



NURSING LEADERSHIP HIRING RELATED TO AGE, GENDER, & NONDISCRIMINATORY BEHAVIORS

GOAL

1. Encourage methods of nondiscrimination hiring practice and law compliance.
2. Present research on age and gender as it applies to hiring.
3. Present in-house and out-of-house protocols that evidence compliance to nondiscrimination.

KEYWORDS FOR APPLICATION

1. Discrimination versus Nondiscrimination
2. Nursing administrator/leader
3. Research
4. In-house and Out-of-house jobs/employment

Applying for a job can be an epiphany! The covert message might be, “We want a younger (hmmm) and maybe a male (hmmm) in a nursing administrative job!” Following is my journey through the significant research findings related to job discrimination—yes, even a nursing administrative/leadership position.

DISCRIMINATORY PRACTICE (FEDERAL GOVERNMENT & ELSEWHERE)

Discriminatory behaviors, by federal law, are unacceptable during or after employment. The federal list is far more encompassing than the usually stated age, gender, and sexual orientation. The list includes race, color, religion, sex, national origin, disability, political affiliation, marital status, membership in an employee organization, age, sexual orientation, gender identity, pregnancy, or *other factors—which could imply an easy in-house transfer.*

COMBINING RESEARCH AND NONDISCRIMINATORY LAWS

Intelligent administrators/leaders understand that a significant research finding is intended to augment our understanding of a researched topic. There is an awareness that there are exceptions to every research finding. However, significant research findings should cause a pause in our thinking to the point of (at least) increased awareness of the past, present, and intended future job hiring behaviors.

A significant research finding merely means there is a preponderance of evidence to indicate the research finding’s correctness. Combining external significant research findings, internal facility/organizational nondiscriminatory policies and procedures, required applicant information, and a related unbiased job description provide the broad-spectrum professional perspective for employment consideration.

IN-HOUSE HIRING

Our human thinking tendencies are related to our personal feelings, attitudes, emotions, and life experiences. These human tendencies encourage us, at times, to make discriminatory employment decisions. Often, these tendencies mean that current in-house (facility/organization) employees are transferred discriminately to a different job position within the facility/organization. Hence, the comment is often heard (unfortunately) and possibly a part of an in-house policy—"We always hire from within."

To help assure legally required nondiscriminatory laws are understood, an in-house nondiscriminatory compliance policy is prepared in printed form, displayed, and shared with all eligible potential employees regarding a planned job transfer. All in-house staff religiously follow nondiscriminatory hiring policies/processes before transferring employees to different in-house job assignments. Documenting a consistent nondiscriminatory policy and evidence of compliance will help protect against in-house illegal, discriminatory allegations.

In-house transfers to a new job title and responsibilities are posted or otherwise made known inside the facility/organization indicating the availability of an in-house administratively-determined job transfer. According to the established in-house nondiscriminatory policy, the information remains in place for a long time. It allows qualified in-house employees to apply for the in-house job and experience facility/organization nondiscrimination evidence.

FACILITY/ORGANIZATION BEHAVIOR POST RECEIPT OF JOB APPLICATION OR REQUESTED INFORMATION

The hiring department's response to a formal job application includes:

1. A thank-you letter for applying for a specific job and a statement that the facility/organization is nondiscriminatory in its hiring practices. State specifically the nondiscriminatory policy
2. A reiteration/list of all papers received from the applicant as a part of the job application procedure
3. A copy of the job description being offered or advertised. Indicate the current availability of the job. All applicants for the same position must have the same job description. A job description includes expectations of the required abilities related to cognition (knowing), psychomotor behaviors (doing), and affective (attitude) requirements.
4. A copy of the hiring nondiscriminatory policy/protocols/process.
5. A planned contact date and the closing date of hire.
6. An invitation to contact the hiring department stating the contact person's name, available contact times, and phone number.

A copy of all correspondence and verbal communication efforts about job employment is retained for the applicant's possible future discriminatory legal action.

Every potential employee for an in-house transfer or hiring as a new potential employee is treated similarly. (e.g., if one applicant requests any behaviors or specific meetings, all applicants are expected to perform similarly.)

Evidence of a facility/organization's discriminatory hiring behaviors/practices is an overt invitation for a potential out-of-house or in-house employee to challenge a facility's/organization legal nondiscriminatory hiring practices.

NURSING ADMINISTRATIVE/LEADERSHIP HIRING CONSIDERATIONS

Nursing administration/leadership is a highly scrutinized profession requiring adherence to legal nursing program behaviors. The professional academic expectations are strict. It requires a nursing administrator to perform a full-time job to meet professional and educational regulations, ensure quality classroom and clinical education and lead/manage nursing instructors to provide unquestionable and superb academic instruction.

Some college presidents/administrators require support in understanding nursing education and a nursing program's challenging legal requirements. The nursing program is probably one (maybe the only one) in a college setting that is so highly regulated regarding program organization, instructor competency, instruction, and clinical experience. Students must also pass rigorous state exams as proof of competence to practice the nursing profession.

