

Action-logics and the Impact of Leadership Maturity in Nurse Executives to Support Speaking Up

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Keywords: Action-logic, Leadership maturity and Speaking up

Communication Challenges

- Health care organizations typically have a hierarchical structure, with physicians dominant and nurses subordinate.
- The challenge to open and honest communication between doctors and nurses is real.
- Communication errors contribute significantly to undesirable patient outcomes.

Leadership Challenge:

- To lead transformation of health care organizations to support nurses to speak up and communicate all critical information.

Barriers to Speaking Up

- Existing culture of organizational silence
- Lack of personal, social, and structural supports for speaking up
- Conventional leadership maturity

Culture of Organizational Silence

- Staff, including nurses, see potential and actual safety concerns, but only 21% to 31% speak up directly to the offender.
- Strong emotion usually accompanies speaking up, although successful communication does not convey blaming or anger in the moment.
- Disrespect, incompetence and disregard for rules are the three most common concerns nurses experience that challenge them to speak up.

Personal, Social and Structural Support for Speaking up

- Personal motivation and ability (S1&2)
 - Staff members demonstrate their own commitment and skill to speak up.
- Social motivation and ability (S3&4)
 - The work group models and coaches team members on how to speak up effectively.
- Structural motivation and ability (S5&6)
 - The organization rewards speaking up and holds managers accountable to support speaking up.

Nurse Executives' Support for Speaking Up

- **Looked for patterns/information (S6)**
- **Listened to concerns (S3&5)**
- **Communicated speaking up important/safe (S1&3)**
- **Took personnel action (S6)**
- **Delineated a process (S4&6)**
- **Spoke up to COS/Executive Team (S1&2)**
- Spoke up with COS to another (S2&3)

(actions in bold by Individualist)

Action-Logic: A Measure of Leadership Maturity

- Leaders demonstrate 7 action-logics
- Action-logics fall into three categories
 - Pre-conventional
 - Focused primarily on own personal gain, blames others for personal failure
 - Conventional
 - Focus on a stable reality through norms and social and power structures
 - Post-conventional
 - Focus on diversity and personal, social and societal transformation, integrating physical and spiritual concerns

Leaders' 7 Action-logics and their Corporate Success

Least Successful

- Pre-conventional
 - Opportunist
- Conventional
 - Diplomat
 - Expert

More to Most Successful

- Conventional
 - Achiever
- Post-conventional
 - Individualist
 - Strategist
 - Alchemist

Observed NE Action-logics

- Most were Achiever
 - Strengths
 - Implements strategy
 - Pulls teams together
 - Can keep multiple projects on track
 - Keeps it positive!
 - Weaknesses
 - Cannot hear/consider feedback that does not support their own views
 - Tends to blame failure to speak up on the staff

Observed NE Action-logics, cont.

- One Individualist
 - Strengths
 - Aware that diverse assumptions may complement one another for learning and for achieving goals.
 - Uses this awareness to deliver services ahead of schedule and under budget
 - Looks for patterns
 - Assumes that there are problems and good things happening and goes out and looks for them
 - Puts mechanisms in place to make it easier for staff nurses to speak up, over the objection of their managers

Observed NE Action-logics, cont.

- Strengths, cont.
 - Shows interest in the unique self-expression s/he sees in the work people are doing, **listening deeply** into their world
 - Then facilitates transformational change
 - Demonstrates an increased ability to self-reflect, listen, discuss failure.
 - Expresses a desire to learn from failure.
- Dark side
 - Sense of something unraveling
 - Decision paralysis

What have you experienced?

- With leaders with pre-conventional and/or conventional action-logics?
- How did they impact your professional nursing practice?
- How did they impact your ability to support speaking up?

What have you experienced?

- With leaders with post-conventional action-logics?
- How did they impact your professional nursing practice?
- How did they impact your ability to support speaking up?

How can I increase my action-logic and effectiveness?

- A coach that understands developmental theory and is at a higher action-logic can help you transform
 - Will require openness, vulnerability, and self-reflection
 - Write a personal autobiography of your career to discuss with the coach
- A small group in which members review specific failures for lessons learned
- Spiritual practice to increase self-awareness and ongoing presence in the moment



The people that awoke my desire to advance my leadership maturity

Questions?

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