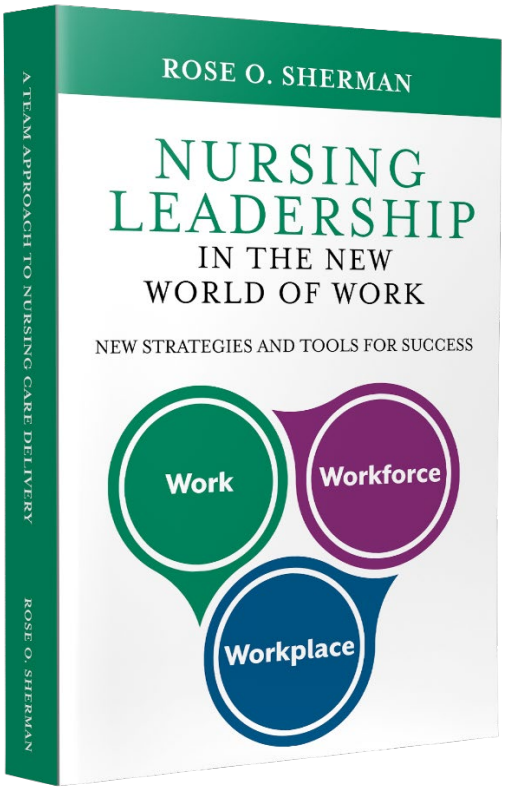
Nursing Leadership in the New World of Work



Book Club Discussion Guide

Overview of the Book

The COVID-19 pandemic drastically altered the healthcare landscape, revealing weaknesses in the existing system and changing perceptions about work and well-being. Nurse leaders face difficulty staffing, scheduling, and retaining nurses as the demand for nurses grows and hospital employment becomes less attractive. To succeed, nurse leaders must adopt new mindsets and strategies, focusing on situational humility, learning from others, and promoting staff well-being.

This book, *Nursing Leadership in the New World of Work: New Strategies and Tools for Success,* provides a new roadmap for navigating the changes in our work, workforce, and workplaces. As Gallup researchers have observed, there is no going back. Many nurse leaders find that using this book as part of a leadership book club provides an opportunity to discuss the strategies presented and how to address the unique challenges in your organization most effectively. With that in mind, I have designed this book club guide with discussion questions for you and your team.

Book Club Discussion Questions

Chapter One Understanding the Drivers of Change

1. What significant shifts have you observed in healthcare during your nursing career?
2. How has the volume of nursing work and the acuity of patients changed in your environment over the past five years?
3. Are you observing the gap between nursing experience and patient complexity in your setting?
4. What changes do you see in patient expectations today as you speak with patients and families about their healthcare experiences?
5. As you think about the five exemplary practices of leadership in the Kouzes and Posner's Exemplary Leader Model® - which of the five is a strength for you and which one is more challenging?
6. What is the current payer mix in your hospital or work environment?
7. If CMS reduced Medicare reimbursement by 10% to maintain solvency, what budgetary impact would that have on your unit and organization?

Chapter Two Responding to Workforce Shortages

1. What demographic changes have you seen in your workforce over the past five years?
2. How have nursing workforce shortages impacted your unit/organization?
3. What differences do you see in how Generation Z nurses view their work and career?
4. Have you seen a decline in empathy among your staff and how have you responded to it?
5. Has your organization explored changing your care delivery model in response to nursing workforce shortages? What team members are you or could you add to the care delivery team?
6. What concerns do you have about team-based models of care delivery?
7. How are you managing your emotions and feelings of loss of control in today's turbulent healthcare environment?

Chapter Three Promoting Staff Engagement

1. What percentage of staff on your unit are actively engaged in their work?
2. What strategies are you using in your environment to build staff engagement?
3. Have you experienced as a leader feeling so overwhelmed that you have shut down and disengaged from your work?
4. How do you coach disengaged staff and promote engagement as a joint responsibility?
5. What current factors in your work environment either promote or discourage staff engagement?
6. When staff tell you that they are her to "work my 12 hours and leave" – how do you respond?
7. What changes could you make to the shared governance model in your organization to promote a higher level of staff engagement?

