

# World Café for Leadership Development

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Partnerships between academic and clinical entities are essential for change in nursing education and the healthcare arena to maximize improvements in quality, clinical, cost, and safety outcomes. The nursing profession has a strong legacy of partnerships in which respect and trust are essential to develop mutual goals and a common vision. In addition, the American Association of Colleges of Nursing and American Organization for Nurse Executives advocate and support these partnerships. These organizations have embraced key principles important to any partnership for strong outcomes and sustainability. These principles include collaborative relationships, mutual respect and trust, shared knowledge, commitment, and shared responsibility, sustainable transition initiatives, and shared infrastructure for data collection.<sup>1</sup> These principles align with the 2010 Institute of Medicine *Future of Nursing* report.<sup>2</sup>

In 2012, Alegant Health and Creighton University Medical Center merged to form Alegant Creighton Health. Creighton University College of Nursing (CUCON) and Alegant Creighton Health (ACH) have a rich history of collaboration. The merger provided another opportunity to bring nursing leadership formally to the table for a conversation to focus on mutual goals to support strategic initiatives within both institutions.

Formal and informal leadership development for undergraduate nursing students in the CUCON and nursing staff at ACH was identified as a common goal for both organizations. The purpose of this project was to conduct a World Café methodology to engage faculty and direct care nurses in a meaningful dialogue on leadership experiences that are important for the development of nurses.

## LEADERSHIP

The skills required to be a nurse leader have always been a professional responsibility for all registered nurses (RNs) and an essential skill set for nursing students in their role development. Demonstrating leadership within the profession in all settings has been a firmly established standard, Standard 12, within the American Nurses Association's Scope and Standards of Practice.<sup>3</sup> The Institute of Medicine *Future of Nursing* report recommendation 7 is as follows:

- Nurses, nursing education programs, and nursing associations should prepare the nursing workforce to assume leadership positions across all levels, while public, private, and governmental health care decision makers should ensure that leadership positions are available to and filled by nurses.

- Nurses should take responsibility for their personal and professional growth by continuing their education and seeking opportunities to develop and exercise their leadership skills.
- Nursing associations should provide leadership development, mentoring programs, and opportunities to lead for all their members.
- Nursing education programs should integrate leadership theory and business practices across the curriculum, including clinical practice.
- Public, private, and governmental health care decision makers at every level should include representation from nursing on boards, on executive management teams, and in other key leadership positions.<sup>2</sup>

Nursing practice is complex. The ability to navigate that complexity is required to ensure patients receive high-quality, safe care in the most cost-effective way. Florence Nightingale had to navigate this complexity. She defined nursing as being in charge of the personal health of somebody: “And what nursing has to do...is to put the patient in the best condition for nature to act upon him.”<sup>4(p4)</sup> Individuals who lead with integrity are accountable for their actions. As all leaders, titled or not, know, leadership is power with people, not power over people. Evidence-based leadership skills are essential for good leaders to become great leaders.

According to a survey of 80,000 managers,<sup>5</sup> Gallup found that leaders can progress from “good to great” if they are satisfied and engaged in their work. This provided the foundation for Gallup’s Corporation Q12, which was developed based on 30 years of accumulated quantitative and qualitative research with strong reliability and validity.<sup>5</sup> Gallup developed its Q12 benchmark specifically to correlate its measure of employee engagement with worker productivity, customer loyalty, and growth. Questions cover basic needs, from workplace expectations to the opportunity to learn and grow on the top of the hierarchy. Each of the 12 questions is rated on a 5-point scale and is in 1 of the following 4 categories:

- Basic Needs—2 questions (Q01 and Q02)
- Management Support—4 questions (Q03, Q04, Q05, and Q06)
- Teamwork—4 questions (Q07, Q08, Q09, and Q10)
- Growth—2 questions (Q11 and Q12)

The ratings from all 12 of these questions are then combined into an index, which can be used to segment employees into 3 categories:

- Engaged employees: These employees work with passion, because they feel loyalty to the organization and work hard to innovate and improve.
- Not-engaged employees: These employees do the work expected of them, but do not put in any extra effort.
- Actively disengaged employees: These employees aren’t just unhappy; they spread their unhappiness to other staff.

The Q12 questions focus on the expectations of the work, whether employees have the materials and equipment to do the work, whether employees are able to do what they do best every day, whether they received recognition in the past 7

days, whether someone encouraged their development at work, whether the employee’s opinions count, whether the employee feels his or her job is important and validates the mission or purpose of the company, whether the employee’s coworkers commit to doing quality work, whether employees have a best friend at work, whether someone at work has talked to the employee regarding his or her progress in the past 6 months, and whether the employee has had opportunities to learn and grow.<sup>6</sup> Employee satisfaction and engagement require relationship management skills, such as facilitating, mentoring, communicating, and negotiating. These skills often can mean the difference between good and great.<sup>7</sup>

Leadership expert John Maxwell describes leadership as a positive influence.<sup>8</sup> Registered nurses and advanced practice nurses have a way of influencing people. The public supports this and has ranked nursing as the most trusted profession for the past 11 consecutive years, ranking “high” or “very high” for honesty and ethics among 85% of respondents.<sup>7</sup> Shared governance has been a predominant methodology to improve RN satisfaction and engagement and bring decision making closest to the point of care.<sup>9</sup> Direct care nurses have opportunities to express their opinions and know that they count, which leads to democracy in action in the workplace. Genuine leaders make things better, not just for themselves, but for others.<sup>8</sup>

## DESCRIPTION OF PARTNERSHIP: EDUCATION AND PRACTICE

The CUCON and ACH have a record of success in student clinical placements and joint research activities. The merger created an opportunity to expand our working relationship, form mutually agreed-upon goals, and leverage our resources. In June 2012, the nursing leadership team at CUCON and ACH met to dialogue and establish mutual goals. The project teams included the following: simulation, transition into practice, advanced practice transition, dedicated education unit, and leadership development. Each team met on a regular basis to develop their strategies and goals. The leadership development team identified short- and long-term goals. The short-term goals included joint speakers for the Nursing Leadership Investment Club and a quarterly book club, continued support for the “Night Out With Nursing Leaders” for nursing students, and utilizing CUCON alumni working within ACH for the Leadership Scholars program. A long-term goal was to develop leadership experiences that are important for the development of undergraduate nursing students. The CUCON was interested in developing a strong thread of leadership didactic and practicum experiences from the freshman to senior year. ACH supported this initiative, knowing their facility would hire interested RN candidates from the CUCON program. An idea for a World Café was created to solicit input from direct care nurses and faculty on leadership opportunities.

## WORLD CAFÉ PROCESS

The World Café format provides a structured methodology for dialogue and conversation between participants. It

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