



The Inverted Pyramid of Nursing Experience

Rethinking Leadership and Redesigning Work

A Full-Day Nursing Leadership Workshop



2027



Available Onsite or Virtually



Workshop Overview

The nursing workforce has changed dramatically, but many of the systems used to lead, staff, and support nursing teams have not kept pace. Today, many units operate with an Inverted Pyramid of Nursing Experience, where novice nurses comprise a growing proportion of the workforce and a smaller group of experienced nurses carries an increasingly heavy burden of clinical oversight, mentoring, and team support.

In this interactive, full-day workshop, nurse leaders will explore the implications of the Inverted Pyramid for patient safety, staff development, and workforce sustainability, and learn practical strategies to redesign work through standardized work that reduces cognitive overload, clarifies expectations, and creates reliable safety nets for novice nurses.



Learning Objectives

Upon completion of this workshop, participants will be able to:

- 1 **Analyze** the changing nursing workforce and explain how the Inverted Pyramid challenges traditional assumptions about staffing, leadership, and clinical safety.
- 2 **Assess novice-density risks** within their own teams, including the effects on clinical surveillance, decision-making, teamwork, and experienced staff workload.
- 3 **Apply leadership strategies** that strengthen coaching, psychological safety, clinical judgment, and accountability while developing novice nurses.
- 4 **Identify structural safety supports** that reduce cognitive overload and strengthen team performance, including clinical huddles, escalation triggers, communication practices, and decision-support tools.
- 5 **Use a practical work design framework** to identify and redesign high-risk workflows through standardized work while preserving professional judgment and appropriate autonomy.
- 6 **Develop a 30-day action plan** to implement one leadership or workflow redesign strategy that improves safety, novice support, or team effectiveness.



Who Should Attend?

Nurse executives, directors, nurse managers, assistant nurse managers, clinical educators, professional development specialists, and other nursing leaders responsible for clinical operations, workforce development, and patient safety.



Full-Day Workshop Agenda

9:00 AM – 4:00 PM
(Local Time)



9:00 – 9:30 AM

Welcome, Introduction & Breakout: Your Inverted Pyramid

- Welcome, workshop overview, and learning goals
- Small-group breakout: Assess your unit's workforce composition and identify key novice-density risks



9:30 – 10:15 AM

The Inverted Pyramid — Why Nursing Leadership Must Change

- The changing experience composition of nursing teams
- What this shift means for safety, leadership, and team performance



10:15 – 11:00 AM

Building Cultures of Safety for Novice-Dense Teams

- Reducing cognitive overload and supporting clinical judgment
- Psychological safety, leader rounding, and clinical decision-support strategies



11:00 – 11:15 AM | Morning Break



11:15 AM – 12:00 PM

Rethinking Leadership in the Inverted Pyramid

- Moving from answer-giving to coaching
- Protecting and engaging experienced nurses



12:00 – 12:45 PM | Lunch



12:45 – 1:15 PM | Speed Networking Exercise

Build connections, share ideas, and learn from peers across clinical areas.



1:15 – 2:00 PM

Redesigning Work for a Novice-Dense Workforce

- Standardized work as cognitive scaffolding
- Identifying and prioritizing experience-dependent workflows



2:00 – 2:45 PM

Designing Standardized Work That Supports Clinical Judgment

- A practical framework for work design
- Clarifying priorities, decision points, and escalation triggers



2:45 – 3:00 PM | Afternoon Break



3:00 – 3:30 PM

Implementing and Sustaining Work Redesign

- Gaining buy-in, coaching, and reinforcing new processes
- Using PDSA cycles and measures to build reliability



3:30 – 4:00 PM

Final Breakout: Your 30-Day Action Plan

- Individual and small-group work to finalize your plan
- Share key takeaways, commitments, and next steps



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