**Service Strategy: My Leadership Development Project**

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Creating a leadership development plan necessitates role awareness; an appreciation of the areas of focus and levels of competence a leader is expected to possess to perform their role specific. It also requires self-awareness; an understanding of the abilities the leader currently possesses, comprehension of areas that are lacking competence or that require fortification, and the steps that can improve the leader’s capabilities in the defined sphere. It is imperative that transformational leaders be self-aware. Self-awareness is a trait that cannot be fully developed without assessment, feedback, and reflection. This paper will explore the competencies that can provide role awareness, and 360 leadership evaluations by a former director, peer, and direct report. The paper will also look at some of the results from tools utilized to develop self-awareness during this course. The paper will additionally cover a reflection of feedback and assessments, planned development activities, a vision for future leadership optics, the writer’s leadership philosophy, an action plan grid, and closing thoughts.

**Leadership Competencies**

The American Nursing Association (ANA) has outlined many areas of competence a level-3 nurse informaticist should possess. According to the ANA, “master’s prepared informatics nurses analyze healthcare information communication technology strategies to reduce risks, improve care delivery, change policy, while providing oversight and guidance in the integration of technology in practice” (2022, p. 54). The ANA makes it clear that the Informatic Nurse Specialist (INS) is a leader that must be proficient in 17 major areas. Competence in technology assessment, analysis, workflow integration, feasibility, needs, design, and system support must be assured. The INS must be adept at implementation and utilization strategies, while appreciating evidence-based practice in all endeavors. The INS looks for unintended issues, and is aware of scope, budget, timelines, regulatory concerns, and community resources.

An evaluator, the INS explores and offers feedback in clinical decision support, healthy lifestyle support, and educational resources offered. The INS uses their knowledge to shape policies, promote structure and procedural changes, and contribute to ethical decision making. The INS weaves culturally congruent practices into their contributions and supports and augments patient technology engagement and outcomes of optimal health. The INS is collaborative and builds relationships to improve care. The INS is an educator and facilitator of the profession, sharing innovative trends, promoting knowledge acquisition, and contributing to informatic education programs. The INS is an advocate for scholarly inquiry and ethical research practices. The INS seeks feedback about their own performance and is a mentor to informatics nurses.

The American Association of Colleges of Nurses (AACN) has competencies outlined for master’s in science nurse (MSN) as well. According to the AACN (2011), graduates with master’s degrees in nursing should have competence in 9 essential core areas. Graduate nurses must be proficient in designing and delivering advanced nursing care based on a deep understanding of the profession. As educated leaders, they must be able to integrate advances, model care for the population, assess, perform, and evaluate care using ethical, quality improvement, and evidence-based considerations, incorporate practice evidence, and amalgamate organizational science and nursing history to elevate healthcare and the profession. Like the ANA competencies, the AACN competencies focus on the MSN graduate’s ability to serve as a leader. The MSN graduate is proficient in performing, training, developing, and evaluating safe, efficient, timely care.

The MSN is proficient in leading quality care initiatives, tracking data, analyzing, and promoting outcome data, and shaping policies. The MSN graduate utilizes research to advocate for necessary changes in healthcare and educates and mentors new colleagues. The MSN graduate is similarly aware of ethical research practices and integrates them into research endeavors. Social determinants of health, clinical interventions, and culturally appropriate and equitable care are areas that are well-understood by the MSN graduate. An advocate for patients and the nursing profession, the MSN graduate uses communication, scientific and ethical principles, and life-long learning to inspire greatness in healthcare. As with the ANA competencies, the AACN (2011) competencies ensure that the master’s prepared nurse provides care, education, and leadership that is consistent with budgetary, regulatory, altruistic, and ethical considerations.

**360 Evaluation: Leadership Evaluation Tool**

The leadership evaluation tool utilized for the 360 evaluation was the one provided by the facilitator, see Appendix A. This tool utilized a Likert-type rating scale for the first 17 questions, followed by two questions regarding what the person could do more of and less of, which allowed for unrestricted qualitative entries. The first 17 questions asked respondents to indicate to what frequency they felt the person being evaluated successfully performed a variety of essential nursing leadership functions, on a scale of 5 for “almost always” to 1 for “never”. Respondents could also choose “I don’t know, or not applicable”, and were encouraged to select this if they didn’t have enough information to answer the question. At the end of the questionnaire, an area was provided which allowed respondents to enter any additional comments.

**Method of Confidentiality**

To maintain the confidentiality of the evaluators, Jessica Isaac, a colleague from NUR 614: Resilient Nursing Leadership was recruited to de-identify and collate the results. Once Jessica agreed to perform this minimal amount of research assistance, and I agreed to do the same for her in return, the three evaluators were identified and asked if they would participate. With the evaluators verbal accord, an email with the leadership evaluation tool was sent to the participants. Jessica was copied on that email.

The evaluators were asked to provide their most honest feedback and were urged to speak freely as their identity would be hidden from me. The evaluation tool included Jessica’s email as the address to use when returning surveys. The evaluators were instructed to send their completed evaluation tools to Jessica, so that their responses could be tabulated, and the aggregate responses sent to me by Jessica. Hand-written comments were typed and pasted over the original script, so that I could not identify the writer. The evaluations were not made available to me until all three responses were received and anonymized by Jessica. This was an effective way to assure confidentiality.

