



ERA+ Clinical Leadership in Nursing Education



Clinical Leadership in Nursing Education

Teaching material for communication lessons

“Not another system...”

Navigating resistance and leading change in clinical practice

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Content

- 1. Scenario description3
- 2. Roles and role distribution3
- 3. Clinical leadership competencies4
- 4. Learning objectives for students.....5
- 5. Case progression5
- 6. Materials needed.....7
- 7. Debriefing guidelines7
- 8. Additional comments8

1. Scenario description

Context

Medical-surgical hospital ward where a new digital remote patient monitoring system (wearable sensors + central dashboard) is being introduced to improve early detection of patient deterioration.

Starting situation

The hospital management has decided to implement the system quickly due to safety concerns. Some nurses are enthusiastic, but others are resistant:

- Senior nurses feel overwhelmed and sceptical about technology
- Concerns about increased workload and loss of clinical judgment
- Lack of clear communication and training
- A student nurse is asked to support the implementation on the shift

A tense team discussion emerges during a shift handover.

2. Roles and role distribution

Provide a brief explanation for each role.

Role	Description	Played by	Key behaviours / points to note
Student nurse (change advocate)	Final-year nursing student who has been briefed about the new system and is asked to support colleagues	Student	Use clear communication Show empathy for resistance Promote benefits without forcing Encourage dialogue
Senior nurse (resistant)	Experienced nurse, skeptical and frustrated about new system	Student	Express concerns openly Challenge the innovation Show emotional resistance
Charge nurse (under pressure)	Responsible for shift, supports change but is time-pressured	Teacher or student	Focus on efficiency and safety Can interrupt or escalate tension
Patient (optional)	Wearing monitoring device and asking questions	Student/extra	Ask about safety and privacy Create real-life pressure

3. Clinical leadership competencies

Primary competences – secondary competences addressed by this case

Domain – ethics

- Ethical competence (**ethical principles and values; professional integrity and accountability**)

Domain – professional nursing

- Clinical competence (**clinical competence in specific clinical area; nursing process; health promotion**)
- Quality management competence (**quality of care; patient safety**)
- Evidence based practice competence (**evidence based practice**)
- Decision making competence (**critical thinking; decision making; problem solving**)
- Self-development competence (**continuous professional development**)

Domain – innovation and change

- Visioning competence** (**future-oriented thinking; understanding the big picture; finding innovative approaches; questioning**)
- Change management competence** (**initiating change; advocating change; implementing change**)

Domain – Influencing and advocacy

- Influencing competence** (**influencing others; motivating others**)
- Patient advocacy competence (**patient advocacy**)

Domain – team leadership

- Team leadership competence** (**team formation, team coordination, positive working atmosphere**)
- Guidance competence (**supervision, mentoring**)

Domain – communication and collaboration

- Communication competence** (**effective communication, dialogical competence**)
- Collaboration competence (**interprofessional collaboration; professional collaboration**)

Specific behaviors practiced:

- **Managing resistance**
- **Giving constructive explanations**
- **Active listening**
- **Speaking up respectfully**
- **Conflict handling**

- Persuasive communication
- Framing benefits (“big picture thinking”)

4. Learning objectives for students

Students can:

- Communicate effectively with resistant colleagues during a change process
- Demonstrate leadership behaviours without formal authority
- Explain the benefits and risks of an innovation in a clear and balanced way
- Reflect on their role in implementing change in clinical practice

5. Case progression

Instructions for role players

Student nurse:

- Try to engage, not convince immediately
- Use questions and empathy
- Avoid defensiveness

Senior nurse:

- Show emotional and practical concerns
- Resist but remain realistic

Charge nurse:

- Introduce time pressure
- Demand action/results

Patient (optional):

- Ask about safety, data privacy, comfort

Timeline / phases

1. Start (briefing/hand-over situation)

- Introduction of new system
- Resistance voiced by senior nurse

2. Escalation

- Senior nurse expresses frustration
- Patient or workload increases tension
- Charge nurse pushes for quick decisions

3. Decision moment

- Student must respond:
 - Support colleagues?
 - Advocate for system?
 - Balance safety vs resistance?

4. Conclusion

- Team either:
 - Moves forward collaboratively
 - Remains divided
 - Escalates to conflict

Possible variations

More difficult

- Senior nurse becomes openly confrontational
- Technical issue with device
- Patient alarm triggers false alert

Simplified

- Less resistance
- Clear institutional support

Unexpected element

- Manager calls asking for progress update
- Family member questions new technology

6. Materials needed

Rooms / space

- Simulation room or classroom set up as nurse station

Props / documents

- Short briefing document about system
- Patient chart
- Simulated monitoring device or visual representation
- Instruction sheet for system

Technical support/materials

- Optional screen showing “monitoring dashboard” (mock-up)

7. Debriefing guidelines

Key questions

- How did you handle resistance?
- What communication strategies worked well?
- Did you acknowledge emotions? How?
- How did you present the value of innovation?
- What would you do differently?

Focus on behaviour (not just content)

- Tone of communication
- Listening vs arguing
- Leadership stance
- Emotional awareness

Link to competencies

- Visioning: Did the student connect to the “bigger picture”?
- Change management: Did they support implementation?
- Communication: Was the dialogue effective and respectful?

Possible pitfalls / sensitivities

- Students becoming defensive
- Ignoring emotional concerns

- Overly “selling” instead of listening
- Conflict escalation without resolution

8. Additional comments

Relevance for clinical leadership

This scenario reflects real-life challenges in innovation and change processes, requiring students to:

- Communicate effectively in resistance situations
- Show leadership without authority
- Balance patient safety, team concerns, and system implementation
- Use visioning and change management strategies

Safety, triggers, inclusivity

- Ensure psychological safety (no judgment during role-play)
- Allow time-out if needed
- Encourage reflection, not performance perfection

What to avoid at all costs

- Mocking resistance
- Oversimplifying change processes
- Ignoring patient perspective

Links to previous or future modules

- Communication skills (basic & advanced)
- Patient safety and quality improvement
- Leadership in nursing practice
- Digital health and innovation