

"Awakening the Leader Within"

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Leadership does not necessarily involve a specifically carved out position, but it does entail a willingness among workers to step up and fulfill needs or empower other workers to perform better. In the healthcare sector, there are many obstacles facing leaders, especially nursing leaders, including strained resources, larger workloads and higher patient acuity. These obstacles tend to cause job dissatisfaction, poor performance and apathy among nurses, experts say. Nurses interested in becoming leaders must recognize their fears and apathy and recommit themselves to caring and transforming the healthcare environment. These individuals must learn to overcome their fears, speak up about care recommendations and become a "care innovator." Lessons learned from care mistakes or other situations should be shared with other nurses and caregivers to create an internal and informal mentorship with colleagues. Nurses also should voice their concerns and suggestions through one-on-one conversations, multidisciplinary rounds and committee meetings, though conversations must remain professional in manner and tone. Building these relationships can empower others in the facility to offer suggestions, recommendations and innovations that improve quality care. Experts also recommend that nurses become involved in professional organizations and the policy-making process at healthcare facilities because those policies determine how and what resources are allocated.