

# Clinical Leadership Roles at the Workplace

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Challenges and Strategies

**Student Name and Number**

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## **Introduction**

The use of social media has slowly become a bane more than a boon, especially in the context of healthcare. Sensitive patient details when leaked out unintentionally can damage a person's reputation, and people in the healthcare industry need to be extremely cautious regarding their public posts online.

A newly graduated nurse faces several challenges in the workplace in learning about patient care and work culture dynamics. In addition to this, learning about responsible and respectful use of social media can be an extra workload for the nurses. However, the people most capable of affecting change related to use of social media by healthcare practitioners are the younger generation as they have a better understanding of Internet reach.

This paper aims to focus on the significance of understanding the responsible use of social media and the role of a newly graduated nurse in taking up a leadership position in the workplace in this regard.

## **Social Media Guidance and its Relevance to Patient Safety**

With the increasing availability and accessibility to social media platforms and applications, professional and personal use of these platforms is on the rise. Some of the common social media platforms through which people communicate and share opinions include social networking sites, online forums, video sites, and blogs. Many professionals, including nurses, use Facebook, Twitter, or blog sites to share their workplace experiences. While sharing ideas and personal opinions on social media can be a positively reinforcing

experience for nurses, it is important to avoid mentioning specifics about the workplace or patients to protect their privacy and data confidentiality (NCSBN, 2018).

In order to officialize the do's and dont's of social media use by health practitioners, the Health Practitioner Regulation National Law has devised a Code of Conduct to guide healthcare professionals on the appropriate use of social media. This document highlights the privacy and confidentiality obligations of healthcare workplaces, healthy professional boundaries while using social media, and respectful communication about patients and colleagues (AHPRA, 2014).

The social media guide encourages healthcare professionals to refrain from using patient information such as names, addresses, admission and discharge details, and specific health conditions while publishing on social media platforms. This practice helps protect patients' privacy as publicly available information can easily be reposted by others and can turn viral. Posting photos of workplace too may harm patients' confidentiality as backgrounds of the images may unintentionally reveal specific patient information on files, folders, or other records (Unnithan and Swatman, 2015).

Writing online comments about specific cases should be carefully considered as revealing too much information can be a breach of privacy for patients and their families. This type of practice should be avoided especially when posting on public chatrooms or forums. Personal opinions regarding sexual practices, religion, and cultural groups should also not be posted online as these can tag healthcare practitioners as biased (AHPRA, 2014).

## **Team Leadership as a Newly Graduated Registered Nurse**

Newly graduated registered nurses are expected to rapidly develop clinical leadership skills so that their actions can help in delivering quality care to patients. However, studies have shown that senior healthcare practitioners are not very satisfied with the leadership skills demonstrated by newly graduated nurses. Evidently, newly graduated nurses also face several challenges while taking up leadership roles at their workplace (Chappell and Richards, 2015).

Leadership in the field of healthcare comprises of aspects of collaboration, coordination, communication, provision of direction and support, and working towards achieving optimal patient outcomes. This might be difficult to cultivate in a short period especially in healthcare where patients' lives and well-being is at stake. In this age of highly dynamic, fast-paced and patient-centric work environments, achieving perfection in all tasks takes time and effort, and newly graduated nurses have a major responsibility of learning the intricacies of their workplace (Ellis and Bach, 2015).

Leadership among nurses is fostered when the workplace has a clear vision of patient welfare and the staff members are highly motivated to take all measures for patient safety. Individual nurses should also be capable of managing teams effectively, be self-confident, and have strongly empowering communication skills. Leadership is not limited to individual perfection, but also involves identifying possible points of change and leading teams within the workplace to bring about positive changes (Al-Dossary, 2017).