A nursing administrator's life history has presented many nursing and educational challenges. They have historical pride in numerous and varied nursing and administrative situations and academic successes. This experience is a prerequisite to a nursing administrative responsibility. The past professional experiences quietly find their place as the *refining fire* of the nursing administrative role.

A nursing administrator (in addition to the nursing practice history, experience, and education) must have the ability to know how to coordinate student nursing experiences and guide nursing educators in meeting state and national nursing educational requirements. The challenge to orchestrate the many varied academic requirements, support faculty and students, maintain clinical relationships, and guide nursing educators in specific teaching behaviors is a privilege and challenge known only to a nursing administrator!

AGE AS IT RELATES TO NURSING LEADERSHIP ABILITIES

Age and experience are important factors determining leadership style, and age is one of the most important factors. It is commonly believed that experiential aging is an important contributor when determining behavior displayed by a leader. Numerous complex and contradictory findings on the relationship between leadership ability and age exist.

In 1997, research found that younger leaders were more effective than older leaders. However, in approximately 2003, increased leader age and follower satisfaction were positively related to older leaders—negatively associated with younger leaders.

Leadership attitudes are changing, and domination as a leader is becoming less important. Nurturing and “good-doing” are recognized as the most important. The affective state is important in literature--that is, how a person relates to feelings, attitudes, and behaviors. Transformation leadership and shared governance in nursing programs are important positive advances in leadership, and these positive factors appear to be reported most frequently among older leaders.

Some Published Research Findings Related to the Leadership Qualities of Older People

- Experience positive feelings and avoids negative emotions.
- Have learned to comprehend better and resolve negative events.
- Predict emotions elicited by future events more correctly.
- Have high control over their emotions.
- More positive and stable emotions.
- Show positive feelings and emotions.
- Exhibit less anger.
- Have low arousal of negative feelings causing more contentment.
- Have low arousal of negative feelings related to sadness.
- Have less anger, a low incident of sadness, and a high state of enthusiasm.
- Prioritize positive information over negative information.
- Pay greater attention to positive social cues, which positively affect emotions.
- Have more experience and, therefore, less dependent on outside information.
- Analyze a situation to comprehend and resolve challenging events.
- Use Transformational Leadership (considered “superior leadership” characterized by the “four I’s---Idealized influence, Inspirational motivation, Individual consideration, and Intellectual stimulation.)
- Have traits of empathy, collaboration, and emotional intelligence.
- Exhibit more positive leadership behaviors.

Some Published Research Findings Related to the Leadership Qualities of Women

- Are assertive and persuasive.
- Have a strong need to get things accomplished.
- Are willing to take risks.
- Are empathetic and flexible.
- Have strong interpersonal skills.
- Read situations accurately.
- Take in information for decision-making.
- Have the ability to bring others around to a point of view.
- Genuinely care about others.
- Leave others with a feeling of understanding, support, and value.
- Are more persuasive.

- When rejected—carry on with an “I’ll show you” attitude.
- Have team-building styles of leadership, problem-solving, and decision-making.
- Are high in teamwork, stability, motivation, and recognizing trends.
- Have a high business aptitude.
- Act on new ideas.
- Have high credibility with management.
- Recognize future potential.
- Have insight.
- Are sensitive.
- Work well with people.
- Have team-building abilities.
- Have problem-solving and decision-making abilities.
- Are more likely to ignore rules and take risks.
- Are more likely to practice Transformation Leadership and Shared Governance.
- Are more confident and caring.
- Experience more obstacles on their way to top leadership/management roles.

CONCLUSION REGARDING LEADERSHIP ABILITIES

The listing of published research on male leadership qualities is not as available as women leaders’ published research qualities. Historically, there seems to be an automatic association of *think manager—think male*. The research findings related to males’ and females’ good or bad decision-making styles *were not research-significant*. Many individuals (regardless of gender) are suited to different situations and job positions.

Leadership success for either gender is related to the culture of the facility/organization. For instance, males are more suited to military leadership, and social service and education are more suited to women. However, it seems that leadership attitudes are changing. Over the past two decades, women have become more prominent in significant leadership roles. Decision-making styles differ; however, both genders have equal task and relationship abilities.

Society expects (in many cases) that successful leadership is associated with masculinity. Research findings confirm that age is a far more significant consideration in both genders in determining leadership abilities. Females are often employed as nursing administrators/leaders due to universal female nurturing attributes.

The skills of accomplishing a successful nursing administrative/leadership role include “having been there” as a practicing nurse. Age, with all its implications, has its unspoken positive place.

Florence Nightingale said that nursing is an art, and if it is to be an art, it requires exclusive devotion, as hard a preparation as any painter or sculptor’s work. This preparation by experience and education is predominant among successful nursing administrators.

An *experientially-aged* nurse in the science/art of nursing as a nursing administrator/leader requires extensive university/college academic leadership preparation and administrative/leadership ability. The

nursing administrator/leader guides nursing educators to meet the rigorous demands of student teaching and promotes high state board success resulting in highly effective nursing health care providers.

RECOMMENDED READING

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