

## Suggested strategies for building relationships and trust

### Individual strategies

- Have an open door policy; post when you'll be available
- Practice management by walking around and spend time on the unit (Fletcher, 2001; McGilton et al., 2004; Peters & Waterman, 1982; Ray et al., 2002; Upenieks, 2002b)
- Check in at meetings and open forums to hear issues and concerns and what's going on in people's lives to foster relationships and provide support (Kofman, 1994)
- Communicate support to staff by determining and clarifying what they expect of their leaders (Kramer, Schmalenberg & Maguire, 2004)
- Provide ongoing informal feedback for jobs well done
- Learn mentorship skills (Doran et al., 2012)
- Volunteer to become a mentor and also a mentee (Doran et al., 2012)
- Learn about interprofessional practice and how to facilitate team-based work (Doran et al., 2012)
- Participate in RNAO clinical practice fellowships (Doran et al., 2012)
- Learn project management skills and volunteer to participate or lead a project or change initiative
- Support change initiatives and actively discuss projects and change initiatives with colleagues
- Learn about and implement interprofessional councils (Wesorick, Shyiparski, Troseth, Wyngarden 1998)
- Volunteer to be council member or leader for your unit (Brody, Barnes, Ruble, & Sakowski, 2012).
- Talk with colleagues about what matters to them and bring it forward at council meetings (Wesorick et al., 1998)
- Share information with colleagues after council meetings and take their perspective back to council (Wesorick et al., 1998)
- Recognize contributions (Patrick, 2011)
- Build a network of advisors and informants who will provide an honest and unbiased perspective when you need information and advice (Joni, 2004)

Excerpt from the RNAO  
*Developing and Sustaining  
Nursing Leadership, (2<sup>nd</sup>  
edition, 2013), page 35*

### Team/Unit/Organization Strategies

- Create a collective vision and values statement for the team/unit/organization (Gillespie & Mann, 2004) and work with the team to develop behavioural standards to reflect that vision
- Design clear accessible role descriptions, including leadership responsibilities
- Design responsibility grids detailing duties and levels of accountability (e.g. input versus decision-making) (Recker, Bess & Wellens, 1996)
- Do regular performance appraisals
- Design interview guides for hiring for leadership positions, incorporating questions about respect for individuals and the value of nursing
- Formalize recognition for nurses who demonstrate excellence in practice with awards, certificates, newsletter articles and events during Nursing Week to recognize achievements
- Establish a council infrastructure. The idea comes from the work of Bonnie Wesorick, a specialist in creating healthy workplaces for nurses. She and her team describe council infrastructures as a safe place to learn, develop, and practice leadership skills, including learning to build relationships through dialogue, appreciative enquiry, conflict management, and polarity management. Council infrastructures are a place where point-of-care leaders engage in decision making with managers. Councils can work in numerous areas, including healthy work environments; patient safety; quality improvement; strategies for recruitment and retention; improving patient-client satisfaction; use of resources, enhancing competency and even connecting with other health care organizations. Council infrastructures are also important in integrating evidence-based practices across disciplines (Wesorick et al. 1998; Wesorick & Shiparski, 1997)