**Leadership Evaluation**

I scored nearly all 5’s on each of the 3 evals submitted, see Appendix B. The only areas that were slightly lower, questions garnering a 4 out of 5, were in hiring and preventing high-impact departures, in consideration and empathy, which was a surprise, in conflict resolution which was only surprising in that it didn’t inspire a lower score, and in using techniques that appeal to reason and value. I created a scoring system by starting with 17 questions multiplied by 5, which was the total number of questions and their highest mark. Determining that 85 is the highest number one could receive per evaluation, I determined that reducing 16 from 85 would make the “outstanding” range for the tool 85-69. The “above average” range was determined to be 68-52, which was identified by taking 16 from 69. The “average” range was determined to be 51-35. The “below average” range was determined to be 34-18. I considered “failing” to be any number below 17. Using this model, my scores from my evaluators would be outstanding.

**Leadership Evaluation Reflection**

Soliciting feedback can be an important part of enhancing one’s self-awareness. According to Wang et al. (2016) not only is feedback highly beneficial to the leader, the practice of asking for it develops trust in employees, creating a win-win situation. According to my 360 evaluations, I am nearly perfect and don’t need to work on anything. I have mastered almost every area of nursing leadership. That, or I haven’t done a very good job of explaining how important it is to get honest feedback. This is not for a lack of trying, but there is obviously room for improvement in how I request feedback.

I think when people care about you and are very busy, they complete evals as if the faster they give you a perfect score, the happier you’’’ be. Often, they don’t appreciate the value in offering criticism, nor do they feel they have the time to do so. In the back of my mind, a nagging concern is that my evaluators don’t care enough to take the time to be honest, don’t feel I would make use of the feedback, or do not believe I truly want to know how they really feel. I can’t tell which one would be worse. Maybe it’s the third that gives me the most pause. Have I acted insincere about personal growth?

While I thought I was clear about my interest in obtaining frank feedback about my performance, the evaluations I received were inflated. At first, seeing the inflation was disappointing, but then I realized I was being hypocritical. Even though I have read our text subsequently developed a genuine appreciation for the importance of coaching up and practicing candid and direct responses to peers and more senior leaders, I am very uncomfortable being honest with colleagues and those above me. It seems respectful in theory yet somehow out of line when compared to common practice. Many people are not used to hearing what others really think. At least in my circles. I know from experience and from our studies that this reluctance to be frank is a common problem. Instead of being satisfied by my glowing ratings, I feel that my efforts would be better utilized focusing on the shortcomings I know I possess, the assessments we completed in our coursework, and exploring the challenges of eliciting honest feedback.

The comments in the evaluation are positive, and assuming that they are based on the evaluators’ perceptions, I imagine that their words reflect a feeling rather than being an exacting account of my leadership. Using the wisdom from a famous Maya Angelou quote, maybe it’s not so much what I do or say. Perhaps their summations represent how I make them feel, which is still valuable to keep in mind. The comments on the first evaluation are kind but generic. My second evaluation contains comments suggesting that I am a model for leadership. I should mention that not every evaluator was privy to all my mistakes. I will use this summary to remember that while improvement is an ongoing must, the perception of others is not invalid simply because I know I have a lot to improve upon. I could try to extend some self-grace. Another evaluator offered that I could delegate more and be less hard on myself about failed projects. I appreciate that very much, as the evaluator continued by suggesting that I take the time to teach others to be proficient rather than doing everything myself. That is a great point and I have added an activity on my grid to address it.

Earning 4’s in hiring and reducing high-impact departures means that I was not perceived as always securing great staff acquisitions. It also means that I had opportunities to be more aware of existing staff members that were considering employment elsewhere. If I had to explain how I could have made better hiring decisions, I could identify a hiring pattern that now seems obvious. Despite being a believer in the value of different personalities, I think I had a new hire “type”. This may have been due to my own empathic view of what I found challenging about emergency medicine. When I hired new staff, I looked for high-energy, highly flexible nurses that were somewhat impervious to chaos. I always asked if they turned down the car radio when ordering takeout, a “yes” answer making me nervous. I worried that they would not be able to handle the clamor and commotion of a level-2 trauma center seeing 450 patients per day. For established employees I must admit that I did little to invest in them outside of ensuring they had great schedules, and a strong defense during disciplinary proceedings, and some very memorable team-building videos. I should have made a greater effort to make them feel important and to help them grow.

The 360-evaluations identified that I had opportunities to make some improvement in conflict resolution. I think that is an understatement which I will expand on during the self-assessment portion of this plan. The evaluations also identified that I could have been more considerate with staff members exhibiting signs up upset. Reflecting on this, I cannot remember a specific instance wherein I failed to be considerate but know that I am terrible at paying attention when I am interrupted. I will assume that such a personal shortcoming could affect my ability to give my full attention to someone struggling emotionally.

