CRITICAL THINKING OF NURSE MANAGERS RELATED TO RN STAFF NURSES’ PERCEPTION OF THE PRACTICE ENVIRONMENT

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Susan Zori, DNP, RN, NEA-BC
Objectives

- Discuss the concept of critical thinking in relation to the role of the nurse manager.
- Describe implications for nursing leaders of research findings from the study “Critical Thinking in Nurse Managers Related to RN Staff Nurses’ Perceptions of the Practice Environment”.

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Today’s Nurse Manager

- Is a transformational leader
- Creates a professional practice environment
- Focuses on achieving goals
  - staff and patient satisfaction
  - high quality outcomes of care
  - prudent fiscal management

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Critical Thinking

- Is a thought process basic to problem-solving and decision-making.
- Involves reflection, judgment, evaluation, and criticism.
- Challenges assumptions.
- Leads to decisiveness that is vital to achievement of goals.
- Is a choice!

(N. Facione and P. Facione, 1996; Scheffer & Rubenfeld, 2000; Zori & Morrison, 2009)

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Critical Thinking Skills

Analysis

Explanation

Inference

Critical Thinking

Interpretation

Evaluation

Self-regulation

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Critical Thinking Dispositions
“Habits of Mind”

Inquisitiveness
Systematic
Analytic
Open-minded

Judicious
Truth-seeking

Confident in reasoning

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Critical thinking dispositions

Open-mindedness
• tolerant of divergent opinions with sensitivity to your own biases
• respects and values differing opinions

Analyticity
• anticipates problems and is pro-active in solving them
• uses evidence and fact-finding to solve problems
• anticipates results and consequences

Systematicity
• organized, orderly, focused and diligent in inquiry

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Critical thinking dispositions

Truth-seeking
- courageous in asking questions
- honest in pursuing inquiry even when it does not support one’s interests or pre-conceived opinions

CT self-confidence
- trusts one’s own reasoning processes and judgments
- others trust them as well

CT maturity
- understands that problems are ill-structured with more than one plausible solution

Inquisitiveness
- intellectual curiosity
- values being well-informed
Critical Thinking Concept Map for Nursing Managers

Antecedents

- Clinical Knowledge
- Business Knowledge and Skills
- Experience

Critical Thinking

- Reflective thinking
- Context/situation
- Intentioned outcome

Achievement of goals
Satisfaction of nurse manager role
Evidence-based practice

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↑ Critical Thinking

↑ Problem-solving

↑ Decision Making

↑ Quality Care

↑ Safety

↑ Nurse & Patient Satisfaction

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Reactive Thinking

- Automatic, programmed, can be useful in certain situations.
- Can result in missed opportunities to create fundamental change.

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RN Staff Nurse Perception of the Practice Environment

- Nurse participation in hospital affairs
- Nursing foundations for quality of care
- Nurse manager ability, leadership and support
- Staffing and resource adequacy
- Collegial nurse:physician relations

Lake, 2002
Theoretical Framework

Orlando’s Deliberative Nursing Theory

- Observe behavior, problems, situations
- Explore perceptions, thoughts, and feelings
- Validate perceptions, thoughts, and feelings
- Take action based on analysis (CT)
- Evaluate outcomes
RN: patient interaction

RN observes patient behavior and has perceptions, thoughts, feelings about the patient.

RN explores perceptions, thoughts and feelings about patient behavior.

RN validates perceptions, thoughts and feelings about patient behavior with the patient.

RN takes action based on patients need for help and relief of distress.

Patient outcome is evaluated.

Nurse Manager Decision-making

NM observes patient or staff behavior and perceives problems and situations that require action. NM has perceptions, thoughts and feelings about situations and problems.

NM engages in critical thinking to explore thoughts, feelings and perceptions about problems and situations. Assumptions are challenged, solutions are creatively sought.

NM validates with staff and other stakeholders perceptions, thoughts and feelings about problems and situations.

NM takes action based on critical thinking analysis of situation and problems.

NM evaluates outcomes of problem and evaluates achievement of unit goals.

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Research Question

What is the relationship between nurse managers’ critical thinking dispositions and their respective RN staff nurses’ perceptions of the practice environment?
Significance

- “Baby boomers” including nurse managers will retire.
- New and current nurse managers need to function as transformational leaders.
- Education and leadership development programs for new and current nurse managers are needed.
- Strategies for promoting and developing CT can be incorporated into education and support programs.

