Compendium of Leadership Topics

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Leadership is more than just leading a group of individuals and meeting goals for an organization. Leaders need to understand the vision of the organization and be able to manifest it to create inspiration for others. Great leaders must understand the intricacies of effective communication, conflict resolution, fostering new ideas, and implementing change. Becoming a successful leader requires a commitment to others that allows growth in leadership skills and development in those being led. This paper will explore two topics related to leadership and how they create an effective leader.

**Organizational Climate and Culture**

The climate and culture of an organization are pivotal to its success. The organizational climate encompasses the work environment's psychological impact on employee's performance, motivation, and behavior. The climate and culture of an organization are often intimately related. It is the mission of leaders to instill organizational values and create a positive and safe organizational climate while cultivating a culture that reflects the organization's values.

**Literature Synthesis**

Organizational climate (OC) has several definitions. OC can be defined as attitudes and perceptions of the work environment, including the role and job characteristics by the workers (Green et al., 2014). Another definition of OC is a set of characteristics that describe and distinguish an organization from other organizations (Momeni, 2009). The last definition for OC is that it is the feelings of individuals about a particular work environment (Mryayyan, 2008). The previous definitions have multiple similarities within them. One of the similarities is the individuals' perception of the organization. Six dimensions have been discovered within OC. These include organizational clarity, responsibility, reward, standards, conformity, and team spirit.

A significant component within the OC is the function of leadership (Momeni, 2009). To have an effective OC, there must be an emotionally intelligent leader to create an environment that is loyal, intelligent, and emotionally invested employees that strive towards goals and self-improvement. There are six variables to OC: flexibility, responsibility, standards, rewards, clarity, and group commitment. Employees should have the flexibility or freedom to be creative while following specific regulations and guidelines set forth. Employees should not be limited to what they are allowed to do. Each employee should have a sense of responsibility for the work they are doing within the organization. Standards for employees should require a tolerance of constant pressure to improve productivity. Rewards should be given fairly and according to the quality of the work being done. Rewards should also be given to encourage good behavior. Clarity is important as it communicates what the purpose of the employees' job is. Finally, group commitment has the intention of employees accepting more responsibility to achieve organizational goals (Momeni, 2009).

Transformational leadership can influence the OC and is specifically important during times of change and stress, when OC is more likely to degrade (Green et al., 2014). OC is associated with work attitudes, provider attitudes, and enhanced treatment outcomes. Leaders who engage in transformational leadership behaviors are more likely to create an OC that is fair, encourages advancement, and has role clarity. Transformational leadership allows for employees to develop a positive working alliance with either clients or other co-workers. Teamwork and cooperation are two other qualities that support an OC. These factors are even more important when evaluating employee retention. Mrayyan (2008), found that when looking at employee retention and employee satisfaction, quality of care and professionalism were two variables that mattered most to both ward and unit nurses.

Organizational culture guides employees on how they are expected to behave within an organization. The values established by leaders must be communicated and reinforced in order to shape the behaviors and understanding of employees. If a culture of an organization is ineffective, the result is a dysfunctional work environment. Successful leaders must live their culture every day and serve as an example (Society of Human Resource Management, 2022). Leaders should be cautious to not create a rigid or resistant organizational culture. The result of a rigid or resistant organizational culture includes suppression of change and passiveness in employees. Culture may be transmitted through the expectations and behavioral norms and expectations more than through the organization’s internal values (Glisson, 2015). Organizational climate is also imperative for leaders to understand the organizational culture and positively influence their employees.

**Application**

Organizational climate stems from relationships that are built within an organization. In my career, I have witnessed how work climate can be influenced by leaders. Work climate can be influenced by leaders by leading by example by resonating organization expectations and positivity and leaders who are able to build strong, trusting relationships with employees. Having a leader that follows organizational values daily encourages employees to mirror this behavior in their own decisions and actions. While setting the expectation of excellence is a difficult task, it can be done by involving humility and the need for personal accountability. Leaders that hold themselves accountable can inspire others to do better. The most influential leaders are the ones that can admit to their wrong doings and acknowledge that everyone makes mistakes. Reacting to mistakes in a positive manner and emphasizing the need for solution rather than place blame, sets a standard for an organization. Employees who recognize leaders are willing to accept mistakes and grow from mistakes are more likely to feel that they can accept their own mistakes and grow from them as well.

