

Leadership and partnerships in nursing, health and social education and practice; does this work and how effective is it?

Mrs Tracy Small, Dr Barbara Wood, Mrs Joanne Garside

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A seamless and shared approach to healthcare education and practice is dependent on strong leadership and partnerships working. This session addresses how leaders in health, social care and education can work together to develop working practices that result in the identification and delivery of professional development needs at strategic and operational level; thus improving health through sustained standards of care (Darzi 2008). Discussed is a successful and effective model of leadership and partnership showing how principles were transferred to developing a Centre for Leadership in Public Life.

The speakers, all from nursing practice and education will present two papers exploring the development of strategic approaches used to identify education and practice development needs for present and future standards of practice required to build a knowledgeable nursing workforce for the future (Thorne 2006).

The first paper sets the context in the UK, discussing the importance of strong leadership from nurses in relation to policy direction in both education and practice at national level emphasizing the key role that nurses can and should play in developing policy using their experience and knowledge in knowing what is needed (Leavitt 2009). Building on this they illustrates how education needs are planned through a strategic alliance comprising leaders from one university and six major healthcare trusts in the UK. The model, its development, the processes used and the strong leadership required to make it a success are discussed with the effectiveness of a system of communication that ensures that strategy is implemented at operational level. The speakers illustrate ensures that the professional development needs of health and social care practitioners are met, thus advancing health and benefiting the community.

The second paper builds on this model illustrating how it has been used to bring leaders from a wider health, social and education background together to combat a number of education and ultimately social and health issues in one community, through the development of a Centre for Leadership in Public Life, the aim of is to enhance the skills of the leaders. The vision in leadership is not the preserve of top management only, but a feature of effective leadership at any level (Gill 2006), and the vision for the Centre is to ensure that present and future leaders in public life have the skills, capacity and ambition to develop excellence in children, young people and family services in a community with serious deprivation problems.