

THE LEADERSHIP CHALLENGE **research**

THE MOST TRUSTED SOURCE ON BECOMING A BETTER LEADER

TITLE Leadership Practices and Emotional Intelligence of Nursing Leaders

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OBJECTIVE The purpose of this study was to examine the self-reported and described leadership practices of Emotionally Intelligent nurse leaders.

METHODOLOGY

The study was conducted within a Catholic healthcare system in Massachusetts using all nurse leaders who volunteered to participate (N = 50, representing a 62% response rate). They completed the Leadership Practices Inventory (self), the MSCEIT (Mayer, Salovey and Caruso Emotional Intelligence Test; Mayer et al. 2000), and 14 participated in a semi-structured interview. Eighty percent of the nurses were over 40 years of age, primarily Caucasian (98%) with a college degree (92%), with an average of nearly 24 years of service as a nurse and 5.3 years as nurse leaders.

KEY FINDINGS

The most frequently engaged in leadership practice was Enabling, followed by Modeling, Encouraging, Challenging and Inspiring. There were no statistically significant relationships between any of the five leadership practices and EI scores. Interview data revealed that Enabling was the most frequently practiced leadership behavior. All three low EI scores in the interview sample described, during their emotional worse critical incident, a desire to Challenge the Process as a leadership behavior. Respondents also described Encouraging and Modeling but did not make any references to Inspiring a Shared Vision.

The findings about the importance of Enabling Others to Act, according to the researcher, was “not unexpected given the nature of nursing and the need for these leaders to provide a milieu that will enable their staff to deliver nursing care to patients and their loved ones” (pp. 92-93). Also not unexpected, was the importance of Modeling the Way “given the need for nursing leaders to ‘walk their talk’ and role model the behaviors that they value” (p. 94).

“It is recommended that nurse leaders be encouraged to incorporate such leadership practices as Enabling Others to Act, Encouraging the Heart, and Modeling the Way. These three leadership practices were described as the most common behaviors among EI nurse leaders” (p. 132).