## **Challenges in Leading a Team as a Newly Graduated Nurse at the Workplace**

The transition period from a nursing student to a registered nurse entrusted with patient responsibilities can be a very stressful period for most nurses. Taking up leadership roles in such a scenario can pose several challenges for a newly graduated nurse. Some of the challenges are listed below:

*i. Being Invisible*

Several nurses face the predicament of feeling all alone in a dynamic professional world where they are not sure of how to do things or communicate with their colleagues. Their position as team leader may be taken lightly and team members may not take the nurse's instructions seriously. In addition, there might be a gap between workplace demands and available resources, and the nurse in a leadership role may face challenges in bridging this gap (Ekstrom and Idvall, 2015).

*ii. Receiving Support*

Being in a completely new environment, nurses in leadership positions need expert guidance regarding workplace policies and dynamics of staff members. Many nurses that have recently started working at a particular healthcare facility may not receive enthusiastic support from their colleagues hindering development of their leadership skills (Ekstrom and Idvall, 2015).

iii. Ensuring Quality Patient Care

Along with taking up leadership positions, nurses need to ensure that they constantly deliver quality care to patients suffering from various complex comorbidities such as cardiovascular disease, diabetes, end-stage renal disease, and cancer. Increased workloads and work-related frustration may affect the quality of care delivered to patients (Hofler and Thomas, 2016).

iv. Performance Anxiety

Just like in other professions, nurses too face performance anxiety and a lack of self-confidence when faced with unnatural issues about patient care. They may have feelings of being insufficient, not being able to prove their competence at the workplace, and dwindling self-confidence in their abilities (Hofler and Thomas, 2016).

## **Strategies to Manage Challenges as a Team Leader in the Workplace**

There are several strategies a newly graduated nurse may employ to acquire confidence and develop skills. Some of them are listed below:

i. Acquire Support from Colleagues or Programs

Acquiring emotional and professional support from individuals within the workplace or through support programs is imperative for a nurse to cope with the stress and feelings of isolation. Participating in support programs offered by healthcare employers can help newly graduated nurses understand the methodology of work in their facility and can help them bond

with their colleagues and seniors. This can make it easier for them to take up leadership roles in their workplace (Ebrahimi *et al.*, 2016).

Support programs have been shown to open lines of communication among different members of the workplace hierarchy by involving newly graduated nurses in important decision-making processes. This helps build an environment of trust, respect, acceptance, and increased job satisfaction. Several workplaces also offer preceptorship and mentorship programs that can benefit newly graduated nurses who participate in them. These programs help expose the nurse to the professional environment and familiarize them with the guidelines followed at the workplace (Ebrahimi *et al.*, 2016).

ii. Planning

When newly graduated nurses are faced with new challenges in the workplace, it is important that they follow strict planning guidelines for their work so that they can complete all their tasks on time and with the highest quality. Planning helps nurses face and overcome challenges smoothly and analyze roadblocks effectively. Laying out all the tasks in a systematic manner can help nurses foresee problems and devise suitable strategies to overcome them before they occur (Chang and Daly, 2012).

iii. Healthy Work-Life Balance

As a newly graduated nurse, many people may fall into the cycle of working on one task after another without taking sufficient time for self-care and personal growth. Over time, this may lead to burnout, causing feelings of depression and low self-esteem. From the first day of

work, it is important for nurses to have a healthy work-life balance and take sufficient time from their busy schedule for relaxation and recreation. This will ensure that they approach their work with a positive and fresh outlook every day and generate highly productive outcomes at the workplace (Chang and Daly, 2012).

## **Conclusion**

Most professionals belonging to the younger generation resort to social media to share their experiences and acquire support from online forums. In such a condition, it is imperative for newly graduated nurses to understand their constraints while using social media for sharing their professional experiences. New nursing recruits need to be taught the legal and ethical consequences of sharing too much information about personal beliefs or patient cases on the internet that can compromise patient confidentiality.

When newly graduated nurses take up their first job in the healthcare sector, they need to go through a transition period before they can analyze the workplace ethics and propose changes. For this to take place, nurses need to build a culture of respect, trust, and knowledge about the profession, which they can achieve by participating in support programs and by focusing on self-growth and learning.

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