I personally have worked with leaders on both spectrums. The environment I thrived in the most was one that had a leader who kept themselves and others accountable for their actions. Working in a culture revolving around positive expectations encourages employees to be more productive and hones. These factors are all imperative in forming inclusive teams who support one another to be the best versions of themselves.

**Communication and Emotional Intelligence**

Interpersonal communication skills are key in building work relationships and influencing others. Along with interpersonal communication skills, it is important to be emotionally intelligent. Being emotionally intelligent allows for individuals to communicate effectively. In order to be emotionally intelligent, individuals must be able to understand their own emotions and have an awareness of how these emotions affect those around them. Emotional intelligence buffers stress, reduces anxiety, and improves overall performance (Bikmoradi et al., 2018). Communication skills can differentiate a good leader from a great leader.

**Literature Synthesis**

Being a leader in an organization does not mean that the individual is in upper management. There are leaders on every level in an organization. Efficient communication is needed to push information and ideas between different peer groups and hierarchical levels. One method of efficient communication is open communication. Open communication may come in the form of an open-door policy for management while for leaders, it may be the willingness to listen to peers for their ideas and concerns.

A great leader also needs to be emotionally intelligent. Emotional intelligence is a concept that enhances the management of feelings and interpersonal relationships (Heckemann, Schols, & Halfens, 2014). Emotional intelligence has four distinct skills that include perceiving emotion, using emotion to facilitate thought, to understand emotion, and to manage emotions (Heckemann et al., 2014). Emotional intelligence allows individuals to adapt to planning, thinking, triggering motivation, and perceiving their job as challenging (Vandewaa & Turnipseed, 2016).

Using empathy in communication is one principle that will increase its effectiveness. Leaders should make sure they are actively listening before responding. Lacking emotional intelligence makes this harder for the listener to do. Lack of emotional intelligence in a leader can result in failed communication and potentially cause unnecessary conflict. For emotional intelligence to be formed, individuals must identify their own emotions along with the emotions of others, can understand emotions, and have the ability to manage their emotions (Bikmoradi et al., 2018).

**Application**

Emotional intelligence and communication are two skills that a leader must be taught over time. Reflecting on my own experiences, the current leader of my unit is one that demonstrates over and over again the ability to communicate through difficult and tense situations. This leader consistently demonstrates the importance of emotional intelligence and how to use this intelligence in communication by active listening, thinking, and asking clarifying questions prior to returning communication, and debriefing to allow reflection for the team involved.

Active listening can be done by sitting eye level with the person, having eye contact, and putting your full attention on the person. The leader that taught me the value of active listening involves not coming up with a response before the person is done saying what they have to say. Sometimes writing in a notebook can be helpful with this. Taking notes and jotting down thoughts allows you to ensure they are not missing anything as well as allowing them to actively follow the conversation. Having the ability to pause and ponder points that were brought up before responding enables open and effective communication. The leader who has influenced my improved communication always pauses and clarifies the situation before responding. She breaks down the conversation into individual subjects if the conversation has gotten too broad to address each item. Reading body language is also important for active listening. Nonverbal cues such as nodding along, posture, hand positioning, facial expressions, and tone of voice can clue leaders into what emotions are at the center of the words being spoken. Remaining calm in tense situations and remaining professional takes both personal emotional intelligence and the ability to read the emotions of others.

Reflection is one opportunity that I have learned to enjoy and use it on a personal level. After important conversations, having a debriefing with your team allows for open communication and allows for growth with other team members. A debrief offers a safe place to air your feelings and concerns as well as nurtures collaboration. Often the debrief is when areas for improvement are addressed because individuals can speak freely about what could have gone better. Having debrief sessions that are facilitated by leadership increases communication as well as increases the sense of teamwork needed for communication to be effective.