(Edwards, 2007; Robbins & Davidhizar, 2007; Sherman, 2005; Zori & Morrison, 2009)

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Research Design

- Descriptive study.
- 12 nurse managers from 13 patient care units completed the California Critical Thinking Disposition Inventory (CCTDI).
- 132 of their respective RN staff nurses completed the Practice Environment Scale (PES).
- A $t$-test was used to compare differences of RN staff nurses’ PES scores based on the strength (score of 40 and above) or weakness (score of 39 and below) of their nurse managers’ CCTDI scores on 5 subscales.
Tools

- CCTDI 75 items with 7 disposition sub-scales: truth-seeking; open-mindedness; analyticity; systematicity; CT self-confidence; inquisitiveness; CT maturity ($\alpha = .60 - .81$ for subscales and .90 for overall score).

- PES 31 items in 5 sub-scales: participation in hospital affairs; nursing quality care; nurse manager ability, leadership, and support; staffing and resource adequacy; and collegial nurse:physician relationships ($\alpha = > .80$ except collegial nurse:physician relationships $\alpha = .71$)
Nurse Manager Sample Demographics

- 91.7% Female
- 83.3% Caucasian
- 58.3% had a baccalaureate degree
- 33.3% had a master’s degree
- 47.3 mean age (range 28 – 60 yrs)
- 23.3 mean of RN experience (range 5 – 42 yrs)
- 11.3 mean of NM experience (range 1 – 27 yrs)
- 10.4 mean in current position (range 1 – 27yrs)

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RN Staff Nurse Demographics

- 95.5% Female
- 57.6% Caucasian
- 59.1% had a baccalaureate degree
- 25.8% has an associate degree
- 41.39 mean age (range 25 – 61 yrs)
- 15.8 mean of RN experience (range 1 - 32 yrs.)
- 8.05 mean in current position (range 1 – 32yrs.)

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Figure 8: Participating Units

- Ambulatory: 17%
- Critical Care: 17%
- ED: 8%
- L&D: 8%
- Med-Surg: 25%
- PACU: 9%
- Postpartum Nursery: 8%
- Procedure: 8%
Study Results

Significant positive relationship between nurse managers’ critical thinking dispositions of analyticity, systematicity, open-mindedness, and critical thinking confidence and their respective RN staff nurses’ perceptions of the practice environment.
## Results

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<td>2.21 .31</td>
<td>2.93 .30</td>
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Truth-seeking results

Non-significant except for:

Collegial nurse:physician relations <.05
There was no significant difference between the nurse managers’ CCTDI subscale scores and demographics of age, experience, and educational level.
Limitations

- Study was conducted in a single setting with a small sample.
- Technical difficulties arose with accessing the CCTDI online.
- The small sample size of nurse managers in turn limited the RN staff nurse participation.
- Nurse managers more confident in critical thinking may have chosen to participate.
- Survey fatigue of nurse managers and staff.

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Implications for Nursing

- Strategies to support the development and use of critical thinking in nurse managers should be considered for both formal and informal settings.

- Nurse managers skilled in critical thinking may be able to create positive practice environments. This, in turn, may improve staff satisfaction and reduce costly turnover and vacancies.
Strategies for Leadership Success

Culture of safety

- Critical thinking
- TeamStepps
- Empowerment Trust
- Just Culture

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Tips and Techniques to Support Critical Thinking

- Inquiry based learning
- Appreciative Inquiry
- Debates
- Case Studies
- Critical Incident Analysis
- Concept Maps
- Reflective Journaling
- Journal Clubs for Management and Leadership Articles
- Electronic Communication

(Edwards, 2007; Zori & Morrison, 2009)
Additional Research

- Replication of the study in different settings including academic teaching and community hospitals.

- A descriptive study of CT in nurse managers using a larger sample in a variety of settings.

- Similar study exploring CT dispositions in RN staff nurses related to their perception of the practice environment.

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Most men would rather die, than think. Many do.

Bertrand Russell
Questions?

Critical thinking about critical thinking?

Thank you

Contact: sazori@aol.com

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