**Clinical Leadership**

**Clinical Practice situation**

Great nurse leaders and mentors have the power and potential to transform and empower student nurses to become the great nurse leaders of tomorrow. As a student nurse, I had the opportunity to work with many and different in attributes registered nurses and experience various styles of both good and bad leadership skills. I have gained knowledge and skills from working with them that will be valuable to my future as a registered nurse. I had the opportunity to observe, ask questions and have many discussions with experienced and new nurses.

One of my most recent and memorable clinical placement in an acute-care medical ward in a hospital setting I had the chance to work with a great nurse whose leadership skills were exemplary, inspiring and eye-opening to observe. I will call this nurse MJ for this assignment. MJ was an experienced senior registered nurse working in the medical ward for several years. I worked with MJ as a student nurse for over three shifts, and one of the first things I observed about MJ was her excellent communication skills, passion for her role as a nurse and the dedication she had to the patient’s care needs. I was instantly attracted and impressed by MJ’s quality of nursing care and effortless exemplary leadership skills. She possessed excellent clinical proficiency and the ability, time and attention to details for her patient care needs even in stressful situations.

I can remember my last shift working with MJ, one of my patients was deteriorating quickly and needed resuscitation. I became anxious and flustered and forgot all the protocols relating to managing patients declining. The patient’s family members also happened to be at the patient’s bedside which made feel even more under pressure. In that situation, MJ remained calm in her reaction, acted swiftly and also explained the procedures to me as she took part in the interventions. MJ was kind and interested in supporting my growth as a nurse and willing to include me in real-life learning opportunities such as how to manage a deteriorating patient. MJ was sensitive and reassuring to the patient’s family. MJ was mindful of the intense family relationship during the stressful situation and was able to communicate with them in a delicate way about the situation and procedures.

I also got to observe the effect of nurse MJ’s leadership skills from a different point view regarding the influences she had on other nurses who I worked with on another occasion. On one shift I worked with another registered nurse, I will name TJ who was a more junior nurse compared to MJ. TJ and I were finishing an early change one day, and we were preparing for handover to the afternoon staff. That day I observed TJ acting a little uneasy and wanting to make sure all tasks were done, and all issues thoroughly addressed for the patients so that MJ who is taking over from us would not be disappointed with any loose ends. I felt like nurse TJ wanted to impress MJ considering her actions at the time and a comment she made to me in private saying “MJ always worries too much about everything and asks too many questions at handover.” It was interesting to see TJ behave in such manner and how much somewhat positive influence MJ was having on her just by her presence.

**Introduction**

In this essay, a clinical practice situation will be reflected upon where a senior registered nurse demonstrated exemplary leadership skills while being a receptor to a student nurse on clinical placement. Furthermore, in this essay, the theory of transformational leadership will be employed as a foundation to analyze the clinical practice situation critically and scrutinize how the nurse demonstrated exemplary transformational leadership during the case. In conclusion, this essay will give brief mentions of the of the implication of my leadership in my future nursing practice.

**Initial reflections on the events**

Initial thoughts and feeling about my experience working with nurse MJ over the three shifts can be described as being on a learning journey and highly educational. It felt like inspired and impressed by her work ethics, excellent clinical skills and excellent time management skills and the ability to prioritize tasks. Observing MJ carry out her work and respond to the difficult situation with so much confidence, calmness and with such commitment to uphold procedures and protocol was admirable, respectable and honorable. Working with MJ in a situation where my patient was deteriorating and being met with pressure required me to think and act quickly in my response. In that case, a feeling of nervousness and anxiety came over me causing me to become flustered and confused on how to respond appropriately. MJ could have chosen to take over the situation, stepped me to the side and handled the situation on her own since my initial reaction was anxiousness and confusion to the case. On past experiences of a similar situation, other nurse receptors would take over and exclude me in critical situations. MJ was not put off by poor management of the situation. Instead, she was very supportive, encouraging and guiding me through the case. MJ took the time and chance to lead me through a difficult situation which eased my anxiety, and as a result, I was able to calm down and think clearly and respond to the patient’s condition appropriately.

**Critical analysis of the clinical practice situation**

The clinical practice situation exemplified the need for practical leadership skills among the nurses as the basis for interacting well with others as well as making decisions that promote positive patient outcomes. Transformational leadership style offers a chance for the nurse leader to involve others in decision or leadership role thus motivating them and improving the chances of achieving the desired objectives (Agnew, Flin & Reid, 2012). The clinical practice situation in context demonstrates the need for appropriate management of clinical conditions to achieve positive outcomes. A nurse leader that adopts transformational leadership style can involve other team members which enhances their ability to address complex situations in healthcare settings effectively. The case of MJ represented how nursing leaders can shape the performance and patient outcome by demonstrating how to solve complex situations (Curtis, de Vries & Sheerin, 2011).