**Summary**

Leadership is a commitment that requires skills in communication, emotional intelligence, organizational climate, and organizational culture. Employees search for environments that are going to nurture their ideas and help them grow. Leaders who have emotional intelligence are able to develop these types of work environments through positive communication and the development of strong relationships. It is important that leaders have effective communication skills to address areas for improvement and give room for employees to express new ideas.

**Compendium of Leadership Topics**

Leadership is constantly changing. The effective resolution of conflicts and the reasonable exercise of fiscal responsibility represent pivotal dimensions that demand the utmost attention. As healthcare systems grapple with complex challenges, including resource constraints, regulatory changes, and dynamic patient needs, nurse leaders must navigate the intricate interplay between interpersonal dynamics and financial stewardship. This paper discusses conflict resolution and fiscal responsibility within healthcare leadership.

**Conflict Resolution**

Conflict is often thought of in a negative connotation, but conflict in an organization can provide the potential to yield new and innovative ideas. Albert et al. (2022) discussed how conflict provides an opportunity for growth and transformation and that leaders should treat conflict as another tool of leadership. Leaders should understand that conflict management is unavoidable and an important aspect of their roles.

**Literature Synthesis**

Often, conflict can disrupt the workplace by causing a distraction to employees, decreasing productivity, and lowering motivation. As a leader, assessing the situation and finding the source of conflict is of the utmost importance when navigating through conflict. Functional conflict is a type of conflict that may produce new ideas and solutions. For functional conflict to be possible, both sides must desire to find a solution to the problem. To find a solution, the willingness to listen to each other and think critically about resolving the conflict must be present. Leaders should look at conflict as teaching opportunities (Neck et al., 2019). Using effective communication, leaders can guide employees to decisions that can improve current processes.

Unhealthy conflict can occur quickly. Diagnosing the conflict is the first step to resolution. If there is a wrongdoing, leaders should find proof of the action to ensure no unnecessary conflict is created. Timeliness is also important. Leaders who wait to address conflict risk seeming hesitant to others (Nelson, 2018). By understanding where a conflict originated, leaders can determine if it is healthy or unhealthy. Understanding conflict can allow leaders to respond appropriately.

A leader's response to conflict can affect the health of a workplace. When employees seek help from leaders with a complaint, the leader often feels pressure to fix the problem for that individual. Leaders must not give in to immediate pressure as it may lead to pre-mature results that are harmful or short-term solutions. Effective communication can shift the conversation from the leader needing to fix something to the leader coaching people on how to resolve the conflict. This approach supports and empowers employees to resolve their own conflicts and can decrease wasted energy (Stutzman, 2019). Leaders may benefit from training to learn communication styles effective in conflict resolution. The best outcome of the conflict would be reaching a collaborative solution. Collaboration focuses on mutual goals and benefits. A solution meets the parties' needs, resulting in a win-win situation (Giotis, 2010). While this is not always the outcome of conflict, leaders should keep this goal in mind while coaching individuals through conflict resolution.

**Application**

As an employee, one of the most frustrating experiences is having a leader who is passive and avoids conflict resolution. Avoiding conflict resolution is one of the main reasons for toxic work environments. When conflicts emerge and are not addressed, the issue continues to grow which can lead to further negativity. Having a leader that is willing to manage conflict in an effective and efficient way is necessary to foster a functioning work environment. Leaders are often uneasy with conflict due to the negative connotation that usually comes with it. However, a good leader is able to take conflict and make it into a positive experience that produces new solutions or need for improvement.

An example of positive conflict resolution that I have experienced involved a nursing leader who did not hold a management position. However, this leader did not allow conflict to go unnoticed and facilitated difficult conversations and solutions when needed. She preached the topic of respect and held all of the nurses to this standard. When an issue arose this leader would make sure to listen to all issues and opinions before facilitating productive conversations that often lead to a stronger relationship between employees instead of hurt feelings. There was never a need to place blame on someone, rather the need was to find the root of the problem and solve it.

