Nurse Manager Engagement

Developing the Strengths of Nurse Managers and their Organizations

Barbara Mackoff, Ed.D
School of Nursing
Adelphi University
Why study nurse managers?

(Because the nursing shortage is a chicken and egg problem.)

Two reasons to begin in the middle:

- Staff nurses leave managers not organizations.
- The aging of the nursing workforce means leadership vacuum that can be filled by today’s nurse managers.
Choice of Research Question

- **Why do nurses leave and how many?**
  What are the problems of individuals and organizations that lead nurse managers to quit?

- **Why do nurse managers stay?**
  What are the solutions and models that can be found in the qualities of engaged individuals and their organizations?
Choice of words: Engagement or Retention?

- Retention is a metric.
- Engagement is a model.
Theoretical Anchors

- **Positive Deviance** *(Hamel, 2007)*
  Study individuals who function more effectively than others. They suggest a model for the solution.

- **Appreciative Inquiry** *(Cooperrider, 1995)*
  Craft unconditional positive questions to learn strengths and value of individuals and organizations.

- **Signature Factors** *(Grafton and Ghosol, 2005)*
  Identify the positive characteristics aspirations and interests of individuals/organizations.
Positive Deviance: Analyze solutions, rather than problems, to create an exemplary model.

- The solutions are present in the situation.
- In every community there are people who have resolved the problem.
- Capture their wisdom.
- You can’t clone people, but you can adopt their successful strategies to create an exemplary model.
Define what successful solution would look like. (Engagement = longevity and excellence)

Determine if any individuals already exhibit this behavior. (Ask CNOs)

Discover uncommon practice (find out what is working -- use positive questions to discover signature elements of individuals/organizations).

Design interventions that allow others to practice these new behaviors (integrate findings into evaluation and education).

Tufts Initiative on Positive Deviance 2008
Original NME Project
Overview

- Funded by Robert Wood Johnson Foundation
- Clinical partner: Pamela Klauer Triolo, PhD, RN, FAAN PT, Chief Nursing Officer, UPMC
- Six institutions studied: Cedars Sinai, NYU Lagone Medical Center, University of Pittsburgh Medical Center, Chicago Children’s, University of Washington Seton/Austin
- 30 middle managers, 6 CNOs
- 45 hours of interviews, 600 pages of transcripts
- Since completion: Hundreds of nurse managers have deepened data base.
Research Tool: The Nurse Manager Engagement Questionnaire (NMEQ)

A focus on experiences, strengths and enduring values of individuals and organizations.

- Developed in Pilot study @UT Medical Center
- Beginnings and self reported strengths
- Positive factors that influenced decision to stay
- Satisfactions and highpoint experiences
- Organizational role in success and longevity
- Aspirations: wishes and positive future for nurse managers
Methodology + Data analysis

- Interview tapes were transcribed.
- Each transcript was analyzed for individual and organizational themes.
- Dominant themes (I) and (O) from each organization were determined.
- Dominant themes across all six sites were tallied and rank in order of occurrence.
- Significant themes and sub themes were noted across all protocols.
Signature factors Contributing to Nurse Manager Engagement

Ten Individual Elements
- Mission Drive
- Generativity
- Ardor
- Identification
- Boundary clarity
- Reflection
- Self-regulation
- Attunement
- Change Agility
- Affirmative Framework

Five Cultural Elements
- Learning Culture
- Culture of Regard
- Culture of Meaning
- Culture of Generativity
- Culture of Excellence
Ten Individual Signatures: Two Keys

- **Line of Sight:** (Boswell & Bingham, 2006)
  One crucible of nurse manager engagement is meaning-making: The capacity to understand how their daily work as a manager contributes to care at the bedside and to the larger goals of the organization.

- **Emotional Mastery:** (Mackoff & Triolo, 2008)
  The other crucible of engagement is capacity to master the unique emotional challenges of nurse management.
The crucible of nurse manager engagement is meaning-making. The capacity to understand how their daily work as a manager contributes to care at the bedside and to the larger goals of the organization.

