

Integrative Leadership in a Bachelor of Science in Nursing-Integrative Health Program

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ABSTRACT

Integrative nursing leadership blends appreciative, relational, authentic, mindful, transformational, and compassionate leadership styles. The following 7 tenets comprise integrative nursing leadership: (1) Beginner's Mind, (2) meaningful relationships. (3) authenticity, (4) role modeling, (5) gratitude, (6) whole person, and whole team care, and (7) the use of team integrative modalities. Clinical nurse leaders may want to consider adopting integrative nursing leadership to adequately lead a nursing workforce interested in transforming healthcare to a more wholistic (bodymindspirit) interprofessional care model.

Keywords: integrative, leadership, wholistic, bodymindspirit

3 Critical Elements

- Nurse graduates interested in transforming healthcare to a more wholistic (bodymindspirit) interprofessional care model will soon enter the nursing workforce.
- Integrative nursing leadership is needed to lead this workforce, which blends numerous relationship-based leadership styles to achieve whole person, whole team leadership.
- The 7 Tenets of Integrative Nursing Leadership include: (1) Beginner's Mind, (2) meaningful relationships. (3) authenticity, (4) role modeling, (5) gratitude, (6) whole person, and whole team care, and (7) the use of team integrative modalities.

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The University of Arizona, College of Nursing, launched a first-of-its-kind in the nation Bachelor of Science in Nursing with an emphasis in Integrative Health (BSN-IH) program in Gilbert, Arizona in August 2019. The BSN-IH program is an online, concept-based curriculum with in-person seminars, examination assessments, laboratory, and simulation. The BSN-IH program addresses the growing emphasis in healthcare toward whole person (bodymindspirit or BMS) care of patients and their families blending conventional and complementary care. Graduates of the BSN-IH will be pioneers leading integrative health as part of the interprofessional health team. Integrative leadership is needed to adequately transition these graduates from the student role into the professional role of nursing.

Background

In 2016, the University of Arizona, College of Nursing, established the Integrative Nursing Fellowship (INF), based upon Kreitzer and Koithan's integrative nursing philosophy and 6 principles.¹ INF fellows learn to thread and embed the integrative nursing philosophy and 6 principles into nursing education, leadership, practice, and research. The BSN-IH program is based upon the integrative nursing philosophy and 6 principles. At the graduate level, the University of Minnesota offers a Doctor of Nursing Practice (DNP) in Integrative Health and Healing. No undergraduate nursing program focused in integrative health has existed until now.

Integrative Nursing Philosophy

Koithan identified complex systems science (CSS) as the meta-theoretical underpinning of integrative nursing and complex adaptive systems (CAS) theory as a more specific branch of complexity science.² CAS theory finds biological systems to be complex, dynamic, emergent, multi-dimensional, unpredictable, adaptable, flexible, open, and interconnected with their

environments.³ Kreitzer and Koithan describe the 6 integrative nursing principles that were used as the guiding philosophical framework to educate nurses in the BSN-IH program.¹

Principle 1: Human beings are whole systems inseparable from their environments.

Principle 2: Human beings have the innate capacity for health and wellbeing.

Principle 3: Nature has healing and restorative properties that contribute to health and wellbeing.

Principle 4: Integrative nursing is person-centered, and relationship based.

Principle 5: Integrative nursing practice is informed by evidence using a full range of therapeutic modalities from least invasive to more.

Principle 6: Integrative nursing focuses on the health and wellbeing of caregivers as well as those they serve.

Integrative Nursing Curriculum

The 6 integrative nursing principles are threaded and embedded throughout the curriculum during development. Students carry the 6 integrative nursing principles on a 6-colored (purple, blue, green, yellow, orange, pink) laminated card on their lanyards to practice these principles. A compassionate curriculum utilizes student-centered scheduling to alleviate over scheduling across courses in each semester. The arts and humanities are interwoven in the curriculum to emphasize multidimensional humanness of patients. The educational forms (SBAR, concept maps, student clinical performance evaluation, simulation scenarios, integrative capstone project, etc.) have been adapted to include whole person (BMS) care and alignment with the principles. Competency testing on various integrative therapies (guided imagery, healing/therapeutic touch, mindfulness, etc.) occur in compliance with health agency policy and procedure. Students are not required to attain additional education and/or certification in these

integrative therapies. Integrative clinical site contracts are being sought. Students learn about integrative instrumentation and conduct critical appraisals related to integrative nursing care in their nursing research and scholarly inquiry course. In the academic setting, a lavender lounge room is used to calm and reduce stress.

