

# THE ESSENTIALS OF NURSING LEADERSHIP

RUTH TAYLOR & BRIAN WEBSTER-HENDERSON



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# INTRODUCTION



## The book roadmap and core skills for leadership

Ruth Taylor and Brian Webster-Henderson

To find out more about Ruth and Brian, please visit the companion website at <https://study.sagepub.com/taylor>



### INTRODUCTION

Welcome to our edited book on leadership in nursing. As editors, we are delighted to bring to you a new approach to talking about leadership. We believe that good leadership is a key component of providing good quality care to patients in a range of environments and settings. We are also of the view that leadership development, knowledge, and the rehearsal of leadership styles and skills are an important part of the student nurse's learning journey.

In recent years the nursing profession has been at the centre of media scrutiny and a changing public perception of nursing which has resulted in political scrutiny of the profession.

#### The scrutiny of nursing

In the past few years, there has been a growing focus from the media around the delivery of poor nursing care, in both the NHS and the private sector within the UK. Television documentaries, newspaper articles, and NHS inspections have regularly focused on a plethora of organisations where the nursing care provided to a range of patients (from the elderly to mental health and learning disability clients) has been of a very poor quality.

#### Public concerns about nursing

At the same time, the UK has seen a number of key public inquiries and investigations following allegations and complaints by patients and relatives about poor nursing care.

In 2013, Sir Robert Francis published his report of a public inquiry into the Mid Staffordshire NHS Trust following a series of ongoing complaints from relatives and several deaths of patients. A total of 293 recommendations were made following the findings from his investigation around a culture of poor care and poor leadership (Department of Health, 2013).

In 2014 the Scottish Government published its Vale of Leven Public Inquiry following a lengthy investigation into the deaths from *Clostridium difficile* of several patients in the Vale of Leven Hospital (Scottish Government, 2014). In both these key reports, the leadership by healthcare professionals, and in particular that of nurses, was heavily criticised.

## A policy response

As a result of a number of policy responses to these and other reports, recommendations about nursing and the need for change with a consistent approach to effective leadership have been published. In 2010 the Prime Minister published a 'high level' report on the future of nursing and midwifery in the UK (Department of Health, 2010). From the 20 recommendations, effective leadership in nursing was a pivotal concern. Yet again a further review in 2015 (referred to as the 'Shape of Caring') places continued emphasis on the need for strong nursing leaders within the UK (Health Education England, 2015).

It is within this climate and context that we believe a contemporary book on leadership is required to support you as you learn, develop, rehearse and reflect on the knowledge and skills that you will require in order to be effective leaders in your chosen field of nursing. We both passionately believe that leadership development starts at the moment you commence your professional, graduate nurse education and can be developed theoretically and in practice. It will be no surprise then that the Nursing and Midwifery Council (NMC) identify leadership as a significant requirement and expectation of a student nurse's learning journey (NMC, 2010) and their professional registration (NMC, 2015). We both hope that this book will facilitate your learning and development, but in order to do so it is important that you understand how to get the best out of it.

Visit the companion website at <https://study.sagepub.com/taylor> to watch Ruth and Brian discussing the origins, key messages, and key features of the book, as well as giving you tips on how to be a good leader.

## INTRODUCTION PURPOSE

The purpose of this introduction is to signpost you towards the structure and content of the book, the types of activities we have designed, and the ways in which you may wish to use the book in support of your learning in your university and practice placements. We have taken a similar approach to the one that Ruth took in her research textbook (*The Essentials of Nursing and Healthcare Research*: Taylor, 2012) which seemed to work well for students. Like the topic of research, some of you will be undertaking a curriculum in which leadership is threaded through all of your units or modules of learning. Others of you will be undertaking specific modules which focus on leadership (and probably management). This book is designed so you can dip into and out of it as

you need – to link to a particular theoretical or practice learning experience, or simply to develop your knowledge-base as you progress through your course. We hope that the approach we have used will suit these differing needs. The authors of the chapters in this book are all leaders in their own right – some are academics with clinical backgrounds, others are clinicians or researchers, still others are managers across a spectrum of settings. Student nurses have also contributed to one of the book chapters – leaders in their own right – and we are really pleased they wanted to be a part of this project. We chose the authors carefully as our aim is to offer the knowledge required for your course in ways that are inspiring and effective. All of the authors are committed to working with students in their different work settings in ways that will enable student nurses to thrive and grow as leaders. We think that this approach comes through clearly in each of the chapters – in different ways, each one offers fresh perspectives on leadership in nursing with, for the purposes of this book, the student nurse at the centre.