I must learn that people are not able to schedule moments of upset. Just as the topic of conflict resolution will be explored later in this paper, color will be added to my black and white habit of protecting time above most other things. The last score of 4 received was in question 16, which had several components. Considering all the elements of this question, I suspect I scored “usually” due to compliance with requests. There are times when I am asked to do things that seem to be in contrast with the best course of action. While I do not feel I challenge requests without a very good reason, I have been guilty of under explaining reasons for my resistance, especially when I fear the person asking would not understand or not really care to hear alternative points of view. This is not a fair practice or assumption on my part.

**Self-Assessment**

The questions on the self-assessment tool forced me to do some soul-searching. My lowest scores were in conflict resolution and careful listening, see Appendix C. While I have some natural conflict resolution abilities, at the time I joined my leadership team I was grossly undereducated in conflict resolution and only dealt with issues when they were put in front of me. Even then, I could have handled conflicts better. Listening is a big opportunity for me. It may be what I must put the most effort into. Questions one, five and seven, though very different, highlighted a common theme and that is a failure on my part to take charge when I feel uncomfortable. This is a recurring personal tendency. In the ED, I hid behind an operations title as I had not accomplished a high level of clinical competency as an emergency nurse. Because I was not as clinically proficient as some of my staff, I set high standards only some of the time; only when I felt clinically competent enough to be confident in my assessment of a situation.

I assessed that I held others accountable for meeting commitments “sometimes” rather than “usually” or “almost always”, as I tended to extend deadlines when I felt torn between holding staff accountable and extending grace. I doubt this problem is unique. Reflecting on why I felt torn, staffing was such a problem that I often found myself begging for nurses to pick up extra shifts. It therefore made it difficult to be immutable about meeting commitments in a timely fashion. Regarding department improvements, I got involved when I felt there was something I could do about an issue but didn’t fight when a problem seemed outside of my control. Similarly, as I did not have a background in healthcare financial matters, I only demonstrated knowledge in the areas I did understand. I failed to dig deeper to gain a better understanding. These examples illustrate a tendency to take a passive stance in the face of knowledge deficits. Having been pulled into leadership without any training, I did what I could with my natural abilities and failed to appreciate the importance of learning how to develop myself as a leader.

Questions 6, 9, 14 and 18 earned higher scores, as I was usually successful in these areas. Looking at these questions, a similar pattern emerges, and that is a positive correlation between performance and perceived competence. When I felt like I could, I did. Helping my staff and being there for them felt natural as I had a genuine interest in their happiness. I did feel very responsible for removing hurdles and easing their ways. Generating enthusiasm and teamwork was easy as I am generally very enthusiastic and positive. Questions 4 and 6 asked about dealing with issues. Again, I tended to respond when issues were obvious, and responded well when I felt competent. Going forward, I need to work on identifying issues before they become problematic, and not give up if I worry that an issue is hopeless.

Questions 3, 8, 10, 11, 12, 13 and 17 earned my highest marks. This indicates that in areas where I feel the most competence, the most passion, and possess the highest locus of control, I demonstrate the greatest performance. In the areas of productivity and staffing, I was extremely committed and as efficient as one could be given the tools available. Question 10 was regarding the cascading of information, which I considered mission critical. It was challenging to disseminate information thoroughly and timely in a large department, and I was able to create new tools with which to accomplish this. Questions 11 and 12 were very important to me as the hiring manager. I worked hard to use innovative techniques and processes to grow the department from a staff of less than 50 to over 200 full-time employees. Question 11 was about hiring effective candidates, and I rated myself higher than some of my evaluators did. Having reflected on that disparity in the leadership evaluation reflection, I may have failed to adequately balance the department by selecting a variety of personalities.

Retaining great staff was crucial. It was difficult with nearby hospitals offering much higher pay, but my perception when writing the self-eval was that I was committed to doing everything possible to reduce high-impact departures. Again, I rated myself higher on question 12. As mentioned in my discussion in the leadership evaluation reflection, I believe that I could have done a better job in engaging established employees. When high performers left the department, it was often a painful shock, which illustrates my opportunity to better connect with my team. In reflecting on my 360 scores when compared to my assessment, I would have to change my own score to a 3 for question 12. We did a few nice things throughout the year, but my contact with new hires was substantially reduced after they finished orientation. I was not a transformational leader.

Question 13 pertained to sympathy and empathy, and my love for the staff motivated consistent demonstrations of kindness, patience, and support. I scored myself higher than some of my evaluators did. As explained in the previous section, I may have been less attentive when surprised by employees needing to talk. Thinking about this, it makes sense considering my difficulty managing competing concerns. This topic will be discussed further. Question 17 addressed the importance of looking at longer-term impacts, which I almost always did. It felt wasteful to turn to quick fixes rather than striving to find more long-term solutions.

Reflecting on this, I know that one of my biggest irritations comes from being forced to deal with processes or practices that waste time. Time is everything. It is challenging, and almost painful, for me to part with it frivolously. Many relationships in my life have suffered due to my inability to tolerate delays brought on by poor planning, poor organization, or a lack of respect for time. It is also challenging to pull myself away from unfinished tasks, which has been interesting now that I am having to balance work, school, and family time. Frankly, my rigidity with completing tasks could be fairly described as compulsive.

