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Authentic leadership: Implications for effective mentoring

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Since the inception of nursing from the Nightingale era, nursing has been guided by the principles of mentorship. Mentorship involves an experienced nurse providing support and guidance like a coach to a novice nurse to develop competencies, networking skills, confidence and career opportunities (Ferguson, 2011). Effective mentoring is commonly described in terms of traits of the mentor such as being approachable, charismatic, and supportive (Fischer *et al.*, 2015). However, there is evidence of movement away from a trait-based approach to focus on the person by the mentor (Wong and Cummings, 2009). This session will discuss a theory that has at its core “the self”, namely, authentic leadership. Authentic leadership draws upon positive psychological capacities and ethical climates to bring about greater self-awareness and self-development through balanced processing of information and relational transparency on the part of leaders working with followers (Rego, Sousa, Marques and Cunha, 2012). Mentorship and leadership in caring professions have been guided by leadership theories. Their focus, however, tends to be on the behaviors and attributes of the leader, while ignoring the person (self). Authentic leadership addresses this great deficiency by promoting self-awareness and self-development. Nursing is relational focus, as such, practicing authentic leadership assists in knowing oneself, and the leader is mindful of others as they help them to know their self and personally develop. Applying authentic leadership in nursing improves nurses’ wellbeing, job satisfaction, and learning. Authentic leadership has far reaching implications for recruitment, retention and effective organizational financial performance.

Biography

Venise Bryan has completed her Master of Science in Nursing Education from the University of the West Indies in 2011. Currently she is pursuing her PhD in Educational Leadership from the University of Calgary. She has been a Faculty Member at the University of the West Indies School of Nursing and at the University of Calgary. Her area of interest is in Nursing Education with special interest in interpersonal relations from a teaching and learning context and authentic leadership. She is involved in mission groups that take healthcare to people living in various countries in Africa and the Caribbean.

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