

Succession Planning for Nurse Leaders: Prioritizing, Planning, and Preparing



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Objective

- ❖ To examine succession planning for leadership roles in nursing education and clinical practice.
- ❖ To raise awareness of the need for increased leadership diversity among minority nurses.



Background

Academic and acute care organizations face challenges in addressing nurse leadership vacancies created by retirement, promotion, or turnover. When experienced high-performing nurse leaders depart, this leaves organizations with a considerable loss and oftentimes there is no succession plan in place to ensure a smooth transition of leadership.

Most organizations only focus on succession planning for the highest leadership positions. In academia, the decrease in the number of experienced faculty, limits the accessibility of mentors, which are beneficial to successful succession planning.



Whites still make up more than 75% of the nurse workforce and while the numbers of Black/African American and Hispanic/Latino nurses are slowly increasing, these two groups are still significantly underrepresented. As a result, a disproportional number of minorities are represented in leadership roles both in academia and in the clinical setting. Academic and clinical organizations must adopt preemptive organizational level strategies to ensure an effective succession to address both present and future nurse leadership needs.

Themes

- ❖ Succession planning appears to be fragmented, uncoordinated, and inconsistently implemented.
- ❖ Effective nurse succession planning revolves around multiple factors, internal and external to the healthcare organization.
- ❖ Absence of a substantial pipeline for nurse leaders and the lack of a pool of strong, competent individuals is a serious threat for future organizational and professional success.
- ❖ Communication between nurse leaders and the younger generation is vital to promote interest in future nurse leadership roles.
- ❖ In regards to diversity, racism continues to emerge as a thorn in the lived experiences of black nursing faculty.
- ❖ More empirical research is required to validate succession planning methods and models.



Succession Planning Model: Rothwell's 7 Pointed Star Model

- Step 1. Make the Commitment**
- Step 2. Assess Present Work/People requirements**
- Step 3. Appraise Individual Performance**
- Step 4. Assess Future Work/People requirements**
- Step 5. Assess Future Individual Potential**
- Step 6. Close the Developmental Gap**
- Step 7. Evaluate the Succession Planning Program**

Recommendations

1. Align succession planning with an organization's strategic planning process and ensure senior nursing leadership commitment.
2. Build a leadership pipeline via early identification of nurses with leadership potential.
3. Identify positions within an organization that are key to the organization's success.
4. Ensure all levels of leadership are included in the succession plan.
5. Develop a succession plan that incorporates:
 - ❖ recruiting & mentoring potential nurse leaders
 - ❖ diversity
 - ❖ professional development & leadership training for staff at every level
6. Enhance partnerships between academia and clinical settings.
7. Create a transparent process highlighting existing vacancies and the requirements to prepare for positions of interest.
8. Monitor progress while ensuring a flexible process that can adapt to a rapidly changing environment.

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