Dunning et al. (2004) found that it is not uncommon for individuals who are not given feedback to exaggerate the assessment of their own abilities, and that respondents providing evaluation are often more accurate in their assessments of a person’s abilities. This may not be the case for people that are very critical of their own performance. For some, it may be more beneficial to imagine what a supervisor would say if they were very honest and committed to offering constructive criticism. This concept may warrant further exploration. I have a list of phenomena that I would like to spend research time on, and I find this topic interesting. Another concept that made my phenomena research list was the idea that nursing leaders may be torn, as I was, by how much they need their staff. It is very difficult to manage role strain brought on by staffing shortages and other challenges that require leaders to hold staff accountable while they must almost simultaneously plead with the same staff members to pick up extra shifts.

Using the scoring system I created, my self-assessment score of 67 would make me identify as an above average leader. This contrasts with the outstanding calculated using the total scores of my evaluators. My final area of self-assessment is in trying to determine what I could have done to be more successful in securing accurate feedback for the 360 evaluations. While I believe that in general, the people I know are very busy and aren’t in the habit of being painfully honest, I must look at myself in terms of the relationships I have created with my evaluators. It is likely that though I have been honest verbally about wanting constructive criticism, I may have communicated nonverbally in ways that are confusing my colleagues. I think I ask for things, like evaluations, in an apologetic way because I know how busy people are. Especially my evaluators.

Replaying my approach, could they have misread my emotions as fearful of hearing something “negative”? I must be aware of that possibility. From now on, when I ask for evaluations, I will do so in a manner that removes any potential doubt about what I am hoping to understand. Similarly, I will work to expand my professional relationships with my colleagues and invite them into the journey I am embarking upon, in the hopes that they will see that personal development is important to me. I want those around me to understand that I cannot be as self-aware without internal and external candor. I also want to establish early in relationships that I am interested in constant feedback and coaching regardless of role or title.

**Professional Development Plan: Planned Activities**

Earlier I spoke about my inability to tolerate timewasters. When I drill down further, it would be more accurate to say I have time-related anxiety. I often feel compelled to immediately complete work that has been assigned, forsaking all other concerns. Even if something is not due for weeks, I must force myself to break it into parts rather than completing it in one sitting. My husband calls it a pathological attention lock. I feel that teaching myself to manage time more constructively will serve me well, and aid in developing self-control. Therefore, the first item on my activity plan is to interrupt my own work every hour and take a five-minute walk. I have tried this and it’s hard. Breaking my attention goes against my instincts and is disruptive and frustrating. I’m hoping it will help me to learn how to be in better command of my emotions.

My Personality Preference Profile indicated that I am a benevolent ruler, and that I am focused on the happiness of others. Having learned the importance of good conflict management, and knowing that I am not strong in this, I will read Good to Great by Jim Collins, and Radical Candor by Kim Scott. This will be helpful as it can teach me how to solve conflicts, provide honest feedback, and create happier work environments. Conflict is usually the first thing that sabotages my ability to speak with any semblance of confidence.

I become nervous fast, and this erodes my ability to communicate clearly and effectively. Albert et al. (2022) introduced the concept of “cognitive rehearsal” which allows leaders to prepare for challenging situations. I have done some form of this throughout my life, maybe we all do to some extent, but I have not made it a disciplined, structured discourse. As my self-evaluation reveals, I feel less in control when ill-prepared, and I believe that cognitive rehearsals paired with orated monologues and journalling will help me to respond appropriately, speak more eloquently, and feel more confident.

Because I want to develop a team that is focused on and comfortable with innovation, I will be creating an innovation challenge on my team SharePoint site. I want my staff to know that what I teach them may not be the best or only way to approach their work, and I want them to be excited about suggesting alternative workflows. Building innovation into my teams will help me gain a better understanding of the possibilities within our EHR, a better understanding of my staff’s abilities and personalities, and will allow me to become accustomed to sharing success. When you have insecurity issues, it’s tempting to hoard glory, but failure to recognize others is toxic. Some of the teams I have been a part of felt driven by the leader’s ego, and I want to train myself to think of wins as a group accomplishment rather than a personal accomplishment. I’m getting there.

I am more physically sedentary than I have been in the last three years, so I have had to increase my workout routines. This has caused an inadvertent shift away from taking time to stretch. I know myself enough to be confident that simply saying I’ll stretch or walk every hour will not be enough, as giving up that much time would be distressing. To combat this, I will combine walking and stretching with a guilty pleasure read like Prince Harry’s new book.

Active listening is one of the hardest things I must force myself to do, and even when I really try, my mind wanders. If I can predict what someone is going to say, or if they have already said the same thing before, or if they have a slow speaking cadence, I may not even be able to hide my lack of attention. Sad but honest. I have found that there are active listening games on the internet and have committed to playing at least one each month. One acronym I learned when reviewing active listening videos was B.U.I.L.D., which stands for body language, understanding, interrupting, looking people in the eye, and don’t judge (Morgan, 2020). According to 16 Personalities, and the people that know me best, I am very judgmental both outwardly and inwardly. Practicing active listening with an emphasis on B.U.I.L.D. will help me to strengthen my communication skills while reducing the impulse to judge.

