

**Leadership Interview Paper**

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## **Nursing Leadership Paper**

The leader I interviewed was one of my mentors in my unit. Her official title is an RN Clinical Mentor, and she orients new graduate nurses on the unit and helps navigate them through the Nurse Residency Program at Inova Fair Oaks Hospital. According to our text by Sullivan (2018), she would be considered an informal leader. She also helps others on the unit if they are struggling or trying to navigate clinical ladder advancement; she coordinates the pairing of preceptors throughout the unit and helps assist the unit as a Resource Nurse. I decided to interview her because she is a massive part of the success of the unit by having the role of support and coordinating so many things at the same time. When I first started as a nurse, she helped me through one of the most challenging times when I was having much anxiety. She was super supportive, and I admire her so much for the work and effort she puts in every day. Sarah always has a great attitude; if she is overwhelmed, I cannot tell. I would consider her a transformational leader as well as an informal leader (Sullivan, 2018). By that, I mean that she fosters a positive environment, encourages growth and leadership in others, encourages a vision of higher ideals, and inspires me to have a positive attitude and keep working hard (Sullivan, 2018).

### **Leadership Traits and Styles**

When I asked Sarah what leadership traits she has, she responded, "I'd say my most prominent leadership traits are integrity, accountability, creativity, and empathy." I would add that she also has competency and interpersonal communication skills that not everyone has. She is also dedicated to the job and passionate about what she does, which makes her a great leader. She may not necessarily be in a formal leadership role, but I think she has the potential to be a manager or supervisor on the unit because she possesses the traits of a great leader. An article by Yeh (2016) suggested that the leader's personality affects the unit's efficiency. I think that is very true since I saw a difference in the two Unit Managers, I worked with in the last three years on my unit.

A nursing leader should be sensitive toward others because it shows that they care for others and are sincere or "understand humankind" (Kim et al., 2022, p.2221). Empathy is an essential trait for leaders to have. Sarah described a scenario where a brand-new nurse struggled to complete assessments and documentation

on time. She showed them the Epic playground we have online so that they could learn how to document quicker and to the manikin we have at the hospital to practice assessments. This shows her empathy, patience, and creativity as a leader to help the new nurses feel comfortable with something they are struggling with. She understood this nurse and found a way to help that not many people would have thought of, showing her sincerity in helping others.

Additionally, Sarah has ethics and morals that guide her decision-making and is very honest about her mistakes. She said she dislikes making mistakes, but “I will always admit full responsibility and learn from my mistakes.” Integrity is a huge part of being a leader. Just imagine what happens when leaders make mistakes in our everyday lives. It is never a good look when they do not own up to their mistake and take responsibility for their actions. We always commend leaders for taking responsibility because it shows they are trustworthy and honest, significantly influencing others.

### **Health Care Setting and Organizational Structure**

The unit that we work in is part of the acute care hospital setting. Our unit is a step-down unit from the Intensive Care Unit (ICU) called the Progressive Care Unit (PCU). Because the PCU is a step down from the ICU, it is considered an acute care unit because people are in between stable and unstable. We are part of a local community hospital in the suburbs of Northern Virginia (Inova, 2024). Our unit has 36 beds and is fully staffed with nine staff nurses, four clinical technicians, a manager, a supervisor, a unit charge nurse, and a unit secretary. If the unit beds are full, those would be the essential staff we need to run fluidly and not be as chaotic for the day. Sarah essentially functions as the Nursing Mentor, checking in with staff members when she is not busy with her other responsibilities. While at work, she schedules new hires and other staff to the unit and ensures that the Nurse Residency requirements are followed. She works with the preceptors and the orientees to see how they are doing, assesses their challenges, and sees what they need help with or if they feel the work environment is a good place for them.

### **Addressing Challenges**

The focus for the challenge in the health care section should relate directly to managing these units, facilities, etc. What has been implemented for best management practices and safety. Sarah best manages challenges by prioritizing and setting goals. She picks three tasks to fulfill, ensures those get done, and then moves on to the following three top priorities. Because her job entails doing so many things, just like being a bedside nurse, she must be able to prioritize and tackle the most critical tasks of the day. Our book (Sullivan, 2018) also mentions the ability to prioritize, which is part of time management and is important for any role you work in. Sullivan states that it is critical to be able to set goals and time frames to manage your time.

Delegation is also another way to deal with challenges. Something that everyone should be able to master is delegating in Nursing because there is not enough time in the day to get everything done for however many patients you have. Time is the most valuable thing in the medical profession, speaking for myself. I struggled with time management initially and prioritizing when I was a new nurse. I have never faced a more significant challenge. This type of job was nothing I was used to, and I would waste time with tasks in the morning that could have been saved for later in the day or things that I could delegate to others. Because of my experience, I have learned to become more efficient with my time, collaborate with my co-workers, and ask for help when needed. However, it is a learned skill, and I think it also takes some humility to realize that you cannot do everything.

## **Conclusion**

This Nursing Leadership interview taught me that a great leader possesses many skills, and all nurses have or learn those skills daily. However, not all nurses possess the personality of great leaders. There are many traits to being a great leader, and the most important ways of influencing others, in my opinion, are integrity, empathy, authority, positivity, and passion. I greatly admire Sarah for her job and the passion and positivity over all her traits because it is something unique that I do not see in everyone.

## References

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