

The Nurse as an Advocate

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The Nurse as an Advocate

Nursing advocacy entails the representation of patients, communities and other health workers by a nurse or group of nurses. All nurses have an integral role to play in establishing successful and integrative advocacy. When nurses advocate for individual patients, they advise them on beneficial healthcare practices or consult other nurses to ensure they provide the best possible care. Community advocacy entails creating local interventions that benefit members, such as free check-ups and disease awareness campaigns. Nurse leaders also advocate for their colleagues by pushing for policy changes that will facilitate better service delivery. The journey towards becoming a nurse advocate is not easy. Mason et al. (2020) highlight the stories of several nurse leaders and their path towards advocacy. This essay discusses their driving factors and challenges and ways of expanding leadership and advocacy skills.

Driving Factors

The first advocate is Delaware's twenty-sixth Lt. Governor. She is a nurse, and she uses her political position to advocate for better healthcare policies and regulations. Her position as a nurse advocate came from a combination of political pedigree, public health service and voluntary background. She comes from a family of influential politicians (Mason et al., 2020). Thus, the family setup helped her establish a sense of service and duty during her formative years. She also served in the public health sector as a nurse. Her position allowed her to interact with community members often and understand the challenges they experience. Finally, she has volunteered in various capacities throughout her career. Voluntary participation allowed her to gain invaluable leadership and advocacy skills that she employs to date.

Dr Catherine Allin's advocacy drive also stems from voluntary work, as well as early leadership experience. Her role as a volunteer leader allowed her to gain crucial insights into the expectations of representative positions. She began assessing her leadership skills early in her career and knows how effectively influence policymaking and large-scale management interventions.

Miss Wang began her career as a health care worker. Conducting the primary nursing duties exposed her to nurses' and patients' plight. Hence, she got the motivation to attack a position where she could influence positive change. She chose a path to nurse entrepreneurship. Her narrative forced her always to consider what is best for her clients. Subsequently, she developed a framework where patients always come first, which is integral to her advocacy role.

Little Emma Dolan drive comes her family and early leadership participation. She is the mother of nine children. As a mother, she had to learn to listen and guide her younger siblings. Therefore, she developed her elementary leadership and advocacy skills at home. Later on, she became an active participant of the Young Women's Christian Association (YWCA). The group honed her skills even further, while also pushing her towards leadership and advocacy.

Challenges

All four nurse advocates have experienced challenges along their path to effective nursing advocacy. The first advocate asserts that she sometimes struggles to balance her political duties, affiliations and perceptions with her nursing duties. People judge politicians based on their political affiliations and area of representation. She states that it is sometimes difficult to convince people of your true intentions when they have already created a perception like against you (Johnson et al., 2019). She also has to balance her local political activities with nursing advocacy duties. Therefore, while her political position enables her to represent nurses, it also creates challenges hindering her success.

Dr Catherine Akhig's greatest challenge was securing a leadership position. She could not find a platform to create connections, gain experience or exhibit her leadership skills. In the beginning, the best position she could get was a client advocate in the Elmhurst community based nursing (Johnson et al., 2019). Despite the drawback, she continued pursuing leadership positions until she eventually became an integral leader in her community.

Miss Way and Linda Burns Bolton have encountered a similar challenge a long path towards nursing leadership and advocacy. Way began her career as a bedside nurse, advanced to a nurse educator and nurse consultant before eventually becoming a nurse

entrepreneur and business owner (Johnson et al., 2019). Her journey was slow but steady to her eventual success. Each position presented unique challenges which could have easily discouraged. Nevertheless, she persevered. Nelson has also had a lengthy career that finally began in the TVCA. She has also served on several local nursing organizations before landing her current role (Johnson et al., 2019). While each position was a learning opportunity, she had to endure social and professional barriers.

Discussion and Comparison of Barriers and Challenges

I can identify with many of the advocates' barriers and challenges. Some of the most compelling driving factors are volunteering, gaining nursing skills and early leadership experience. The common challenges that the advocates endure include career difficulties, social isolation or competing interests, and the rigorous career path. Each barrier and challenge influences a young nurse's perceptions, decisions and their eventual career level in some leadership and advocacy.

Volunteering is an essential motivation for advocacy. First, it allows one to learn skills and explore new ones. Many organizations accept volunteers in various positions (Jand et al., 2019). Taking on the role exposes one to the industry's demands. For instance, during my nursing school years, I would volunteer as a nursing aide in the local healthcare center

doing my best. My duties were simple, but they afforded me the chance to learn from professionals and experience what it would be like to practice outside an academic setting. Volunteering also exposes one to new people and various challenges (Jand et al., 2019). At the center, I met various professionals who gave me useful insights to use in my future career. I also witnessed the challenges that nurses and patient encounter. Since the academic setting is less time-consuming than working practice, I had time to reflect on the challenges and determine how I could solve them currently and in the future. My voluntary experience is slightly different from the advocate discussed earlier, who mainly participated in community and leadership roles. While I hope to get such a chance soon, I am content that my exposure, especially before completing nursing school, will create a foundation for future leadership and advocacy roles. Doing nursing roles and only leadership experiences also help one identify the issues they wish to address in future (Johnson et al., 2019). While they might not be my main driving factors currently, I appreciate the universal role they play in motivating others to become nurse advocates.

The advocacy nursing career and practice are full of challenges. First, tight working schedules and bureaucratic make it difficult for organizations to accommodate new members, even volunteers. I had applied to several other facilities before I got a voluntary

positions at the local healthcare center. Such educational difficulties make it harder for nurses graduate and continuing students to gain leadership and advocacy experience. Therefore, one should learn to be patient and seize any opportunity they get. One must also be patient as they advance their career from basic entry-level positions such as bedside nursing to national advocacy. Finally, avoid taking and competing interests longer advocacy. One must attain a political or professional position to influence healthcare policies. However, such positions require compromise and collaboration. One must balance their nursing duties with the politician's demands, which is not often easy.

Skill Expansion

The next five years will be critical to my career growth. I intend to make significant strides to become a national nursing advocate. I will require skill expansion to accomplish my goals. I intend to do so through continuing education and career diversification. Education opens up new opportunities (Lifton & Thomas, 2019). For instance, a master's degree allows one to become a faculty member leader. The courses will also offer a crucial theoretical framework upon which I can develop my leadership style and philosophy. Advanced studies require excellent time management, but I believe I can find a way to balance my practice and education.

I also intend to diversify my career. All the advocates discussed above have worked in more than one field. Thus, I cannot overlook the significance of career diversification. I will consider enjoining new healthcare related fields such as community and public health nursing. I will also participate in local political forums to create new connections and improve my leadership and advocacy skills.

Conclusion

The nurse advocates highlight some common driving factors and challenges in nursing advocacy. Their remarks are suitable to direct all nursing students and practitioners. Moreover, they encourage others to join them in improving the profession. I intend to follow their advice and become an influential nurse leader. I will be patient as I enhance my skills and knowledge as I aim to oversee policy and strategy changes that will guide the nursing sector in the future.

References

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