Completing the Diamond leadership assessment, I earned my lowest score in “reality”. To strengthen this skill, the assessment summary indicated that I should strive to be well-informed, among other suggestions. I used this advice in combination with the need for self-awareness, as I often feel like I am not in touch with the true source of my feelings. To increase my self-awareness and to connect my harder-to-trace feelings with reality, I am taking some activities from a blog that I found. Goke (2017) encouraged the use of asking yourself three “why questions” when trying to get to the real reason behind emotions.

I used this activity last week. My uncle called me a few nights ago and asked about how my dad is doing. Dad broke his pelvis a year ago, and after a few unfortunate complications, went from being an independent, talented musician to a wheelchair-bound, withdrawn nursing home resident. Though the call was not unpleasant in and of itself, I found myself feeling angry after speaking with my uncle. 1) Why was I angry? Because my uncle waited a year to pick up the phone. 2) Why did he wait so long? Because he and Dad aren’t close. 3) Why aren’t they close? Because my Dad didn’t make it easy for anyone to be close to him. He was brilliant and tormented and now he’s almost gone and it’s too late to fix us. Writing that was hard. Clearly a helpful activity, but much less painful when used on a lighter topic. Contemplating the gym a few days later, I felt a flash of irritation. 1) How could I feel irritated about the gym when I love working out? Because I’m afraid of losing an eye. 2) How could I lose an eye at the gym? By forgetting for one second that the environmental services lady has a long-handled mop and a very poor sense of spatial relations. 3) Really? She might also hate me. I have anecdotal evidence to support this.

Another activity in the same vein as the three why questions is putting three labels on a feeling. I have modified the activity to be the most impactful for my personality. Looking at the Diamond assessment, I had a high “vision” score, and learned that those with developed vision look to analysis to increase comprehension. I know from experience that when my mind wanders, it often finds petty irritations over which to perseverate. Giving three labels, I decided that one of them should always be either “disregard” or “reflect”. I can more quickly identify my feelings, decide if a thought or emotion warrants a deeper reflective dive, and grow my emotional resilience while saving time. Trying it with the uncle/dad scenario: 1) Disappointment 2) Futility 3) Reflect. This topic will be added to a journaling exercise. Trying it with the gym: 1) Irritation 2) Irrational 3) Disregard. This mental energy thief will be given the right to remain silent.

I’ve mentioned that attempting to calm my mind is a great challenge. Sleeping is a problem. Letting go is a problem. Just as was indicated in 16 Personalities, my intuitive nature can get me into “rabbit holes” of thought wherein I search for hidden meanings. That was such an accurate bit of assessment. I know how important learning proper meditation is and suspect how beneficial it would be. Once my academic program is over, I plan to take a guided mindfulness meditation course for beginners, and initiate practice sessions based on the meditation course guidance. I have already purchased a Deepak Chopra meditation recording and will start listening to it before bed. I also have Sleeping Tapes from Jeff Bridges, which is weird yet excellent, but haven’t listened to it in a while. I will alternate between these two recordings to reduce noise, avoid the rabbit hole, and reduce “working dreams”, which is the nickname I’ve euphemistically given the vivid nightmares that involve me toiling over unending problems all night long.

Gratitude is something I consider to be hugely effectual, and I do not make enough time for developing it. My husband and I have decided that some volunteerism would help provide something beneficial for others, while expanding our perceptions and improving our gratitude. We have created a list of volunteering activities and aim to contribute to it monthly, so that by the time I am finished with school, we will have determined the best ways to match our skills with the needs of the underserved. An extrovert according to the 16 Personalities assessment, it is important for me to have social interaction. Volunteerism will also offer opportunities for socializing, as my husband and I are both remote workers and could use the synergy of joining others to help the less fortunate. My courage score was the second lowest on the Diamond assessment. Because I am very empathetic as identified in multiple assessments, volunteerism could help me to be more courageous, as I tend to shy away from examples of human suffering.

I have always been good with computers and interested in technology. Professionally, it would be advantageous to learn electronic dashboard development. I am planning on overseeing several teams that will likely work in multiple areas around the country, and while I will visit the teams in-person as often as possible, I will need to maintain an awareness of their productivity. According to the Diamond assessment, my top strengths are in vision and ethics. I do not wish to be a task-manager, but a leader that finds solutions to problems and helps staff to be successful. Dashboards will help me to use my strength as a vision leader to discover strategies to help my teams manage their work. Dashboards will help support my ethical values by allowing me to solve productivity problems that are the result of workflow shortcomings, rather than allowing senior leaders to attribute reduced productivity to reduced staff effort. I will start dashboard training in 2025. I plan on choosing a certification program that will provide me with the tools needed to create, maintain, repair, and analyze dashboards.

People are my passion. The Diamond assessment accurately highlighted my interest in relationships and the value I place in them. The only professional opportunities that make me as excited as being able to solve problems and help people are opportunities that focus on innovation. While not as confident as I’d like to be, I am assertive when certain of something. It is my hope that my current role will grow into all that I expect it can be, but if it does not, I will be looking for avenues that will allow me to connect my love of innovation and people in a harmonious fashion. I recently read a book called Ikigai: The Japanese Secret to a Long and Healthy Life. Ikigai is the “sweet spot” achieved when an individual finds overlap between what they enjoy, are good at, are compensated for, and have found meaning in (Garcia & Miralles, 2017). An excellent Venn diagram based on the book’s teachings can be found in Appendix E.