**Line of Sight**
(Boswell & Bingham, 2006)

- Mission-drive
- Identification
- Generativity
- Ardor
#1 Mission-Driven/LOS

“It is the patient--the person in the bed.”

- Orientation toward purpose.
- Focuses on end result and outcome while addressing day-to-day issues.
- Defines context with big picture thinking about self, team and organization.
#2 Generativity/LOS

“I just love seeing my birds fly.”

- Finds gratification and joy in the growth and development of others.
- Creates a legacy of care in their own image.
- Maintains continuity and links generations.
- Grants opportunities for autonomy and freedom.
Communicates intensity of devotion.

Excitement about staff and colleagues.

Dedication to patient care.

Commitment to organization.

“I cannot begin to tell you energized I am every morning-- because I will be working with this group of people.”
Describes and savors their part in the success of their staff.

Maintains a clear line of sights that connects their own work to the care of the patient.

Creates an atmosphere where staff can provide superb patient care.

“Everything that I take pride in comes from how the floor runs.”
The other crucible of NM engagement is the capacity to master the unique emotional challenges of being a nurse manager.

- Reflection
- Boundary Clarity
- Self-regulation
- Attunement
- Change Agility
- Affirmative Framework
“It’s the self awareness and being careful that I don’t lose the people working with me.”

- Leverages lessons from experience.
- Observes self and notes the effect of their behavior on others.
- Scans for cues about self and others in workplace situations.
“If I took it as a personal attack, I would never survive.”

- Connect to others without losing sense of self.
- Builds strong internal boundaries—separates own thoughts and feelings from those of others. ("This intensity is not mine.")
- Maintain focus and equilibrium in the face of strong feelings in others. ("It’s not personal.")
- Accept your own authority. ("You can’t be one of their buddies.")
- Restore boundaries through disengagement. ("Get off the dance floor and up on the balcony.")
- Avoid the triangle.
“Sometimes, it’s learning when not to say something.”

- Uses restraint to choose battles; keeps emotions and impulses in check

-Suspends judgment--thinks before reacting.

-Practices perseverance; proceeds with patience and proportion.
# 8 Attunement

- Shows regard of the individual and the appreciation of each person’s contribution to the organization.
- Displays the capacity for understanding diverse perspectives and “standing in another person’s shoes.”
- Sets aside assumptions to hear the whole story (“bracketing”).

“I am always going to get their side of the story before jumping to conclusions.”
#9 Change Agility/EM

“I am usually the first to try something.”

- Challenges the process. (The unit Fixer”)
- Welcomes and initiates change.
- Seeks change through new learning.
“If you stay with the negativity and complaining the staff will see that your hair is on fire. And if your hair is on fire their hair will be too.”

- Generates positive expectations.
- Uses optimistic explanatory style.
- Models resilient behavior.
Engagement:Signature
Individual Factors

Ten Individual Elements

- Mission Driven **LOS**
- Generativity **LOS**
- Ardor **LOS**
- Identification **LOS**
- Boundary clarity **EM**
- Reflection **EM**
- Self-regulation **EM**
- Attunement **EM**
- Change Agility **EM**
- Affirmative Framework **EM**
CNOS/Managers Elements

- NM’s Elements
  - Mission Driven
  - Generativity
  - Ardor
  - Identification
  - Boundary clarity
  - Reflection
  - Self-regulation
  - Attunement
  - Change Agility
  - Affirmative Framework

- CNO’s Elements
  - Affirmative framework
  - Change agility
  - Mission Driven
  - Ardor
  - Generativity
  - Continuous learning
  - Assertive Communication
  - Attunement
  - Self-regulation
  - Commands respect/confident
Engagement: Signature Cultural Elements

- Learning Culture
- Culture of Regard
- Culture of Meaning
- Culture of Generativity
- Culture of Excellence
#1 Learning Culture

- Creates opportunities for educational mobility and continuous learning.
- Encourages learning through risk-taking and increased visibility.
- Provides transparency and accessibility of information and resources.

