead others, either directly or indirectly, toward achieving certain goals within the organization.

In the nursing profession, a number of distinct leadership styles exist: Authoritarian, democratic, and laissez-faire. Each of these leadership styles affects the nursing practitioner differently and ultimately determines which style will produce the best work environment for nurses and the best possible patient outcomes. For instance, authoritarian leaders create a clear hierarchy and structure in the workplace; however, they can also create employee dissatisfaction due to their lack of encouragement of employee creativity or input on how work should be accomplished. Similarly, democratic leaders tend to create an environment in which nursing staff are encouraged to collaborate with one another and participate in decision-making related to their work; this not only results in higher job satisfaction for nurses but also leads to improved patient care.

A number of studies have found strong correlations between leadership styles and the work environment experienced by nursing staff. For example, many studies have reported positive relationships between democratic leadership and increased motivation among nursing staff. In addition, the democratic leadership method enhances teamwork dynamics among nursing staff and creates a more supportive work environment for nursing professionals, all of which are essential to the professional development of nursing staff and the overall quality of care provided to patients (Ali & Rahman, 2019).

Changes in healthcare delivery continue to occur rapidly, making the need for effective nursing leaders even more urgent. Adapting leadership styles to current trends will help increase the resilience of nursing teams as they address ongoing challenges and obstacles facing the nursing profession, such as technological advances and increasing patient demands. In conclusion, nursing leaders should focus on enhancing their leadership skills and developing new styles of leadership to ensure that nursing is well-prepared for the challenges that await in the future, as well as to provide quality patient care and positive patient experiences

Nursing Education for a Future Full of Obstacles

The progressively changing healthcare environment will require new changes to nursing education including preparatory/educational programs, skill-building programs, and mentorship programs. As hospitals evolve, nursing education must adapt by incorporating new technologies and providing students with hands-on training beyond traditional nursing models.

A major component of the nursing education process will be to include a mentorship program during training, so that as the student learns to function as a nurse, there will also be someone along the way to provide mentorship, support, and feedback on their performance while they provide care/service to patients. When a nurse becomes competent in their technical skills, it is also important that they feel confident and supported, and that they trust they have people they can turn to for help when they are unsure how to safely provide patient care.

Mentorship is critical in bridging the gap between theoretical education and the practical application of knowledge for new nurses, providing them with a toolbox to successfully navigate many obstacles they will encounter throughout their careers as RNs. By participating in the mentorship program, a nursing student learns about similarities/discrepancies between novice and experienced nurses in how they provide services and is mentored to improve their performance, ultimately leading to improved patient outcomes. Additionally, through the mentorship program, nursing students will be encouraged to continue learning; therefore, they will develop and be prepared to adapt as changes occur in the delivery of health care and patient care needs.

Additionally, as technology advances, clinical education programs will need to incorporate new digital technologies. Due to the increasing reliance on technology in the delivery of patient care, nursing education programs must also prepare nursing students for the digital shift and for using new technologies in their practice. By providing nursing students with both technology and mentorship, they will be prepared to use new technologies, have increased confidence and ability to provide high-quality patient care, and address the challenges of delivering quality patient care in their future nursing practice.

Changes in Technology and Innovation Impact on Nursing

Advancements in technology and innovation in nursing have significantly changed how care is delivered to patients, improved treatment efficiency, enhanced patient care, and improved the overall experience for nurses delivering care. Telehealth services, for example, enable nurses to deliver care from a distance (remote locations), which is especially helpful for patients living in rural settings and/or with mobility issues. Video conferencing and mobile applications enable nurses to provide remote consultations, follow-ups, and health assessments to patients without the patient having to travel to their healthcare provider's facility. This provides patients with

greater access to healthcare and helps reduce healthcare costs by eliminating the need for patients to travel for in-person appointments.

The use of electronic health records (EHRs) has further streamlined nurses' workflows by allowing easy access to patient health records at the point of care. As such, nurses can easily document all interactions with patients and/or access the critical information they need to provide appropriate care, thereby facilitating communication among members of the healthcare team. The digitalization of patient health records enables better-coordinated care among all healthcare providers, who can access patients' health information instantly, allowing for better-informed decision-making regarding patient care.

Data analytics is another innovative technology being used in the nursing profession to transform the nursing practice. Using data analytics, nurses can identify trends in patient health, monitor patient outcomes, and provide the best-fit care for each individual patient. The use of an analytical approach provides strong evidence-based practice, enabling nurses to reference current best practices and incorporate evidence-based procedures into their clinical work.

As technology continues to advance, innovative and collaborative leadership models within nursing teams will be necessary to enable nursing teams to take full advantage. Leaders who promote collaboration and communication create an atmosphere that enables nurses to adapt to and utilize technology, enhancing the quality of patient care and the strength of the healthcare system.

Types of Collaborative Leadership Models

With the growing importance of collaborative leadership models in nursing, these models facilitate a collaborative approach to care delivery by supporting interdisciplinary teamwork. Within collaborative models, leadership is a function of shared decision-making among team members, rather than being defined by a single individual's ability to manage others. This creates a collaborative environment in which all perspectives are respected and included within strategies for patient care.

Successful teamwork within the interdisciplinary team fosters greater collaboration among nurses and enables them to work as integrated members of larger,

multidisciplinary teams. Leaders who practice collaborative models encourage open lines of communication among team members so each individual can contribute their knowledge base(s). This results in improved quality of care and increased satisfaction among nurses, who are empowered and engaged in their professional role(s).

In addition to enabling nurses to collaborate effectively, the concepts underpinning collaborative leadership models help nurses better meet the demands of their patient/client mix; promote mutual trust and respect; and create an environment in which all team members feel valued as contributors to the team's success. The promotion of respect for cultural differences is particularly important in the multicultural environment of today's healthcare settings, where cultural competence is essential to holistic and integrated patient care. Nursing schools are now placing greater emphasis on collaborative teamwork in their education. Cultural competence and diversity will now also be incorporated into this shift to ensure that nurses have the tools necessary to deliver quality patient care through collaboration as we transition to a highly diverse health care environment. Understanding and appreciating the variety of cultures patients come from will enable nurses to collaborate effectively and deliver higher-quality care to the populations we work with, including patients and their families (Diggele, et al., 2022).

Diversity And Cultural Competency Will Be the Future for Nursing

Cultural competency and diversity will increasingly be important parts of a nurse's role as the patient population continues to grow, requiring trained nurses to provide patient care accordingly. This degree of understanding is about knowing the culture and what different cultures believe, but, most importantly, being sociologically engaged with those we care for to honor their specific belief systems and practices. To achieve this, it is critical that we train nurses to develop an environment of understanding and appreciation around cultural competence.

Interpersonal skills, such as active listening and empathetic communication, need to be emphasized in training programs so that nurses develop the skills necessary to respond to patients' diverse needs. This will allow nurses, who truly embrace cultural competence, to develop trusting relationships with their patients. When patients feel valued and understood by their nurses, they are more likely to be actively involved in

their health care and follow through on recommended treatment plans (Lauwers et al., 2024).

Also, the commitment to cultural competence needs to go beyond the individual level but requires the transformation of healthcare organizations at all levels, including policy development that supports diversity and inclusion. By promoting equitable policies, nursing leaders can improve the structure of the healthcare organization and create a supportive work environment for patients and employees. Advocacy for equitable policies will also provide a strong foundation for ongoing discussions related to health equity and the future of nursing leadership.

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