For career advancement, I will need a role that I can believe in completely. I cannot accept a position that is incongruent with values like fairness, integrity, and compassion. I have underperformed in roles that expect me to be assertive even if I don’t believe in what I am expected to support. There is nothing worse than feeling fake. To ensure that I can determine when I have found a proper role match, I will use part of my reflection journal to create a list of questions for my future employer. My goal is to come up with one cogent question per month so that should I need to interview, I will be ready to query my prospective employer.

**Future Leader Description**

At present, I am seen as an innovative professional who is honest, helpful, organized, and efficient. I am usually the person asked to help with creative or technological issues. I am seen as a friend; both by direct reports, and by one-ups. The harmonizer in me has facilitated great professional relationships at all levels. I have been praised for being notably flexible and willing to try most anything that may lead to a positive outcome. When I feel strongly that a decision will have negative effects, I withdraw, and can be accurately viewed as difficult to persuade.

I have been identified as quick to start new projects before thoroughly vetting all the necessary stakeholder and regulatory concerns. This impulsivity is likely due to insecurity and a commensurate desire to please people I respect. Unfortunately, I have struggled with and have been open about my lack of confidence. While my insecurities are not crippling and have not led to imposed professional limitations, I feel they are holding me back, and am sure that to at least some degree, my lack of confidence has been perceptible at times. I’m not considered a workaholic, and I’m sure my desire for balance has been disappointing to those that that love feeling busy. If I am asked to bail water out of a sinking ship, it better be because it will allow someone to fix the hole. Bailing water in perpetuity sounds like a punishment, not a solution.

Five years from now I will be perceived as a well-educated, well-developed nursing leader with confidence, self-awareness, self-control, and excellent conflict resolution skills. I will have cognitively rehearsed to the point of appearing prepared for many issues and will be reputed as someone who inspires innovation and collaboration. I will be benevolent. I will be seen as a professional with enough courage to make tough but fair choices and a person who can speak to those decisions without apprehension. My teams will consider me to be a supportive leader worth staying with because of what I motivate in them through honesty, creativity, and service.

My leadership style will encourage people to grow and take chances. I will be viewed as someone who enjoys work but who also has many other passions and interests. I will be respected for my ability to accept my mistakes and learn from them, only giving errors enough emotional attention to allow for personal reflection and improvement. Colleagues will recognize gratitude in my actions and will look to me for partnership. I will be respected for insisting on a balanced work life for myself and my staff. If I have a criticism to offer, the recipient will know, really know, that my feedback is selfless and is coming from a genuine place of love. I will lead with wisdom.

**Philosophy of Leadership**

My philosophy of leadership is based on self-less service, compassion, justice, balance and innovation. It is free from ego. As a leader I am choosing to be a servant; someone who appreciates how hard caregivers work, and therefore someone who is committed to supporting them and easing their way. I am my team’s biggest advocate. A compassionate person, I am empathic and will appreciate the needs of my team over their wants. My compassion allows me to differentiate between the two, and to act courageously as I shun frivolity in favor of substance. Every decision that I make will be considerate of justice. Justice necessitates that I create a culture of learning instead of one focused on placing blame. Compassion dictates that I understand my team members on a deeper level and am devoted to developing them as professionals and as people. I will be selfless in this endeavor. Because my ability to lead requires personal balance, I will stay vigilant in my pursuit of mindfulness, my holistic health, and the protection of my resilience. As a servant leader aware of the importance of innovation, I will use my positivity and drive to inspire innovative thinking, weaving progress into my team’s mindsets. I will teach my team to challenge the status quo. Transformational leadership is the ability to motivate and inspire change through service and compassion. I understand that limiting my focus solely to my own team will not result in the kind of progress I am looking for. As a transformational leader I will develop the abilities of those around me, encouraging system performance and collaboration.

**Action Plan Grid**

Table 1/ Leadership Development Action Plan. See Appendix D for a clearer version.

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**Conclusion**

This leadership development plan began with a strategy for understanding role awareness and self-awareness. The plan was broken into four parts. In the first part, I outlined the leadership competencies as written by the ANA and the AACN, which helped me to understand the capabilities associated with a graduate nurse in healthcare and nursing informatics. The second part narrated confidentially collected results from 360-degree feedback using three evaluations, and analyses of the results. The third part of the plan included a self-assessment, and a comparison of evaluator’s scores against the self-assessment.

Finally, a professional development plan was created. This portion included three assessment tool results through which I explored my strengths, weaknesses, and ways in which to improve my leadership abilities. A discussion on how others see me, as well as how they will see me in five years, was followed by my philosophy of leadership. The plan was concluded with an activity plan grid and this summary. This plan represents the transformative synthesis of nationally recognized competencies, 360-degree feedback, self-reflection and planning, and the current and future state of my leadership optics. And though the written portion of this journey is at an end, the pilgrimage that gives it reason has just begun.

