

# Leadership: Pioneering Possibility & Enabling Potential

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## ABSTRACT

### *Introduction/Background*

The national picture of Mental Health Services in Australia highlights increasing expenditure and growing facilities in line with increasing episodes of mental health care with a workforce of 11,558 mental health nurses. Mental health nursing—with its own social system—requires transformational leadership to navigate the constantly changing landscape. Overarching requirements that influence accountable leadership include national mental health standards, state legislative requirements, consumer perspectives of mental health care and local strategic direction. To safeguard patient outcomes an innovative leadership program was developed for registered nurses (RN) to meet the service needs for succession planning and workforce development.

### *Aim/Purpose of the project*

The project provided the RNs an opportunity to examine and experience the role of the senior nurse using a supportive framework for understanding effective leadership. The pathway encouraged nurses to consider leadership in the light of their enthusiasm and optimism to achieve common goals through expanding related knowledge, skills and attitudes.

### *Methods/Process/Who is being studied*

The six month program transferred the focus from clinical skills to a personal transformational approach connecting to the level 1 RNs own commitment and passion using self-reflection, clinical supervision, mentorship, self-evaluation and supported rostered senior nurse shifts.

### *Results/Outcome*

RNs enjoyed the personal approach—not solely focused on clinical mental health knowledge and skill—but on the more challenging aspects of visible professional and organisational accountability. The aspects that contributed to personal and professional growth included; decision-making, building morale and culture, managing problematic staff, having difficult conversations and conflict resolution. The rostered supported coordination shifts contributed to reduced anxiety.

### *Recommendations/Conclusion*

The RNs reported being empowered, respected and confident in their personal and professional transformation to the senior nurse role.