Resilience building through student self-care is paramount. The Quadruple Aim⁴ emphasizes the importance of healthcare providers own self-care as a critical way to build resilience. Students are required to reflect on their own emotional, physical, and spiritual self-care practices and these activities account for a small percentage of their required clinical hours. For example, outdoor nature activities are incorporated into students' seminars, laboratory, and clinical experiences. Faculty meet with students on the campus grounds near a water fountain to discuss resilient building ideas/tactics, role model, and support the students. Application of the integrative nursing philosophy and principles provide students and practitioners with a foundation to lead and transform healthcare. Clinical nurse leaders will be impacted by these changes, thus, may want to consider adopting a new leadership style to meet the growing needs on whole person care for both patients and their staff.

Integrative Leadership

A paucity of literature can be found related specifically to integrative nursing leadership. Most of what has been published is found in the business sector rather than healthcare and far less in academe. In the business sector, integrative leadership is described as “a wholistic approach to leading yourself, others, and in organization/community, in a reflective, conscious, and responsive way.”⁵ Weil and colleagues⁶ describe integrative medicine as “healing-oriented medicine that takes account of the whole person, including all aspects of lifestyle, emphasizing the therapeutic relationship between practitioner and patient, that is informed by evidence, and

makes use of all appropriate therapies.”⁶ Perlman and colleagues⁷ describe 5 domains of integrative leadership to express an organizational process change that one person can make, however, does not address the qualities or characteristics of other integrative healthcare team members.

Integrative *nursing* leadership appears to blend the components of authentic, relational, mindful, appreciative, transformational, and compassionate leadership styles (Figure 1).⁸ Authentic leaders are known to foster trusting relationships thereby building their legitimacy as leaders⁹. Relational leaders create positive relationships that sustain organizational change through ethical inclusivity.¹⁰ Mindful leaders are aware of both themselves as well as others to stay in the present moment.¹¹ Appreciative leaders understand relational capacity and the potential to mobilize power.¹² Transformational leaders bring about transformation through inspiration, innovation, and motivation with team members.¹³ Compassionate leaders place themselves in a position of knowing another person’s life and experiences by showing kindness and compassion.¹⁴ The common theme across these leadership styles is relationship-based leadership.



Figure 1. Integrative Nursing Leadership⁸

The 7 Tenets of Integrative Nursing Leadership

The following 7 tenets (Figure 2)¹⁵ were experientially developed and based upon my learning about the integrative nursing philosophy, and the 6 integrative nursing principles during my fellowship. This formed the basis to lead the BSN-IH faculty team in the development of a revolutionary curriculum.



Figure 2. The 7 Tenets of Integrative Nursing Leadership¹⁵

Tenet 1: Begin with a Beginner’s mind.

Tenet 2: Build meaningful relationships.

Tenet 3: Cultivate authenticity in yourself and others.

Tenet 4: Role model resilience, balance, and harmony.

Tenet 5: Show appreciation, gratitude, and recognition.

Tenet 6: Develop and care for the “whole” person and “whole” team.

Tenet 7: Build in time for reflection, silence, mindfulness, and meditation, and more.

Tenet 1

In Zen Buddhism, the Beginner's Mind, or Japanese term *Shoshin*, is the act of keeping one's mind open to infinite possibilities by being ready for anything and everything.¹⁶ The integrative nurse leader should begin every professional interaction and meeting by being fully present. Embracing a Beginner's Mind entails an openness, eagerness, and awareness of ideas, perspectives, opinions, concerns, and areas for change, even when there is great knowledge or perspective on a matter before final decisions are made.

The BSN-IH faculty were inspired to develop a unique integrative nursing program that would stand out. The team created core attributes or characteristics of these graduates which include compassion, resilience, integrity, and balance. The team created a story about the development of this curriculum using a 6-petaled multi-colored flower¹⁷ to represent the 6 integrative nursing principles (Figure 3). This educational tool allows students to center/focus themselves on the patient as a whole person (bodymindspirit) prior to entering the patient simulation room.