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**Appendix A**

**NURSING LEADERSHIP EVALUATION TOOL**

|  |
| --- |
| **Name of Person Being Surveyed:**\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ **Title:**\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_  **Dept:**\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_  **Individual completing survey is: (circle one) Staff Member Self Peer Director Other**\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ |

The purpose of this survey is to provide feedback to the person named above. This will be helpful to his / her continuing development as an effective leader. Please read each question and circle only one response.Please feel free to select “Don’t know or not applicable” if you cannot answer an item with confidence or if the person does not perform that function; these responses are preferable to assumptions or guesses based on limited direct experience.

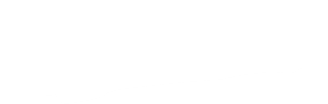
***Please send the completed survey to:***

***\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_***

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| 1. Sets and enforces high standards for the quality of patient care delivered in their department. |  | Almost  always  5 |  | Usually  4 |  | Sometimes  3 |  | Seldom  2 |  | Never  1 |  | Don’t know or  not applicable  N/A |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 1. Holds self and others accountable for meeting objectives and commitments. |  | 5 |  | 4 |  | 3 |  | 2 |  | 1 |  | N/A |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 1. Strives to ensure that department staff has the supplies, information, and resources needed to work effectively (e.g., suitable and functional equipment and systems). |  | 5 |  | 4 |  | 3 |  | 2 |  | 1 |  | N/A |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 1. Analyzes problems in a systematic, logical, and timely manner. |  | 5 |  | 4 |  | 3 |  | 2 |  | 1 |  | N/A |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 1. Takes accountability to improve department performance: quality improvement, patient satisfaction, staff morale, clinical outcomes, etc. |  | 5 |  | 4 |  | 3 |  | 2 |  | 1 |  | N/A |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 1. Acts promptly and decisively to address problems that arise in the department. |  | 5 |  | 4 |  | 3 |  | 2 |  | 1 |  | N/A |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 1. Demonstrates knowledge of the principal drivers of departmental revenues and reimbursement, expenses, and profits when making decisions affecting the department or project. |  | 5 |  | 4 |  | 3 |  | 2 |  | 1 |  | N/A |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 1. Closely monitors ongoing department indicators (ex: HPPD, staffing, etc.) which affect unit financial performance. |  | 5 |  | 4 |  | 3 |  | 2 |  | 1 |  | N/A |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 1. Listens carefully to and actively solicits input from others. |  | 5 |  | 4 |  | 3 |  | 2 |  | 1 |  | N/A |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 1. Expresses ideas clearly and effectively and responds to issues raised by others. Ensures that people get the information they need to do their jobs and provides feedback that enhances performance. |  | 5 |  | 4 |  | 3 |  | 2 |  | 1 |  | N/A |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 1. Selects and hires effective people for department staff (if applicable: assists with selection and hiring effective people). Markets unit job openings to attract highly skilled staff members. |  | 5 |  | 4 |  | 3 |  | 2 |  | 1 |  | N/A |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 1. Prevents high-impact staff departures when possible. |  | 5 |  | 4 |  | 3 |  | 2 |  | 1 |  | N/A |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 1. Is considerate, patient, and helpful; showing sympathy and support when someone is upset or anxious, or presents a personal or work-related problem. |  | 5 |  | 4 |  | 3 |  | 2 |  | 1 |  | N/A |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 1. Encourages cooperation, teamwork, and identification with the department. |  | 5 |  | 4 |  | 3 |  | 2 |  | 1 |  | N/A |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 1. Facilitates the constructive resolution of conflict. |  | 5 |  | 4 |  | 3 |  | 2 |  | 1 |  | N/A |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 1. Uses techniques that appeal to reason and values. Generates enthusiasm for work, commitment to task objectives, and compliance with requests. |  | 5 |  | 4 |  | 3 |  | 2 |  | 1 |  | N/A |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 1. Takes a longer-term perspective on problems and opportunities facing the department (considers implications 3 to 6 months in the future and beyond). |  | 5 |  | 4 |  | 3 |  | 2 |  | 1 |  | N/A |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |

Timeline

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**Appendix B**

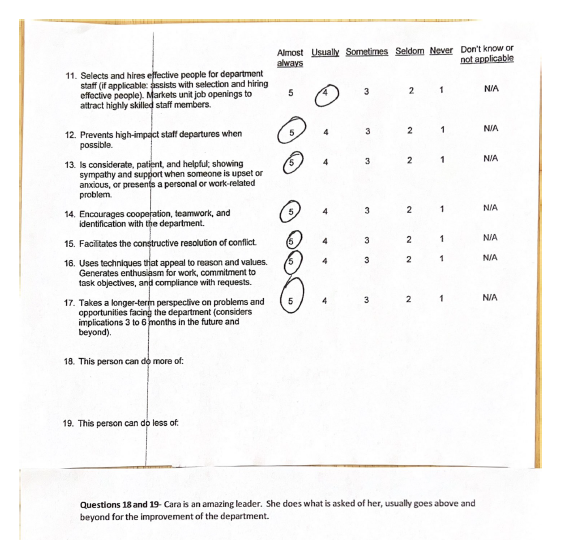
**NURSING LEADERSHIP EVALUATIONS**

Table

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**Appendix B**

**NURSING LEADERSHIP EVALUATION TOOL – SELF ASSESSMENT**



Total score = 84 = Outstanding

Table

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Text

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Total score = 85 = Outstanding

A picture containing table

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Table

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Total score = 80 = Outstanding

**Appendix C**

**NURSING LEADERSHIP EVALUATIONS - SELF**

|  |
| --- |
| **Name of Person Being Surveyed:** Cara Garcia  **Title:** Operations Manager **Dept:** ED  **Individual completing survey is: (circle one) Staff Member Self Peer Director Other**\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ |

The purpose of this survey is to provide feedback to the person named above. This will be helpful to his / her continuing development as an effective leader. Please read each question and circle only one response.Please feel free to select “Don’t know or not applicable” if you cannot answer an item with confidence or if the person does not perform that function; these responses are preferable to assumptions or guesses based on limited direct experience.

