Self-Assessment

Helping Hands Group Project/NURS 440

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This is a self-assessment of the roles I have taken during the group work of the organizational strategic plan project for Nursing 440. In this self-assessment, I will evaluate my role as a leader, follower, manager and collaborator while working with the group, Helping Hands. I will explore the conflict's Helping Hands encountered and how I learned from these. I will use this assessment to outline steps for further growth.

Leadership

Sims suggests all nurses are leaders by virtue of knowledge in our area of expertise (2009, p. 272). By this definition, every person in this class is a leader. However, we each came to this group bringing a different level of experience and expertise. Leadership is demonstrated by the ability to influence the other members of the group to work toward the goal (Yoder-Wise, 2011, p. 40). I began to demonstrate leadership when the group questioned the vision of the Helping Hands adult daycare during the goals and objectives assignment. By using the personal power of expertise in the form of knowledge gained from research, I was able to influence the group to see the necessity of developing a daycare for adults in Mecosta County rather than a senior center (Alkire, 2011, p.1). I also led the budget and final paper portion of the project with personal power. I gathered the necessary knowledge for the budget, put a large amount of effort and time into clarifying this part of the project and shared this information with the group to form the final budget project. The amount of time and research I brought to the final paper gave me the characteristic of legitimacy of leadership that the other members seemed to support (Alkire, 2011, p.1). In addition, I acted as the internal coordinator of all of the projects by

clarifying what was necessary, putting them in proper format and submitting them. This

increased my relevance to the group project (Alkire, 2011, p. 6).

Followership

"Followership is engaging with others who are leading … by contributing to the problem

identification, completing tasks, and providing feedback…" (Yoder-Wise, 2011, p. 6). I began

playing this role from the first conceptualization of the idea of developing an adult daycare. I

asked questions, clarified the purpose of the project and the requirements of each step, added my

input based on research and frequently summarized the group work in all nine steps to the final

paper and presentation.

Manager

In making sure the final product of all submissions met the requirements, I acted as

manager for all of the projects. I was most often the first to post questions and clarification of

each individual step, as I like to work ahead of time. I identified this need to the group when

seeking members and forming the group. Frequently, I started the initial project and submitted it

to the group for their input. This was the case in the budget preparation and the final paper.

Collaborator

Collaboration includes "sharing of planning, making decisions, solving problems, setting

goals, assuming responsibility, working together cooperatively, communicating, and

coordinating openly (Gardner, 2005, p. 2). This is often discussed as teamwork (Gardner, 2005,

p. 2). Collaboration was evident from the onset of the Organizational Strategic Plan Project. We

passed each step back and forth adding input and research based evidence. This provided a

finished product that was a sum of the group's efforts. In the original planning, I brought in the

statistics and demonstrated the need for the service we were developing. Based on personal

experience, I asked the group to consider respite care as an important benefit for this type of service. I worked with the other members of the group on deciding the wording of the mission, goals and objectives. We passed each step of the project between members to determine the best result.

Conflict

Helping Hand's initial conflict was identified while we were forming our goals and objectives. It was discovered during this time that members of the team had very different ideas on the actual type of service we were developing. We all had a different vision of what a senior service should look like. Yoder-Wise says, "Conflict arises when there are different interpretations of a situation" (2011, p. 467). To resolve this conflict, I shared information I had found about the growing needs of the elderly. With participation from the other members of the group, Helping Hands formed a better idea of what services would be the best for the project.

The other conflict I encountered was more interpersonal. During the budget planning, my requests to get started early and for participation from the group went mostly unanswered. The little information that was contributed did not meet the requirements of the assignment. With two members out of town and unresponsive, the remaining member (who had work responsibilities) and I designed a budget with little feedback from the others. I used the method of avoidance to resolve this conflict because of time constraints. Until this time, we had been working well as a group. Yoder-Wise says sometimes it is better to walk away from a no-win situation (2011, p. 469). Helping Hands returned to their normal collaborative working relationship after this issue.

Learning

Both conflicts could have been avoided by early communication. A more thorough discussion of the vision earlier in the project would have put everybody on the same page sooner in the process. The use of e-mail sometimes makes it more difficult to "determine one's intention" (Cragan, Kasch, & Wright, 2009, p.314). Developing into a team requires engaging in self-disclosure, developing interpersonal trust, and managing individual differences (Cragan, Kasch, & Wright, 2009, p.22). This is more difficult with on-line (virtual) teamwork (Cragan, Kasch, & Wright, 2009, p.321). "Communicating and explaining- again and again" is necessary in leading and managing (Yoder-Wise, 2011, p. 17). Lesson's one and two of the Ten Lessons in Collaboration are "Know Thyself" and "Learn to Value and Manage Diversity" (Gardner, 2005, p. 2-3). Early in the formation of the team, I could have contributed more toward the group orientation (newly formed identity) by disclosing more about myself and my expectations of the group work (Cragan, Kasch, & Wright, 2009, p.37). This would have led to an early decision on division of labor and leadership on the various steps to the final project.

"Swift trust describes the type of trust that develops within teams that work under tight deadlines and with a limited history and future" (Cragan, Kasch, & Wright, 2009, p.319). This is necessary for team success and particularly important for virtual teams (Cragan, Kasch, & Wright, 2009, p.319). This is something I need to learn to develop early in the process to avoid feeling as if I need to manage every aspect of the project. I also need to respect my other team members and understand that my need to always complete work early is my problem, not theirs.

Steps for Further Growth

In my next virtual teamwork project, I will contribute more during the onset of group formation to the process of a group orientation to identify group goals and my individual goals. I hope this will lead the group to dividing leadership responsibilities. I will continue to share in

collaborating with the decided leader. In other leadership opportunities, I will make sure to

include the group in developing a vision and contributing to the solution to the problem. I also

must learn to respect individual differences, particularly with timeliness.

Conclusion

I participated in every role while completing the Organizational Strategic Plan Project.

The Helping Hands group worked well in sharing the leadership role and collaborating to

achieve the final recognized goal. More communication early in the process would have

eliminated the minimal conflict we had. I identified a need to manage projects because of my

personal need to be ahead of schedule. I need to develop a trust and respect for group members

as individuals early on. This type of attitude will help any group develop more of a cohesiveness

to increase the quality of the outcome (Cragan, Kasch, & Wright, 2009, p.17).

I have many opportunities to exhibit leadership in my current position. I will continue to

precept new employees to my department and hope to inspire other nurses by example to further

their careers. I will collaborate with co-workers on the various shared governance committees

on which I serve. A new opportunity to lead has presented itself by my election as co-

chairperson of the hospital-wide shared governance committee, the Maternal-Child Council.

Here, I will be able to use communication skills learned to ensure the vision and goals are clear.

By respecting each member of the committee, encouraging, and valuing their contributions, I

hope to influence the quality of work produced by this committee.

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