Welcome to Leadership 1001

That is not a typo! I meant 1001, not 101. What we are going to do is way beyond the introductory 101 type content! This issue includes the inauguration of a column devoted to leadership and what we need to do to prepare our learners to become leaders and continue their personal development.

Dr. Michael Bleich, a longtime JCEN reviewer and a contributor to the well-known 2010 Institute of Medicine report, *The Future of Nursing: Leading Change, Advancing Health*, is our column editor. He has mapped out a vision for where he believes we need to help our learners venture.

We have taken on this task, along with our ongoing commitment to continuing professional development (including formal continuing education: registered nurse to bachelor of science in nursing and formal graduate education) because the need is so great. In addition to the normal, rapidly intense change that occurs now, the Institute of Medicine report set the expectation that nurses must assume leadership roles to advance the health of the nation. Yet, as I learned through other leadership activities, few educators are prepared to facilitate learning in this content area. How, then, can we meet the demands that this report places on us if we ourselves are not prepared to help others learn about leadership?

According to Northouse (2013), more than 65 classifications of leadership have been identified. No wonder we have so many challenges when we address leadership in nursing! He went on to define leadership as “a process whereby an individual influences a group of individuals to achieve a common goal” (Northouse, 2013, p. 5). Leadership is a process that involves influence, demands a goal, and involves others. Again, no wonder we face so many challenges!

Kouzes and Posner (2012) identified five core practices that are necessary for leaders. They are things that every one of us can do. They are: (1) model the way, (2) inspire a shared vision, (3) challenge the process, (4) enable others to act, and (5) encourage the heart. We can and do follow these five practices. No matter what we are doing, we are seen as the model [fill in the blank]. We are either a negative or a positive model. The joy of being a leader in continuing education is that we can model the way to be whatever we are attempting to teach to others! Inspiring a shared vision is often seen as the role of the top leader. However, everyone who is a leader can set the tone for accepting a vision or share an insight that makes the vision real. Challenging the process means that we don’t just take things at face value. We pose thoughtful questions, explore options, and think deliberatively about the future. Enabling others to act may sound like a manager’s job, and nurses in those roles have a special opportunity to fulfill this practice. So do those of us in continuing education. As an example, we can help others acquire the knowledge, skills, and attitudes needed by leaders so that they are confident in what they do. Finally, encouraging the heart refers to how we renew ourselves and others. We can share our own “self-talk,” rewards, and recognition with others. Our efforts to help others assume a greater leadership role advance the profession.

Although some of us are known as “leaders” by virtue of a position we hold (e.g., chief nursing officer, president, dean, executive director), those positions are really headship, not leadership. How they are enacted makes them positions of leadership. Leaders can emerge from anywhere within the profession. That is our big challenge! How do we help the more than 3.1 million
members of the profession develop the knowledge, skills, and attitudes that allow them to lead in various situations when failing to lead would result in patient harm or a lower quality of care?

The JCEN Board and staff are counting on Michael to provide us with insights that can help us to meet the challenge that the Institute of Medicine report set forth and the American public deserves. Nurses as leaders—our commitment to each other as we continue to move forward in advancing the health of our nation! Lead on!

REFERENCES
Pati#cia S. Yoder-Wise, RN, EdD, NEA-BC, ANEF, FAAN
Editor-in-Chief
psywjcen@aol.com
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