***Please send the completed survey to:***

***jaisaac1@umary.edu***

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| * 1. Sets and enforces high standards for the quality of patient care delivered in their department. |  | Almost  always  5 |  | Usually  4 |  | Sometimes  3 |  | Seldom  2 |  | Never  1 |  | Don’t know or  not applicable  N/A |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| * 1. Holds self and others accountable for meeting objectives and commitments. |  | 5 |  | 4 |  | 3 |  | 2 |  | 1 |  | N/A |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| * 1. Strives to ensure that department staff has the supplies, information, and resources needed to work effectively (e.g., suitable and functional equipment and systems). |  | 5 |  | 4 |  | 3 |  | 2 |  | 1 |  | N/A |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| * 1. Analyzes problems in a systematic, logical, and timely manner. |  | 5 |  | 4 |  | 3 |  | 2 |  | 1 |  | N/A |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| * 1. Takes accountability to improve department performance: quality improvement, patient satisfaction, staff morale, clinical outcomes, etc. |  | 5 |  | 4 |  | 3 |  | 2 |  | 1 |  | N/A |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| * 1. Acts promptly and decisively to address problems that arise in the department. |  | 5 |  | 4 |  | 3 |  | 2 |  | 1 |  | N/A |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| * 1. Demonstrates knowledge of the principal drivers of departmental revenues and reimbursement, expenses, and profits when making decisions affecting the department or project. |  | 5 |  | 4 |  | 3 |  | 2 |  | 1 |  | N/A |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| * 1. Closely monitors ongoing department indicators (ex: HPPD, staffing, etc.) which affect unit financial performance. |  | 5 |  | 4 |  | 3 |  | 2 |  | 1 |  | N/A |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| * 1. Listens carefully to and actively solicits input from others. |  | 5 |  | 4 |  | 3 |  | 2 |  | 1 |  | N/A |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| * 1. Expresses ideas clearly and effectively and responds to issues raised by others. Ensures that people get the information they need to do their jobs and provides feedback that enhances performance. |  | 5 |  | 4 |  | 3 |  | 2 |  | 1 |  | N/A |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| * 1. Selects and hires effective people for department staff (if applicable: assists with selection and hiring effective people). Markets unit job openings to attract highly skilled staff members. |  | Almost  always  5 |  | Usually  4 |  | Sometimes  3 |  | Seldom  2 |  | Never  1 |  | Don’t know or  not applicable  N/A |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| * 1. Prevents high-impact staff departures when possible. |  | 5 |  | 4 |  | 3 |  | 2 |  | 1 |  | N/A |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| * 1. Is considerate, patient, and helpful; showing sympathy and support when someone is upset or anxious, or presents a personal or work-related problem. |  | 5 |  | 4 |  | 3 |  | 2 |  | 1 |  | N/A |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| * 1. Encourages cooperation, teamwork, and identification with the department. |  | 5 |  | 4 |  | 3 |  | 2 |  | 1 |  | N/A |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| * 1. Facilitates the constructive resolution of conflict. |  | 5 |  | 4 |  | 3 |  | 2 |  | 1 |  | N/A |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| * 1. Uses techniques that appeal to reason and values. Generates enthusiasm for work, commitment to task objectives, and compliance with requests. |  | 5 |  | 4 |  | 3 |  | 2 |  | 1 |  | N/A |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| * 1. Takes a longer-term perspective on problems and opportunities facing the department (considers implications 3 to 6 months in the future and beyond). |  | 5 |  | 4 |  | 3 |  | 2 |  | 1 |  | N/A |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |

1. This person can do more of:

Looking for operational hindrances and hurdles. Get stronger and more knowledgeable rather than hiding behind inabilities. Be more vocal about changes that need to take place. Rock the boat. Try to find solutions even when it seems like no one is listening or interested- these nurses are still people that are relying on you. You may be right. Tho boat may be sinking. Keep pushing.

1. This person can do less of:

Worrying about senior leader perceptions. Feeling sorry for themselves. Taking comfort in night-cheese instead of constructive methods of feeling joy. Taking everything personally. Taking instead of giving.

1. Additional comments (indicate question related to if applicable):

Total score = 67 = Above average

**Appendix D**

**Leadership Development Action Plan**

Table

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**Appendix E**

**Ikigai Venn Diagram**

In her article in the World Economic Forum, Oliver (2017) featured this graphic which depicts the overlap of

Ikigai concepts while highlighting the limitations of the concepts alone. Once overlap occurs, bliss is reached.

Diagram, venn diagram

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