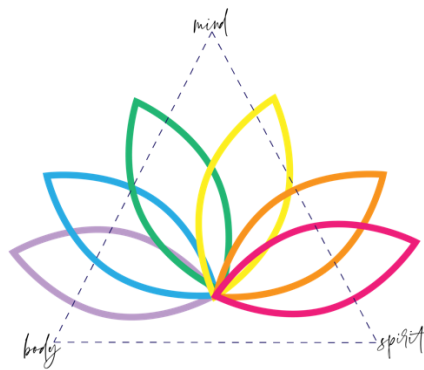


Figure 3. Centering/focusing activity using 6-petal lotus flower image¹⁷

Tenet 2

The integrative nurse leader is highly relationship focused, which is the core of integrative nursing leadership. Relationships are built on honest and open communication,

collaboration, mutual respect, reliability, loyalty, and trust. These relationships include a positive relationship with Source, self and others, the environment, and nature. Positive relationships can be fostered by looking for the goodwill or favor in everyone and everything. Relationships and other social determinants have been proven to affect the long-term health, longevity, and the health and well-being of people globally.^{18,19} The development of healthy relationships with boundaries helps to keep resilience high and stress low. Integrative leaders listen and lead with their hearts, motivating, and inspiring their team members. They are slow to speak, but quick to listen. Relational beings realize the interconnectedness of all interactions and reactions with others and how these can build up or break down relationships. Much focus is placed on team members strengths rather than their areas for development. Integrative nurse leaders must synergistically blend the team's strengths together. The integrative nurse leader knows that more work will get accomplished by establishing strong civil relationships with their team. They are willing to forgive misunderstandings, shortcomings, and/or oversights. Integrative nurse leaders keep their promises and commit to speaking truth at all times, thereby, exhibiting integrity.

Tenet 3

The cultivation of authenticity of self and others is an important quality in establishing integrative leadership. Integrative nurse leaders know who they are and where they're going. A deep level of conscious self-awareness resides in these leaders. These leaders not only know their own areas of strength and limitations, but their team members, too. Being authentic conveys transparency and truth. Being genuine involves being straightforward in all discussions, explanations, and collaborations. The integrative leader knows that when they're asked a question, an honest answer is needed without delay or deception. They approach matters head on with full sincerity and transparency to the best of their knowledge and ability. The cultivation of

these qualities is expected of others, too. This tenet is nurtured by genuinely accepting others for who they are and what they think. Integrative nurse leaders are ethical in their approach and address all situations, conversations, and problems at-hand.

Tenet 4

Integrative nurse leaders role model resilience, balance, and harmony. Engaging in personal activities that bear great pleasure and happiness nurtures resilience. Mental strength, or resilience, is role modeled in interactions and meetings. Growth and finding new directions to succeed results when failing is not considered to be an option. Working and reworking tasks help to push through all issues big and small. Challenges are viewed as momentary and exhibiting a “can do” attitude models resilience. Resilience is built on excellent self-care, which involves incorporating a healthy and nutritious diet, getting plenty of sleep and exercise, and finding meaning and purpose in one’s personal and professional life. Integrative nurse leaders should meet with their team members to ask questions about their professional journey and aspirations. Balance is achieved through self-care and stress management techniques. Personal/work balance can be accomplished by creating schedules and calendars, carving out time for self, engaging in self-care, and ensuring an adequate workload. Harmony is established through mutual respect, being helpful, communication, optimism, raising each other up-not down, avoiding gossip, and socializing outside work. The willingness to embrace uncertainty and unpredictability and hearing all voices in collaboration with others also helps to establish harmony.

Tenet 5

Integrative nurse leaders value, appreciate, and recognize their team. The celebration of special events, birthdays, births, marriages, etc. is one way to recognize individuals. The more that appreciation and recognition is given, the more it is returned to the leader. Showing

appreciation and recognition increases team morale and fosters a kind, caring, and harmonious environment. These leaders do not take credit for work created by one or more of their team. They send thank you notes and publicly acknowledge individual team members for their work efforts. Team rewards, incentives, and awards are other ways to show the team how much you appreciate, value, and recognize them. Small gifts such as lunch, gift cards, flexible schedules, social media, are other ways to show your team how much you care and appreciate them and their work. Outstanding faculty are often recognized by students who are the key stakeholders in academics. These faculty receive academic awards or may be asked to pin students at ceremonial events. A leader takes care of their team and in turn the team takes care of the leader. The golden rule of treating others the way you want to be treated applies to the integrative nurse leader.