Communication was integral in facilitating solutions among my coworkers. The leader I worked with had a way of making everyone feel comfortable and feel like voicing issues was acceptable. She was able to coach many new graduate nurses through conflicts with other nurses or doctors with ease. Open ended questions were used to encourage staff to offer their own thoughts and ideas. This communication makes individuals feel valued while facilitating them to find their own solutions instead of being told what they must do.

**Fiscal Responsibility and Sources of Funding**

Leadership plays a significant role in the financial performance of an organization. Funding is required for almost every aspect of running a successful business, making it necessary for leaders to understand. The fiscal responsibilities of an organization include reporting, financial planning, budget execution, and procuring funding from available sources (Kulas et al., 2013). In healthcare, external funding, such federal grants, may be applied for and used for specific purposes. Leadership should be aware and knowledgeable of this funding and should be able to determine how to use funds efficiently.

**Literature Synthesis**

The financial health of an organization is not just the responsibility of the billing or fiscal services department. Employees play a prominent role in supporting the financial success of an organization. Organizations should ensure that all employees are trained on how the organization is funded and how finances play a role in achieving the goals of an organization. Clear guidelines of internal controls that are utilized to prevent the waste of resources should be available to employees. Educating employees on financial decisions has the potential to impact the financial health of an organization. Payroll, timekeeping, and having clear records of how money was spent are all areas to educate employees (Ray, n.d.). Leaders should have a functioning knowledge of this information and communicate the expectations to others.

Effective leaders have a sufficient knowledge of the organization's economic and financial standing. This knowledge allows leaders to make informed decisions grounded in financial realities (McCaray & Rosenbloom, 2015). In healthcare, government funding can play a significant role in the financial standing of an organization. Leaders need to understand the funding sources and what the rules and regulations state on the spending of those funds. Health and Human Services is a government entity offering funding for many medical institutes. This funding does come with regulations such as an efficient spending policy that determines what expenses can be paid through the funding to ensure the funds are used for their intended purpose (U.S. Department of Health & Human Services [HHS], 2014). Financial knowledge that is beneficial for leaders to understand to make decisions is one example of regulations on government funding.

**Application**

Fiscal responsibility is one area that I did not know much about until this semester. During my leadership clinicals however, I got to see firsthand how fiscal responsibility fits into a leadership role. The leader I followed explained that the finances of an organization are deeply engrained into the everyday functioning. Leadership that offers education and honesty are able to teach their team the importance of fiscal responsibility. I have learned through my experiences that honest communication about financial issues from leadership has fostered an understanding of the intricacies of how money impacts the organizations mission. Having an understanding of the financial state of the organization has been important in decision making. Leaders must understand the financial impact of decisions because they directly impact the success of an organization as whole.

**Summary**

Effective leaders are advised to assess the source of conflict, distinguishing between functional and unhealthy conflict. Leaders are encouraged to employ effective communication to guide employees in resolving conflicts, promoting critical thinking and mutual understanding. Conflict should be seen as an opportunity for leaders to teach employees conflict resolution skills and improve existing processes. When discussing fiscal responsibility, leaders are expected to understand their fiscal obligations, which encompass tasks like financial reporting, planning, budget execution, and securing funding from various sources. All employees should be educated about the organization's funding sources and how their actions can impact its financial success. Influential leaders understand their organization's financial status, enabling them to make informed decisions based on financial realities.

**Compendium of Leadership Topics**

Leadership and management in healthcare organizations are important for the success of each organization and ultimately the well-being of patients and the satisfaction of employees. Power, influence, leadership, and management aid in shaping the direction and outcomes of healthcare environments. The integration of innovation and systems thinking is imperative for the addressing the complex challenges that healthcare professionals face daily. Navigating change management is essential for leaders to adapt to evolving patient needs and advancements. Below discusses the connection of these concepts with the context of healthcare organizations, highlighting how they impact the quality of care, employee motivation, and the ability to foster a culture of innovation. Understanding these relationships is important for healthcare leaders wanting positive change as well as improvement in patient care outcomes.