"It’s a great learning experience and they always provide training for you. There are always options: continuing education, advancement of jobs."
“From the organization, there is the acknowledgment and understanding of the work of nursing. There is respect.”

- Conveys esteem for nursing though responsiveness to viewpoint, and decision-making of nurse Managers.
- Fosters collegial physician-nurse relationships and mutual accountability.
- Empowers nursing practice.
- Facilitates goal attainment.
“Our hospital vision is to create a brighter future for all children. It is very simple—but complicated.”

- Creating mission clarity and perception of ethos.
- Fostering alignment between organization and individual goals and values.
#4 Culture of Generativity

- Creates visible and intentional mentorship of nurse managers.
- Provides exemplars to serve as role models.
- Offers available and approachable leadership.

“When I was still a supervisor, she became a director of nursing resources. I admired her knowledge and her confidence and her way of handling situations. [If I had a situation to get through.] I would ask myself, “What would Madeleine do?”
#5 Culture of Excellence

“We joke about it, but it is true, 98% is never good enough.”

- Communicates expectations of excellence in care and practice.
- Cultivates “brand pride” and personal investment in organization’s reputation, results, research and continued growth.
Signature factors Contributing to Nurse Manager Engagement

Ten Individual Elements
- Mission Drive
- Generativity
- Ardor
- Identification
- Boundary clarity
- Reflection
- Self-regulation
- Attunement
- Change Agility
- Affirmative Framework

Five Cultural Elements
- Learning Culture
- Culture of Regard
- Culture of Meaning
- Culture of Generativity
- Culture of Excellence
Applications: Three Arenas

- Educate for Engagement
- Assess for Engagement.
- Transform culture for Engagement.
Educate for Engagement

- Include signature elements of engagement in job description and in nursing education.
- Identify elements that can be learned and practiced (e.g., Boundary clarity) to create curriculum for emotional mastery.
- Assignment of learning, risk-taking and developmental tasks with oversight of mentor.
EM=Emotional Mastery
Curriculum for Nurse Managers

- Two levels: For new NM Orientation and ongoing for seasoned managers.

- Focus developing boundary clarity, mission alignment, reflection, attunement/perspective taking, self-regulation, change agility and resilient cognitive style.

- A laboratory course with case examples, coaching, role play, skill practice and behavioral rehearsal.
Assess for Engagement

- Develop tools to assess dispositional elements (e.g., change agility) in job interviews, talent management, and succession planning.

- Include assessment and discussion of signature engagement elements in performance evaluations and self-assessments.
Transform Culture for Engagement

Culture of Meaning

- Design annual “line of sight” surveys to evaluate how time is spent and to remove obstacles (e.g., reduce number of meetings).
- Assess span of control for NMs and set a manager/direct reports ratio that facilitates more staff and patient contact.
- Streamline the work of unit managers to keep them on the unit and focused on the mission.

- Reconfigure workload -- adding extra personnel such as business assistant or clinical instructor.
- Include “highpoints” in performance discussion.
- Assign NMs to write an individual and unit mission statement.
- Design annual “line of sight” surveys to evaluate how time is spent and to remove obstacles (e.g., reduce number of meetings).
- Assess span of control for NMs and set a manager/direct reports ration that facilitates more staff and patient contact.
- Streamline the work of unit managers to keep them on the unit and focused on the mission.
Transform Culture for Engagement

- **Learning Culture:** Address different needs of initiation and sustainment (book of knowledge. “go to people” vs. “stretch” experiences) easy access to on-site learning.

- **Culture of Regard:** Facilitate physician/nurse contact, accountability and recognition of nurse evidence base.

- **Culture of Generativity:** Introduce concept and create cultural rituals and storytelling to highlight. Assignment of designated mentors at various stages. Include generativity in performance discussions.