

EMPOWERMENT IN NURSING

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The concept of empowerment is extensively used in the development of nursing care, education and management. Having authority and being empowered are critical to nursing leadership as these two factors enable nurse leaders to provide efficient and effective care to patients under the umbrella of their senior nursing role (Hughes et al., 2015). Empowerment in nursing has been studied for decades, and there has been growing global research interest in the subject (Kuokkanen et al., 2003; Pines et al., 2012; Woodward, 2019).

The empowerment ideology is rooted in social action where empowerment was associated with attempts to increase the power of oppressed groups (Woodward, 2019). According to Udod (2012), empowerment is enabling an individual to act by sharing the power with others to achieve a common goal as well as gain control over own their lives and become aware of practices that constraints their work in an organization. Rega et al. (2017) define nursing empowerment "as a condition in which individual nurses take control of his/her practice, successfully fulfilling the responsibilities of an organization (p.608)". Some of the characteristics of empowerment highlighted in the literature include power, control, ability, competence, self-efficacy, autonomy, knowledge, development, self-determination, and strengthening of one position (Trus et al., 2011).

In the organizational environment, empowerment is described as a process leading to increased productivity and effectiveness. A nurse manager plays a crucial role in developing an empowering work environment by facilitating the tools needed for support, guidance, and influencing positive change (DiNapoli et al, 2016). The empowerment of nurse managers' is one of the essential elements of managerial and organizational effectiveness. When nurse managers are trained to be empowered, they can ensure nursing teams they supervise will be able to provide high-quality care for patients (Trus et al., 2012).

Empowerment has been viewed in literature mainly from structural, psychological and critical social theoretical perspectives. According to Kanter's (1993) structural empowerment is the presence of social

structures in the workplace that enable employees to accomplish their work in meaningful ways with access to relevant information, support, resources and opportunities for learning and growth within an organization (cited Wong & Laschinger, 2013). Psychological empowerment is perceived as employees' psychological perception being valued and attitude reflected by their sense of control at their workplace (Shapira-Lishchinsky & Benoliet, 2018). Critical social empowerment elicits employee's understanding of whether they are viewed as professionals by members of the multi-disciplinary team and whether they are involved in decisions that affect themselves, the organization, and the multidisciplinary team (Li et al., 2018).

The link between employee empowerment and job satisfaction reinforces the importance of favorable workplace conditions for nurses' quality of work life (Wang et al., 2012). Fostering empowerment can increase the performance of nurses through commitment, job satisfaction, intention-to-stay, less turnover leading to enhance career success for nurses (Dan et al. 2018). Evidence suggests working in an environment that empowers nurses to practice according to professional standards has a lower level of job stress and may protect them from burning out in work settings. (Guo et al., 2016). This article has highlighted the importance of empowerment in nursing. An empowering

work environment can facilitate support, guidance, and influencing positive change among nurses and the nursing care they provide. Empowered nurses feel more capable of shaping their work role, contributing to the broader organizational context and a high quality of healthcare services.

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