The clinical situation demonstrated the need for the nurses to have excellent communication skills and decision-making skills to adopt a care model that promotes positive patient outcomes. The clinical practice situation is characterized by diverse patient needs which creates the need for the nurse to take a collaborative approach to enhance the chances of adopting the appropriate care model (Welford, 2002). Transformational leadership supports the adoption of the collaborative plan as the basis for delivering patient care thus efficiently managing their needs and promoting the chances of positive outcomes (Doody & Doody, 2012). The adoption of transformational leadership theory is centered on the idea that MJ posses important attributes which are critical in the clinical practice and enhances the chances of the nursing team members to achieve both personal and professional development. The situation in context demonstrated exemplary leadership in action as the nurse leader was able to instill critical attributes and ideas to other nurses while addressing complex cases effectively (Balsanelli & Cunha, 2014). The leadership model was useful in understanding the patient needs and ensuring the inclusion of the family members among other critical stakeholders in patient care. The leadership style promotes a clinical practice that is centered on clearly understanding the underlying problems, the risk factors and working collaboratively towards addressing the clinical practice problems (Sherman & Pross, 2010).

A review of the clinical practice situation and the care model adopted based on the transformational leadership style demonstrates that there is a need for nurse leaders to ensure the nurses and other healthcare professionals are motivated to improve their performance. Researchers such as Rolfe (2011), argue that effective leadership promotes the chances of healthcare settings being increasingly responsive to the needs of the patients primarily in the context since it involves a complicated clinical situation. Transformational leadership ensures the patient values and beliefs are accommodated during care provision thus achieving improved positive outcomes (Dyess, Sherman & Chiang-Hanisko, 2016). The clinical case exemplifies the need for healthcare providers to adopt care models that promote quality and safety aspect. Transformational leadership has been effective in achieving this model by ensuring the care provided is based on teamwork, and the nurses are accountable for the patient outcomes. As a nurse leader, MJ demonstrated useful communication skill which has been deemed necessary in the healthcare system to promote teamwork while helping address complex clinical situations.

The clinical practice situation further demonstrates the need for individual nurse proficiency in their practice as the basis for determining the quality of care provided as well as the overall patient outcomes. Researchers such as Stanley (2006), support the notion that nurses are expected to have key attributes that can enhance their chances of promoting the quality of care and effective decision making. Characteristics such as communication skills increase the chances of engaging the patients and their family members, this also relates to the clinical situation in context. However, the adoption of transformational leadership style offers a chance for the nurses to gradually improve their skills and abilities to achieve the desired objectives in healthcare settings (Scully, 2015).

**Implication for my leadership practice**

The clinical situation practice and the transformational leadership theory adopted has a crucial implication in my leadership practice since it has enhanced my understanding of the need for leadership in nursing practice. It also helped to understand the idea of an inclusive model of leadership which ensures all the team members are involved in patient care. In this regard, I share the perspective that the clinical practice situation and the leadership model used will have a positive impact in my leadership practice which helps to improve the quality of care provided as well as the patient outcomes (Daly et al., 2014). The transformational leadership style demonstrates the need for a leader to involve the followers in the leadership role to enhance the feeling of inclusiveness (Saccomano & Pinto-Zipp, 2011).

The clinical practice situation also positively shapes my leadership practice by improving knowledge on the need to continually develop the individual skills and knowledge level through engaging in training and development programs. The clinical situation presented the notion that clinical practice involves dealing with diverse situations which creates the need for the nurses among other healthcare providers to adopt efficient models of care to achieve the desired outcomes (Ennis, Happell, Broadbent & Reid-Searl, 2013). The transformational leadership style taken in this case helps in continually improving personal knowledge and skills which helps in addressing complex situations affecting patients (Marshall & Marshall, 2011). The case further promotes my critical thinking abilities which are also critical in decision making as well as treating patients with diverse needs. I have improved my understanding of the positive role of critical thinking in my leadership practice and the need to adopt the aspect as the basis for my decision making.

I have also gained an understanding of the need to incorporate improved communication and possess the skills in my leadership practice since discussion offers a chance to engage the patient, their family members, and other stakeholders. In this regard, my leadership practice will be centered on efficient communication models to achieve the desired teamwork levels and support positive patient outcomes (Curtis & O’Connell, 2011). The leadership model adopted also have positive implications in my leadership practice since it emphasizes on the need to consider values and beliefs of the patient while delivering care to gain their trust (Lewis & Cunningham, 2016). Additionally, it highlights the consideration of critical details or clinical proficiency which helps shape the overall practice of a nursing leader as well as promote positive outcomes (Fitzpatrick & McCarthy, 2014).

**Conclusion**

 The clinical practice situation exemplifies the critical issues involved in healthcare practice primarily to nurses since they are more involved in patient care and determine the services provided. The effectiveness of nursing practice determines the patient outcomes; however, it’s also dependent on the nursing leadership adopted since it impacts the other nurse’s training in healthcare settings. Leadership theories such as transformation leadership acknowledge the decisive role of collaborative models or teamwork in nursing as the basis for efficiently understanding the patient needs and addressing them. In this case, MJ the nursing leader demonstrated a key positive aspect of a nurse leader as well as clinical proficiency which motivated other nurses while ensuring high-quality care was provided. The adoption of transformational leadership model also promoted the chances of ensuring inclusiveness in care provision thus stimulating performance while transforming the patient’s situation positively. The clinical practice situation exemplifies the need to provide an understanding of the underlying problems, the adoption of appropriate care models and nursing attributes which determines patient outcomes.