



TITLE Mentoring Nurse Leaders in Exemplary Leadership Practices

RESEARCHER Susan H. Pedaline
School of Nursing
University of Pittsburgh
Unpublished research paper: April 2011

OBJECTIVE The purpose of this study was to evaluate the effect of structured mentoring within the conceptual framework of Kouzes and Posner's Five Practices of Exemplary Leadership.

METHODOLOGY

The pilot project was initiated with a pilot group of six nurse managers within the Obstetric and Newborn Division of Magee-Womens Hospital of UPMC (University of Pittsburgh Medical Center) who were invited to participate. The study participants were all female with an average age of 43, with 13-32 years of nursing experience (average = 21), an average of 21 years of nursing experience, with between 3 and 15 years of management experience; everyone had a BSN degree, with four holding graduate degrees and the remaining two enrolled in MSN programs. Each nurse manager completed the Leadership Practices Inventory and randomly selected a minimum of eight to ten members of their staff to complete the LPI Observer. After reviewing the entire report, the mentor and nurse manager discussed potential target areas for mentoring, considering those behaviors with the largest gap between self and observer scores and/or overall lower scores in a practice area. Prior to the next mentoring session, they were asked to identify a leadership behavior focus, or one of the 30 specific items within the Five Exemplary Practices of Leadership that they wanted to target with mentoring. Their focus area, a specific leadership behavior, was chosen based on mutually established goals following review of the results of their pre-mentoring LPI (LPI 1) 360 degree feedback. Within two weeks of receiving the report, an individual mentoring session was held to review their selected area of focus, based on their review of the data and to clarify any information they received from conversations with their observers. Individual mentoring sessions occurred monthly with each of the nurse manager participants for a period of six months. Each session lasted one hour and included a similar format each time. A reassessment of the LPI was administered to the same group of observers following the six months of mentoring and feedback. An independent party did post-mentoring interviews of each of the participants.

KEY FINDINGS

Post-LPI scores for the nurse managers were all higher than the pre-test scores and significantly so for every leadership practice but Model. There was a similar trend for scores from observers but they did not reach statistical significance levels. All six nurse managers in their interviews recognized that their scores had increased, and demonstrated an overall positive response to the mentoring program. The author concludes: “An evidence based 360 feedback is an effective tool to measure both baseline performance and reassessment for further development” (p. 17) and suggests “that structured mentoring provided by a direct supervisor within the Exemplary Practices of Leadership conceptual framework can be an effective strategy in improving the leadership practices of frontline nurse managers” (p. 18).