**Influence Versus Power and Leadership and Management**

Power in an organization may be from seniority, rank, or authority given with the position held such as the ability to hire and fire (Neck et al., 2019). Power does often give a person influence; however, it can also be acquired by possessing leadership qualities and earning respect. Power and influence can be linked with leadership and management. Leaders in management need to understand their power and use it to positively influence employees.

**Literature Synthesis**

Leadership and management choices can determine if a company succeeds or fails. Leaders can be managers, but it should be noted that managers are not always leaders. In the circumstance that the manager is not a leader, the perceived power and influence of the manager can be an issue. Hierarchy in management can show that power is not earned through leadership skills. Management that holds power but does not have leadership skills negatively affect employees by decreasing their confidence and motivation. People in the position of power are not always successful at initiating change.

Compliance of employees is a response to management power with the knowledge that acceptance is only occurring because an authoritative figure is involved. Commitment to the change shows a positive attitude with motivation from an employee and often results from management who are leaders (Zaleznik, n.d.). Good leaders realize that inspiration and promotion of the organizational vision is essential in motivating employees. Good leaders can use power and influence to be persistent and innovative in order to demonstrate focus on performance and excellence (Tomsic et al., 2016).

Without considering power and influence, leading and managing should be able to coexist. According to Azad et al. (2017), leadership and management should form the framework for skills and abilities for success. Azad et al. (2017), explained that leadership and management are not functional or effective without each other. Having management who are also leaders is helpful to assist in implementing innovative ideas and change.

**Application**

To be an effective leader it is more important to have influence versus power. Respecting a leader that is in a top position in the chain of command of an organizational structure is common but is often backed by a sense of fear rather than a sense of esteem. Integrity and optimism are two qualities in leaders that I have learned to recognize as influential.

One example I have of this is when a seasoned floor nurse has assumed power. The seasoned nurse demand respect rather than earning it from the newer nurses. This has led newer nurses to have a negative attitude toward their coworker rather than viewing them as a leader. Wielding power that is self-given due to rank is not an attribute of a leader. Leaders are those who have earned respect and use this power to positively influence others.

Optimally, leadership and management should go hand in hand. However, this is not always the case. Management positions can be given to employees who have the most experience in a certain skill or who have been with a company for a long time instead of given to employees who have demonstrated leadership ability. I have been in positions in which my management team held power because of their position titles and not because of their leadership skills. These positions have been hard to work in because I never felt that I was valued or that my management was committed to making myself better. It is unsettling to have management that cannot function as a leader and even more difficult to respect management decisions that you do not agree with when they do not come from a place of leadership.

**Innovation, Systems Thinking, Change Management**

Innovation and implementation of new ideas is one-way organizations can ensure they are meeting the needs of proprietors, customers, and employees. For leaders to foster innovation, continually looking for new challenges is necessary to implement change (Albert et al., 2020). Systems thinking is one way to look at organizations in a holistic way that allows for exploration of innovation (Palaima & Skaržauskienė, 2010). For systems thinking and innovation to occur, change must also occur. Change requires specific management and leadership styles to be effective.

**Literature Synthesis**

Innovation is not something leadership or management achieve on their own. A team of people and considerable resources are also required for innovation. Innovation does not need to be a breakthrough idea, it can be something as simple as implementing something that is new while also adding value (Horth & Vehar, 2014). Systems thinking is a tool that can be utilized by team members to analyze events, trends, and underlying structure to help take a layered approach to finding new ideas or solutions. Systems thinking can pinpoint complex intricacies of a system which can help innovation come to live (Tooley, 2021). Systems thinking offers a clear way to see an organization’s environment while revealing a new perspective for team members to integrate new ideas. Systems thinking principles offer the ability of the leader to manage an organization using a system approach that treats problems in an organization as problems in the system. Systems thinking principles may lead to system integrated solutions that can also be called innovation (Palaima & Skaržauskienė, 2010).

