Managing People

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ESSENTIALS OF NURSING MANAGEMENT

Managing People

Sheila Marson
Michael Hartlebury
Rita Johnston
Barbara Scammell

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MACMILLAN

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Preface

The health service's most valuable resource is its workforce of committed staff, many of whom have undergone years of training in one of the caring professions.

But herein lies a dilemma. For the very staff who have spent years learning to be professionally competent soon find themselves with the crucial responsibility of managing some part of that valuable resource without any kind of preparation or training at all.

Every nurse who takes responsibility for a ward or community area is, of necessity, a manager, working through other people to achieve the objectives for that ward or area and thus contributing to the overall achievement of the policy of the employing organisation. Only by securing the commitment of other staff to achieving the same aims will the nurse be effective as a manager.

As a nurse manager you should understand the objectives and plan how they can be met. You should be able to build and lead a team, recognising and using its strengths and working to diminish its weaknesses. You should encourage the personal and professional growth of the team members while working always towards your own. And you should continually evaluate the team's progress and take steps to ensure that it is dynamic, efficient and effective.

This is a tall order. The skills needed to manage a group of people to achieve a consistently high level of effective interaction are not innate; they have to be learned and can always be improved.

But the more you know of how people are likely to respond to your attempts at managing them, if you can understand your own motivation and theirs, the more you can start to adopt a more positive and effective approach.

The importance of good management at ward level must not be underestimated. Here is the greater proportion of the valuable nursing workforce, here are the nurse managers of the future, learning by example – and here, at the point of delivery, is where quality of care matters most.

This practical guide for first-line managers sets out the basic principles of managing people, the first steps on the way to acquiring a style of management which is both efficient and effective.

JB
February 1990

Notes on the authors

Sheila Marson had, up to retirement, extensive and varied experience in the field of nurse education. This experience included an in-depth study of the teaching role of the ward sister.

Michael Hartlebury trained as a nurse in Sheffield and attained the Certificate in Clinical Nurse Studies (Behavioural Therapy) at Dundee. Having spent 15 years working for Sheffield Health Authority, he is now a self-employed management consultant to various Health Authorities and private health care companies.

Rita Johnston is a lecturer and director of the distance learning master's degree in training and development, in the Centre for Continuing Vocational Education in the University of Sheffield.

Barbara Scammell, formerly a school teacher, then nursing officer in a variety of local, regional and national posts, is now a training consultant.