Role of Ethics within Leadership

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NR504 Leadership and Nursing Practice: Role Development

July, 2017

**Role of Ethics within Leadership**

Ethics are the principles, values and beliefs that define the wrongness or rightness of an action or behavior. Leadership is the process of inspiring or influencing others towards a common vision. The role of ethics in leadership cannot be overemphasized, as they define the process of influencing others through principles and values that embrace proper behavior. Leadership plays a central role in the nursing profession as it provide the requisite motivation that ensures nurses deliver high quality care (Sharifabad, Ashktorab, & Shoorideh, 2017). Moreover, nurses are required to make leadership decisions on a daily basis due to the scope of their work. As such, ethics are an essential component that help define how to be an ethical leader capable of providing guidance to ensure occupational satisfaction of personnel through the prioritization of morals.

Ethics are important in that they play a huge part in enabling nursing leaders to understand their role in creating a healthcare environment guided by the right principles (Sharifabad, Ashktorab, & Shoorideh, 2017). Ethics enable leaders to conduct themselves with integrity and humility in addition to contributing to their understanding of their role as leaders. Ethics also enable leaders to embody certain behavioral traits such as commitment to doing the right thing, consistence in decision making and the courage to adopt certain perspectives (Weiss & Tappen, 2015). This can guide them in the establishment of standards of conduct and a culture of integrity in their organizations.

There is therefore a need for ethics to become an organizational priority in healthcare, specifically in the provision of nursing care. This can be achieved by ensuring that organizations are led by ethical leaders who continuously keep an eye on the mission, vision, and values of the organization. In healthcare, nursing care is perceived as the moral center. This requires nurses to act as moral agents, in addition to displaying moral courage (Yoder-Wise, 2014). Nursing leaders should also ensure that they support nurses in the course of their work and address situations facing their work with moral courage. This is important in helping enhance the quality of care that the patient receives, as well as boosting the reputation of an organization.

In addition to competence, creativity, and experience, people at all organizational levels require ethical values. The nurturing of a values-based culture has become one of the defining principles of today’s organizations. From politics to business, there is a strong need to prioritize ethics. In today’s highly dynamic environments, it has become increasingly difficult for leaders to choose their priorities (Kelly & Crawford, 2013). Large corporations, professionals, politicians, and healthcare organizations can all have their reputations and images ruined by the lack of ethics. This is because of the complexity of today’s environment that requires leaders to demonstrate moral courage in their actions.

Ethics are essential in helping leaders deal with complex dilemmas. This includes problems that pertain to doubt in the morality of an action, moral conflicts, and ethical distress. Nursing leaders are confronted with various challenges that are associated with ethical leadership during the course of their work (Weiss & Tappen, 2015). Nurses for instance have the ethical obligation to address issues that pertain to the care of patients as well as the underlying organizational issues that may have an impact on the care delivered. At times, the interests of these parties may diverge. Ethical leadership can promote the development of strategies for navigating through obstacles in addition to promoting an ethical culture (Yoder-Wise, 2014). Across the globe, nurses are guided by professional codes of conduct that inform how they should carry out their duties.

Ethics play a critical role in ensuring that a leader embodies the purpose and values of a company that he or she leads. The role of ethics in leadership are also vital as it can promote ethical conduct in the entire healthcare organization by enabling leaders at the managerial level to act ethically. Maintaining strong ethics can ensure that a leader gives his or her best output and inspires others to do the same. When a leader exhibits high standards of moral responsibility, it encourages his or her followers to follow the same (Porter & Malloch, 2016). When employees follow ethical behavior, they are able to act with honesty and integrity. The implementation of ethical leadership by nurses in formal leadership positions involves the nurturing of appropriate behavior through their actions and interactions (Sharifabad, Ashktorab, & Shoorideh, 2017). Ethical leaders are sensitive to moral issues and they enhance the morality of the actions of their followers by fostering respect for human dignity. Thus, ethics can play a core role in supporting the moral competence of nursing professionals, the reputation of the firm, and in promoting the quality and safety of patient care.

Maintaining strong ethics also makes a leader stand out from the crowd. This is especially more relevant today, with ethics having made great strides in prominence (Kelly & Crawford, 2013). Society has advanced beyond seeing ethics as only necessary for safeguarding public image and reputation. It is now seen as necessary in shaping the future. Ethics also play a role in giving leaders moral focus in the course of their responsibilities. This is because ethics can power and drive an individual to perform to the best of their ability and overcome obstacles or challenges that are in the way of success (Storch, Makaroff, & Pauly, 2013). Ethics enable one to put aside their egos and individual ambition for the greater good of the company, team or organization. The role of ethics in enabling leaders to maintain moral focus is critical given that lack of this focus can lead a leader to lose perspective and begin rationalizing unethical behavior.

In addition to decision making, ethics also play a role in the institutional culture that leaders cultivate. This is because ethics enable leaders to identify the role that positive relationships play in the organizational effort. For leaders to cultivate an ethical organizational or institutional culture, there is a need for congruence between ethics and the vision, mission, and values of the organization. Given that ethical values are essentially social in nature, this congruence will enhance the relational expectations of the leader. Ethics can ensure that leaders’ relations with their followers and their external relationships are all prized (Storch, Makaroff, & Pauly, 2013). This is central to the success of an organization as positive relationships are built on respect and trust as these are key to the organizations success. Ethical leadership is important in that it can create an ethical climate that results in positive outcomes for both patient, nursing professionals, and the organizations at large.

# References

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