Chapter Four Leading Change

1. As you look at Everett Roger's diffusion of innovation – what percent of your staff are on the left of the bell curve and what percent are on the right? How can you use this information to manage change more effectively?
2. Have you had the experience of presenting a change to staff that you knew would be unpopular? What leadership strategies did you use to present the change?
3. How do you help staff manage their change fatigue?
4. How do you ensure that initiatives like bedside shift report become embedded in everyday practice?
5. Think about a time when you tried to implement a change on your unit that failed. What were some of the reasons for failure and the lessons learned for the future?
6. What have you learned about timing when introducing new initiatives in your leadership?
7. How do you create a sense of urgency with staff when trying to change something in your unit?

Chapter Five Finding Your New Leadership Voice

1. Have you thought about leaving your leadership role? What has kept you in the role?
2. What changes have you made to your leadership approach in this new world of work?
3. What thoughts do you have about Servant Leadership as an approach in the current nursing environment?
4. Do you find it difficult to build trust with your team today? What strategies are you using to promote trust with your staff?
5. Think about a time when your leadership behavior did not match your words. How do you think your staff perceive this?
6. Are you Superman or Yoda as a leader? What can you do to be more Yoda in your role?
7. Do you set boundaries in your leadership role? How do you explain your boundaries to your staff?

Chapter Six Understanding New Workforce Expectations

1. What generational differences do you see on your team? Think of one example where you flexed your leadership to accommodate generational differences?
2. Does your unit have the magic third in composition of generation Z nurses? If yes, how has it changed the culture of your unit?
3. How do you respond when a new graduate tells you that "this is not what I thought nursing would be"?
4. What challenges do you face in meeting your staff's scheduling needs?
5. How do you manage situations where staff want you to advocate for things that are not in your circle of influence?
6. What are strategies you could use to be more effective in closing the loop on your decisions?
7. What challenges are you experiencing holding staff accountable for their practice? What strategies are you using to promote a culture of accountability?

Chapter Seven Moving from Core Teams to Teaming

1. How has team turnover impacted team effectiveness in your setting?
2. What strategies do you use to help staff feel psychologically safe?
3. How do you manage gossip in your environment?
4. Do you see signs of more individualism today? How do you promote a team first mindset?
5. When a staff member requests an unplanned schedule change that will impact the rest of the team – how do you manage the request?
6. Does your team have a set of team values? If not, what values do you think would be important to discuss?
7. What strategies do you use to teach team backup and situational awareness?

Chapter Eight Changing from Traditional Manager to Leader Coach

1. What changes will you need to make in your practice to become less of a traditional leader and more leader coach?
2. Give an example of how you could use the GROW coaching model to structure your conversations with staff.
3. Describe an example of when you have given constructive feedback to a staff member that was not well received. What could you have done differently?
4. Have you ever avoided giving difficult feedback to a staff member and then found the behavior escalated?
5. What barriers get in the way of having coaching conversations with staff? What could you do to overcome these barriers?
6. Have you done career coaching with staff members that has resulted in their rethinking a career decision such as travel nursing?
7. How do you set expectations for staff about the quality of care that you expect on the unit?

Chapter Nine Communicating with a Diverse Workforce

1. Think of a situation where you communicated a new policy or practice to staff and the message was not conveyed in the way you intended. What could you have done differently?

2. How many different methods/channels of communication do you have in your current work environment? Are there some that are more effective than others?
3. What strategies do you use to ensure that your staff read or are aware of organization emails? Is reading email a performance expectation in your environment?
4. You have communicated and repeated an important practice update using at least three different channels over a two-week period. How do you respond when a staff member tells you that they never saw or heard it?
5. How could TEAM STEPPS improve communication among your team members?
6. Two staff members on your team are in conflict but rather than talking with each other, they want to involve you? What could you do to help build their conflict management skills?
7. Have you ever avoided having a difficult conversation with a staff member because you were concerned it would not go well? What strategies could you use to be more confident in managing these situations?

Chapter Ten Recruiting and Retaining Talent

1. What are some market forces that impact nurse recruitment and retention in your community?
2. How have you and your organization changed your recruitment practices to respond to the needs of a new generation of nurses?
3. What questions do you ask and what content do you cover to ensure interviewees understand the role expectations?
4. How could the onboarding experience be improved on your unit?
5. Are your staff net promoters of your unit? Would it be helpful to do net promoter scoring?
6. Do you conduct STAY interviews with your staff? If yes, what is the most important thing you have learned from these interviews? If not, how could they improve retention?
7. Do you do strategic offboarding with valued staff who leave your organization?

