

## Authentic Leadership: Creating & Sustaining a Healthy Work Environment

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## Objectives

- Discuss the current literature linking healthy work environments with quality outcomes and patient safety.
- Discuss current literature related to authentic leadership.
- Identify strategies to develop authentic leaders and create (and sustain) healthier work environments.

## Staff Led Initiatives: Transforming Care at the Bedside

- RWJ Video:  
<http://www.rwjf.org/pr/product.jsp?id=21069>



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## What is a Healthy Work Environment?

- An environment conducive to healing in which pts have a sense of warmth and well-being.
  - Nightingale: *Notes on Nursing*
- Healing environment must also extend to the caregivers: "sanctuaries of healing" that are beneficial for all.
- Organizational classifiers associated with healthy and effective work environments:
  - Magnet hospitals, Fortune 100 best companies to work for in U.S.

## What does a Healthy Work Environment Look Like?

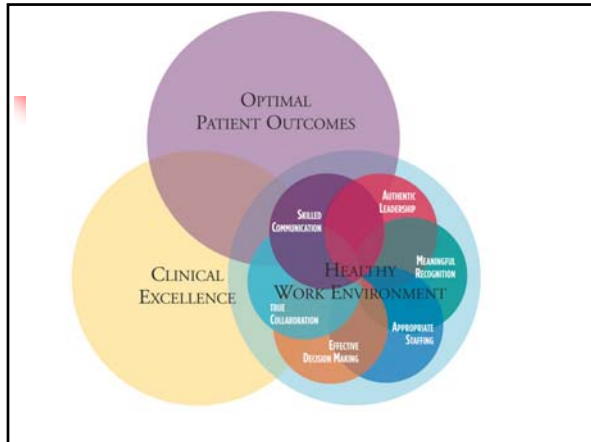
1. Employees are treated in a respectful and fair manner. Concern and value for each person as an individual is apparent.
2. Strong sense of trust between management and employees. (engage and empower)
3. Organizational cultures that support communication and collaboration; views individuals as assets; decision making considers impact on the "big picture", including mission and its members
4. "Feeling tone" in which individuals are encouraged to feel physically and emotionally safe; a sense of family

Heath, J. Johanson, W. Blake, N.  
Healthy work environments: a  
validation of the literature. J Nurs Adm.  
2006; 36(4):215-220


## Healthy Work Environments Require:

- Skilled communication
- True collaboration
- Effective decision making
- Appropriate staffing
- Meaningful recognition
- Authentic leadership





## Studies Linking HWE to Outcomes




- Linking healthy work environments with Essentials of Magnetism
  - ICU study: HWE enabled nurses to meet organizational objectives and patient outcomes while achieving personal satisfaction in their work.
  - 83% (Magnet) & 89% (Beacon nurses) satisfied with current positions

(Schmalenberg & Kramer, 2007)


## Assertion #1

- Healthy work environments do not just happen
- ***...if you do not have a formal program in place addressing work environment issues, little will change***



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## Assertion #2



- Creating healthy work environments require changing long-standing cultures, traditions and hierarchies
- ...While everyone must be involved in the creation of healthy work environments, ***the onus is on organizational/departmental/unit leaders to assure that it happens***

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## HWE: Where Do We Begin?


- Formalize a program to address Healthy Work Environment Standards
- Strategic planning
  - Assessment of critical elements
  - Incorporate the standards as part of job descriptions and performance appraisals
  - Prioritize initiatives to work on (e.g. skilled communication, mentorship culture)
  - Celebrate your successes – recognize contributions to an environment where patients, nurses, and ALL staff thrive!

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## How Do We Get There?

- Strong Leadership Buy-In
  - Leaders “walk the talk”: authenticity
  - Accountability is established
  - Targeted and system wide educational programs
  - Engaging staff in a unit-based root cause analysis addressing a pt care error
  - Triad partnership with champions: Nurses/physicians/administrators

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“Authentic leaders generate the energy to make the impossible possible by their passion for their people, their patients, and for doing the right thing.”

- Karlene Kerfoot

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### 5 Evidence-Based Management Practices for Patient Safety and HWE

- Balancing tension between production and efficiency
- Creating and sustaining trust
- Actively managing the process of change
- Involving workers in decision making re. work design and work flow
- Using knowledge management to establish the organization as a learning organization

Institute of Medicine. Keeping patients safe: transforming the work environment of nurses. Washington, DC: The National Academies Press; 2004.


