

Four skills key in establishing nurse-led cross-sector collaborations

29 May 2018

About 70 percent of all variations in health care outcomes are explained by individuals' social conditions including housing, neighborhood conditions, and income, data show. In order to establish community cultures of health where people are empowered to live healthier lives, health care providers and community sector leaders in transportation, government, schools, and businesses must collaborate to address the social conditions that affect population health.

New research points to the types of skills necessary for nurse leaders to encourage such collaborations. The study, *Promoting a Culture of Health Through Cross-Sector Collaborations*, has been published in the journal *Health Promotion Practice*.

The study focused on the experiences of members of the American Academy of Nursing's Edge Runner program, which recognizes nurses who have designed and/or are leading care models that have demonstrated positive clinical and financial outcomes. By studying the experiences of these innovative nurses who have developed cross-sector collaborations that promote a culture of health, the researchers discovered four key skills that enable leaders to successfully manage such collaborations.

"Health care providers can be important leaders and 'bridgers' in collaborations, but they must possess the knowledge, attitudes and skills of facilitators, partners, and relationship-builders," says Antonia Villarruel, Ph.D., RN, FAAN, Professor and the Margaret Bond Simon Dean of Nursing at the University of Pennsylvania School of Nursing (Penn Nursing), one of the authors of the study.

The four key themes discovered to be relevant to cross-sector collaborations that develop a community's culture of health include:

- Being bilingual—Edge Runners found they needed to be able to speak the language of both the community and the institutions of power.
- Neighborliness and trust—Successful Edge Runners are able to demonstrate to community leaders their long-term commitment to the communities they serve and a willingness to listen and understand community needs.
- Having a business sense—Ensuring continued support often requires Edge Runners to make a business case for their programs, particularly in explaining how to sustain or expand these programs.
- Shared vision and language—Being able to communicate shared visions with potential [collaboration](#) partners is an essential way Edge Runners gain trust and engagement.

"The study results have a number of important implications for policy and health professional education," explains Villarruel. "It also provides initial insights into how [health care providers](#) can collaborate with both health and non-[health](#) entities, on the ground at community level and at the funder level, to benefit local communities and populations."

More information: Grant R. Martsolf et al. *Promoting a Culture of Health Through Cross-Sector Collaborations*, *Health Promotion Practice* (2018). [DOI: 10.1177/1524839918772284](https://doi.org/10.1177/1524839918772284)

Provided by University of Pennsylvania School of Nursing

APA citation: Four skills key in establishing nurse-led cross-sector collaborations (2018, May 29)
retrieved 19 November 2019 from <https://medicalxpress.com/news/2018-05-skills-key-nurse-led-cross-sector-collaborations.html>

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