Chapter Eleven Promoting a Culture of Well-Being

1. What changes in baseline mental health do you see with younger staff?
2. What are some social determinants of work health that you have observed with your staff?
3. Have you ever found yourself in the role of therapist with a staff member? What could you have done differently?
4. What strategies are you currently using to help your staff (and you) decompress between work and home?
5. What strategies are you using to build a sense of community among your team members?
6. How knowledgeable are you about wellbeing programs offered by your organization?
7. What could you do right now to promote a healthier work environment for your team?

Chapter Twelve Building Career Mobility Programs

1. Are you judgmental of staff who switch positions frequently questioning their organizational loyalty? How can you reframe this behavior by viewing it through the lens of a young staff member?

2. Have you taken the time to do career coaching with one of your staff even though you realize you may lose them to another position?
3. Do you ask candidates in interview about their career plans and then link them to opportunities within your organization?
4. Have you observed the "tours of duty" phenomena discussed in this chapter? What is your viewpoint on this?
5. How does your organization support staff in their career planning?
6. What are some "grow your own" opportunities that you either currently have or could have within your organization?
7. Are you using strategies to retain your nurses over the age of fifty-five? What other ideas do you have to keep your seasoned workforce working longer?

Chapter Thirteen Becoming More Strategic

1. When you find yourself in a "heads down" mode, how do you stop this behavior and take time to reflect on what is happening?
2. Have you had conversations with staff who want to move quickly out of acute care environments to understand their perspective on why hospital environments are no longer employers of choice?
3. What are you doing to develop strategic awareness of what is happening in your specialty area – locally and nationally?
4. What questions do you ask potential leader candidates to determine their strategic thinking skills?
5. Can you think of a challenge in your organization where you are dealing with the symptoms of the problem versus the upstream problem?
6. What environmental scanning do you do in your leadership role to assess what the future could look like?
7. When you get stuck in a mindset that may not serve you well into the future – what are some strategies you use to get unstuck?

Chapter Fourteen Innovating and Piloting New Technologies

1. How do you avoid being an idea killer even when you are skeptical about what is being proposed?
2. How do you monitor the new trends in technology that could be beneficial in your practice area?
3. Do you have an example of a new technology that was purchased by your organization that increased the work burden of nurses rather than streamline care?
4. Are you using Artificial Intelligence in your work and what potential do you see for it in nursing practice?
5. Have innovations been rejected in your organization because there was not enough evidence to support the purchase or piloting of the change?
6. What have you learned from failure in your professional life?
7. What innovative technologies are you most excited about as we move into the future?

Chapter Fifteen Reducing Friction in Organizations

1. If you were planning a new hospital and had the opportunity to start over – what friction points would you eliminate that exist in your current environment?
2. What are time-consuming activities that nursing staff do on your unit that do not add value and could be eliminated?
3. What evidence do you see of the addition-addiction in your work environment?
4. How do you maintain situational humility as a leader and acknowledge the gaps you have in your knowledge?
5. What are some of the 20% of things you do in your leadership that result in 80% of your best outcomes?
6. How do you decide what meetings to attend in your organization? How many could be eliminated? Do you have FOMO if you are not present during meetings?
7. What is an example of a wicked problem that you see in your current environment?

About the Author

Rose O. Sherman, EdD, RN, NEA-BC, FAAN, is nationally known for helping current and future nurse leaders develop their leadership skills. Rose is an emeritus professor at the Christine E. Lynn College of Nursing at Florida Atlantic University and currently serves as a faculty member in the Marian K Shaughnessy Nursing Leadership Academy at Case Western Reserve University. She received a BA in Political Science and a BSN in Nursing from the University of Florida. Her master's degree in nursing is from the Catholic University of America, and she has a doctorate in nursing leadership from Columbia University in New York City. Before teaching, she spent 25 years in leadership roles with the Department of Veterans Affairs at five VA Medical Centers.

Rose was editor-in-chief of *Nurse Leader,* the American Organization of Nurse Leaders' official journal, for nine years. She writes a popular leadership blog, www.emergingrnleader.com, read by tens of thousands of nurse leaders weekly. Rose is a Fellow of the American Academy of Nursing and an alumnus of the Robert Wood Johnson Executive Nurse Fellowship program. She is a Gallup-certified strengths coach and author of three best-selling books: *The Nurse Leader Coach: Become the Boss No One Wants to Leave*, *The Nuts and Bolts of Nursing Leadership, and A Team Approach to Nursing Care Delivery.* In 2020, Rose received the Pioneering Spirit Award from the American Association of Critical Care Nurses for her innovative work in developing nurse leaders. Contact Rose at roseosherman@outlook.com