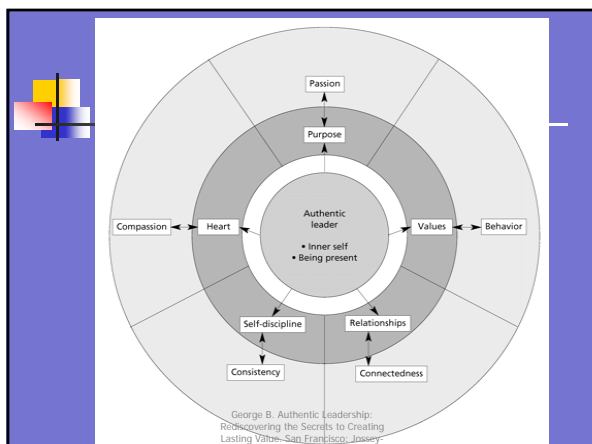
### Key to Transforming Work Environment: Authentic Leaders

- Ability of leaders to translate the evidence related to healthy work environments into nursing practice at the bedside.
  - Cultivating leaders at all levels of the organization.



### What is Authentic Leadership?

- “The glue that holds together a healthy work environment.” (AACN)
- “A leader who is genuine, trustworthy, reliable, and believable.”
  - George B. *Authentic Leadership: Rediscovering the Secrets to Creating Lasting Value*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass; 2003.

### 5 Key Characteristics of Authentic Leaders

1. Purpose with passion
  - Finding passion and articulating the passion requires believing in the purpose, internalizing its intrinsic worth, and living the purpose (mission)
    - The mission is more than a plaque on the hospital wall
    - Actions match the words

## 5 Key Characteristics of Authentic Leaders

2. Practicing values: testing one's fortitude under the most difficult situations that may challenge individual values.
  - "When in Rome, don't follow the Romans."



## 5 Key Characteristics of Authentic Leaders

3. Leading with heart: requires compassion.
  - Getting to know life stories and engaging coworkers in shared meaning
  - Co-mentoring relationships



## 5 Key Characteristics of Authentic Leaders

4. Establishing enduring relationships
  - Requires a sense of connectedness and shared purpose of working toward a common goal.
  - Behavior needs to be consistent with values; not the result of trying to please everyone, attain rewards, or avoid punishment.



## 5 Key Characteristics of Authentic Leaders

5. Practicing self-discipline
  - Balance in one's personal and professional life: reflection & renewal



## How Do Authentic Leaders Create Healthy Work Environments?

- Attributes...
  - Character not charisma
  - Substance not style
  - Integrity not image
- Leadership approach that restores confidence, optimism, hope, resiliency, and meaningfulness: engaged employees who create this healthy work environment with better outcomes

## Authentic Leadership

### What Clinical Nurses Can Do:

- Walk the Talk
- Participate
- Recognize Contributions of All
- Use Power Wisely
- Take Pride in Achievements

## Strategies to Become an Authentic Leader

- Self-awareness: getting good honest feedback
  - Determining your own values....won't know until they are tested under pressure
- Finding the sweet spot where greatest strengths match your greatest motivations
- Building support teams around you
  - Honest feedback; mentors
- Leading an integrated life: being same person in every environment

## Personal Development Strategies

- Authentic Leadership Books
- Communication awareness and development
- Internet sources to enhance authenticity in leadership
- Volunteer to serve on a community board
- Develop the art of listening and reflection
- Personal program of self-renewal...

## A journey....not a destination

- The art of leading yourself...before you can lead others



## Organization-assisted Development Strategies

- Become actively involved (engaged) with professional organizations
- Executive coaching programs on authentic leadership

## Healthy Work Environments and Authentic Leaders

- Authentic leadership is preferred style for creating and sustaining healthy work environments.
  - Organizations provide support for knowledge and skill development in skilled communication, effective decision making, true collaboration, meaningful recognition.
  - Organization provides a formal co-mentoring program for all leaders.
  - Leaders are held accountable for creating and sustaining a healthy work environment (criterion in job description and performance appraisal).





## References

- AACN Resources: [www.aacn.org](http://www.aacn.org)
  - Healthy Work Environment Website (resources, speakers, standards, access to join listserv)
  - AACN Standards for Establishing and Sustaining Healthy Work Environments: A Journey to Excellence (2005).
  - Beacon resources (assessment tool, exemplars, resources)
  - Nurse manager resources (Framework of ENMO, assessment tool, listserv link, new certification)
- Other websites:
  - Justculture.org
  - Vitalsmarts.com
  - Appreciative Inquiry.com
  - Leadershipstudio.com
  - Robert Wood Johnson Foundation – [rwjf.org](http://rwjf.org) (Transforming Care at the Bedside project)
    - [www.rwjf.org/files/newsroom/profiles/icab.popup.html](http://www.rwjf.org/files/newsroom/profiles/icab.popup.html)
  - Association of Nurse Executives – [aone.org](http://aone.org)
    - Nurse manager resources (ENMO: new Nurse Leader certification)
    - Executive coaching resource center (ECRC)

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