Reflection Paper 3: Clinical Leadership Competence & Potential

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When I look back over my life in the area of leadership. I know that I was not a born leader. I was the middle child in my family with two older sisters who I followed and who bossed me around with ease. I was also as the middle child and this made me the peacekeeper. I did not like distention among the “troops”. I wanted everyone to get along and I worked to negotiate peace among us all. I feel that this trait has stayed with me and was of benefit as I made my way through my life. I was also extremely shy and quiet even as I was a member of school clubs and band, I did not want to stand out, and I liked being just part of the crowd.

My first experience with leadership was when I was in college as member of a service sorority, I ran and was elected as the secretary. This made me part of my first leadership team. We attended an officer training to help us with our roles and responsibilities which I found was very helpful. After graduation, I was able to secure a job which allowed me to grow and assume leadership responsibilities which allowed me to gain more confidence in my role becoming head of my department. After 15 years, I went back to school to become a Registered Nurse not wanting to be in a leadership position but to just take care of my patients. Now, 15 years later I find myself again growing in leadership in my current position as a full time Charge Nurse. This was something that I was ready for and had been asked to do for some time. I am responsible for the daily coordination and management of my medical surgical unit. In this current role my manager encourages us to take part in leadership training which I am finding to be of great benefit and I feel like a novice again excited to learn these important tools to help me to be the most effective in my position after not being in a formal leadership position for years.

When looking back on my hospital’s Interdisciplinary Team and my role as the nursing representative, I find that this process has evolved to be more nurse driven. My role now in addition to updating the team on the current status and any new needs of the patients, but to obtain from the physician the anticipated date of discharge for each patient and to then have each discipline (Dietary, Quality, Rehab, Pharmacy and Social Work and Case Management) state the status of their department in the care plan of each patient. The Interdisciplinary Team now meet seven days a week with just the charge nurse, case manager and social worker meeting on the weekends.

In completing the leadership skills questionnaire, I found that I scored highest in the area of interpersonal skills with a score of 30. I was not surprised by that because I consider myself a person who enjoys working with others and resolving conflicts to create a positive working environment. I scored a 25 (high) for both administrative and conceptual skills. I know that these are areas in which I need to make improvements. For instance I know that I can improve in becoming more effective in the detailed aspects of my work. I am fortunate in that I have the support of my manager to gain greater experience in these areas by attending leadership development classes offered by my hospital and by being exposed to experiences that will allow me to increase the opportunities to utilize these important skills.