One of the leadership’s main concerns is adapting to organizational change. There are many different styles of change management including directed change, planned change, and guided change. Directed change focuses on authority and compliance and how to cope with the emotional reaction to change. Planned change is brought forward by upper management. This process is typically mapped out prior to implementation. Guided change occurs in reaction to organizational changes that are already underway. Guided change may include pausing current change in order to gain a clearer understanding of what is happening so obstacles can be dealt with (Kerber, 2004).

Lewin’s basic change model lays out how to initiate, manage, and stabilize change. The first stage is unfreezing and requires a rational explanation for why the change must occur so understanding may be reached by peers. The second step is called the transforming stage. The transforming stage allows employees to work through uncertainties and doubts and embrace the new direction of the organization. It is important for leaders and managers to promote stability and complete incorporation of the change during the transforming stage (Neck et al., 2019). The final stage is the refreezing stage, and this is where the change is implemented.

**Application**

Change is difficult to deal with in an organization if it is not presented in the right manner. In my experience, larger facilities that I have worked for often have fallen short in change management. Being a floor nurse, it often felt as though you were the last person to find out about the change. One of the hardest things I experienced in this facility was being told to change something with no explanation as to why the change was occurring. It was hard to deal with change that was not processed appropriately because there would be failure in the new change system and there was not an opportunity to learn because there was no background knowledge as to why the change had occurred in the first place. The unfreezing stage is very imperative to reach a level of understanding of change within the organization.

I have also had the opportunity to be a part of an organization that presented change in the correct manner. The organization was educated about the change and then opportunities were available for staff to voice their concerns either in a meeting setting or one on one with the manager. Leaders that present change as a possibility first and gather feedback from employees are encouraging innovation and valuing the input employees may have. Change should not feel forced because if it is, it may cause negative feelings and subsequently fail. I have been in situations where employees have refused to enact a change simply because they did not understand it and did not feel that it was needed. Refusing change can be avoided if the leader takes the necessary steps of communication and explanation for change within an organization.

**Summary**

It is crucial to understand the intricate interplay of power, influence, leadership, management, innovation, systems thinking, and change management within healthcare organizations. In healthcare leadership, the distinction between power and influence is apparent. While power can be derived from organizational positions, true influence is earned through the demonstration of leadership qualities and the respect of colleagues. A critical aspect of healthcare leadership is the differentiation between leaders and managers. Managers may hold positions of authority, but not all possess the leadership skills required to inspire and motivate healthcare professionals effectively. Leaders need to realize that inspiration, shared vision, and the promotion of organizational goals are vital for motivating employees. Innovation involves teams and resources and is collaborative in nature. Innovation does not always need to be a groundbreaking idea but can also be incremental changes that add value to quality care. Systems thinking enables a holistic understanding of healthcare organizations, which allows for identification of complex intricacies within the system. Finally, change management directly impacts patient care and organizational effectiveness. Various change management styles such as directed, planned, and guided should be understood and applied. Leaders must navigate the complexities of healthcare organizations, fostering a culture of innovation, effectively manage change, and ultimately improve patient care outcomes through a combination of leadership and management skills.

**Final Conclusion**

The above compendium covers a comprehensive array of leadership topics within the context of organizational dynamics, communication, emotional intelligence, conflict resolution, fiscal responsibility, and innovation in healthcare. The impact of transformational leadership on organizational climate is discussed, highlighting its role in fostering fairness, advancement, and role clarity. The critical components of effective communication and emotional intelligence in leadership is then discussed. The discussion stresses the significance of active listening, empathy, and reflective practices in enhancing communication skills. Conflict resolution is addressed as a crucial leadership skill, distinguishing between functional and unhealthy conflict. Reporting, financial planning, budget execution, and understanding funding sources are all qualities that a good leader should be knowledgeable in. Finally, the distinction between power and influence as well as the need for a shared vision to motivate employees is important when leading a healthcare organization. The integration of innovation and systems thinking can foster an environment that allows for individuals to be heard and to voice their ideas. In summary, the compendium provides a comprehensive exploration of leadership topics. There is an emphasis on communication, emotional intelligence, conflict resolution, fiscal responsibility, innovation, and change management reflects a holistic approach to effective leadership.

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