Tenet 6

Developing the whole person and the whole team is an important task for the integrative nurse leader. The hiring of faculty with diversity and inclusivity in mind helps to establish a whole team with a myriad of perspectives, beliefs, and values. Integrative leaders promote equity and justice. Final decisions are made by the team after everyone has been given plenty of time to think, process, and reflect upon potential positive and/or negative outcomes of these decisions. It is important to hear from everyone on the team in an environment that is safe and free of judgement or blame. The physical, emotional, and spiritual care of each member and whole team is important. Physical activity engagements should be regularly offered by the integrative nurse leader, such as tai chi or yoga. Emotional care involves an open-door policy to privately share and listen deeply to concerns. Spiritual care is facilitated by exploring each team member's dreams, purpose, talents, and aspirations as well as offering a sacred workspace. Sacred workspaces are created by meaningful surroundings with artifacts. Spiritual care can also be

facilitated by sitting with the team in silence to allow for issues to come forward without direction or interruption. Repeating mantras, journaling, reflective practices, chanting, and engaging in service activities are other avenues to feed the soul/spirit. A whole person, whole team approach moves the organization forward and builds capacity for transformation and innovation within the organization.

Tenet 7

Building in time for reflection, silence, mindfulness, and meditation in team meetings assist in meeting Tenet 7. Team meetings should incorporate integrative modalities such as mindfulness, centering/focusing, meditation, and showing gratitude help to begin collaborative work. Team members should share the responsibility of leading these integrative modalities at the beginning of meetings. Team members express gratitude toward each other before beginning team meetings since this increases positive feelings toward one another and increases team morale. This allows for the opportunity to publicly acknowledge the observations about each other that are so valuable to the team. There were walking meetings along a nearby canal to feel oneness with the environment. Faculty are encouraged to partake in these same activities with their students conducting seminars, prior to examinations and/or laboratory, simulation or practice. Walking the talk is a goal of the integrative faculty team.

Conclusion

Integrative nursing leadership blends various relationship-based leadership styles. Integrative nurse leaders effectively and efficiently manage energy to produce whole people and a whole team. Figure 4 illustrates²⁰ the academic-healthcare systems model. Complexity theory supports that changes at any level cause changes above or below at other levels. Clinical nurse leaders may want to consider adopting integrative nursing leadership to adequately lead a

nursing workforce interested in transforming healthcare to a more wholistic (bodymindspirit) interprofessional care model.

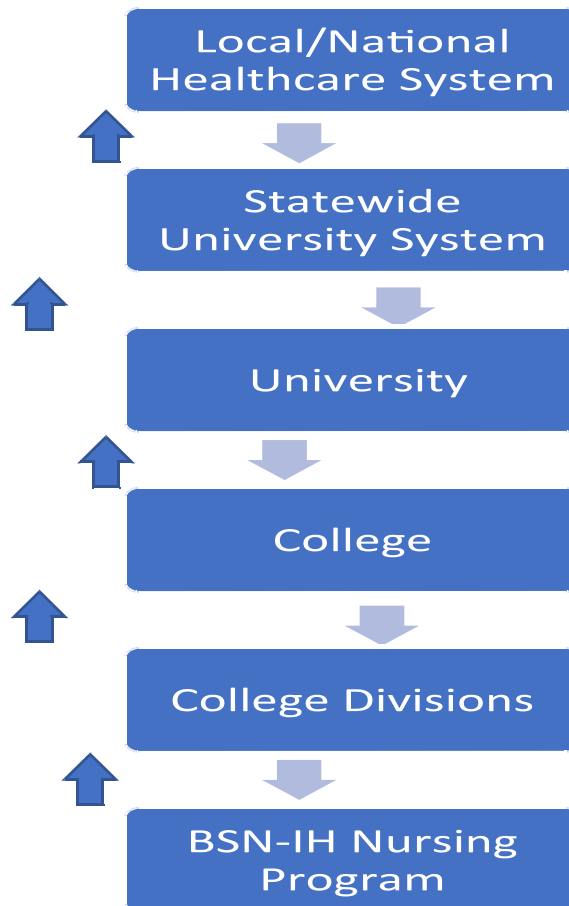


Figure 4. Academic-Healthcare Systems²⁰

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