The learning activities are designed to bring to the fore the perspectives of the authors – offering you a chance to consider different viewpoints, question practice, and to look at yourself as you develop in your role and your own leadership skills and attributes. We both know that being a ‘good’ leader is an evolving process and that as a student nurse you may not even see yourself as a leader. We want to challenge your thinking and encourage you to see why your early development as a leader will play a crucial part in improving practice. We have used examples of nursing practice across all the fields – adult, mental health, children and young people, and learning disability. So we hope that you will feel engaged with the focus of the book, and that you will use the examples we offer as a springboard to explore the issues in leadership further.

## OVERVIEW OF THE BOOK'S AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

The overall aim of this book is to enable you, as a student, to develop the relevant knowledge and skills (and possibly attributes) that are needed for leadership in this evolving and volatile health and social care context. The authors have provided the theory that you will need to do this in ways that are clearly applied to different contexts in practice – so that you can see the relevance of the theory to real-life situations. In particular, we are pleased to be able to let you ‘hear’ the voices of student nurses and successful nurse leaders, both in the book and in the videos on the companion website (<https://study.sagepub.com/taylor>), so that you can appreciate their experiences and perspectives, and consider their relevance to your nursing journey.

This book will enable you to achieve the following overall objectives:

1. To develop your understanding of theories of leadership and management in healthcare practice.
2. To appreciate your role as a leader and student nurse and how you can impact positively on practice.
3. To apply knowledge of, and skills in, leadership to practice.
4. To value how your role as a leader can impact positively on the care of service users, carers and relatives, as well as on how you can be a role model for colleagues.



As a starting point, undertake the activity below – it aims to begin your thinking and to act as a benchmark for your development as you work your way through your course. You may want to come back to your notes in future.

### Introduction activity

Reflect on the following points and make notes which you can come back to at a later date if you wish:

1. How would you define leadership?
2. What role do you think a student nurse has as a leader?
3. What is the importance of leadership for clinical practice?

You may have come up with a whole range of areas that you think might define leadership. Some of these may relate to inspiring others to achieve a vision, or to ensuring that things get done. As you consider the theoretical perspectives in the book, you will be able to draw your own conclusions about this and the other questions.

## OVERVIEW OF THE BOOK'S CHAPTERS

Each of the chapters has a key focus and these are described below. What you will find though is that there is plenty of overlap across the chapters. Healthcare practice, and leadership for nursing and healthcare practice, are huge areas with many viewpoints, perspectives and a wide range of evidence to support those practices. The overlapping nature of the theoretical underpinnings for leadership is key to our overall understanding of how leadership is enacted in practice. We have provided signposts across chapters so that you can delve more deeply into the areas that are of particular interest to you. For ease, however, here is an overview of the key learning points within each of the chapters.

## CHAPTER OUTLINES

### Part One: Knowledge and theory

#### **Chapter 1: The context of leadership in practice**

This chapter offers a brief historical overview and background of nursing leadership, with some key examples of nursing leaders cited to help you see how leadership in nursing has evolved over the years. The chapter touches on the policy context in the UK – though this is covered in depth in Chapter 3 – and how that context is relevant to nursing leadership in our current healthcare and political context. Linked to this, the author introduces the student nurse as a leader, so that you can start to make some connections between what goes on at policy level, and what you are doing as you learn in

your clinical placements. Your role as a student undertaking a degree – with the recent move to an all-graduate profession across the UK – is highlighted.

## **Chapter 2: Nursing leadership in organisations: Theory and practice**

A book on leadership would not be complete without definitions and a discussion of leadership and management. These are provided alongside a discussion about their relevance to *nursing* leadership. Analysis of situations in which different styles and approaches can be used, plus the skills and attributes of ‘good’ leaders, give a grounding for the future chapters. It is important that you have this theoretical background so that you can reflect on the differences between approaches that you will come across in different settings. In addition, the chapter discusses organisational leadership as a complex system – with the aim of providing the ‘bigger picture’ and so that you can explore the factors that contribute to the success or failure of healthcare organisations. Some key areas of management practices are discussed so that you can see the complexity of a senior leadership role, and can prepare yourself for these areas as you progress through your course. You may well have experience of these and other areas of management from previous roles.

## **Chapter 3: Policy perspective: Students as the future generations of leaders**

Contemporary policy perspectives on nursing leadership are explored. It is acknowledged that policy is a shifting environment – and it is likely (almost certain!) that the policy situation in the UK will have changed since we wrote the book. However, a focus on the history and current situation across the UK nations aims to help you engage meaningfully with the policy landscape. The key aim is to emphasise that understanding and interpreting policy and its impact on the student nurse/newly qualified nurse as a leader is an important aspect of your role. The author makes the case that you should be interested in, and engaged with, policy formation.

## **Chapter 4: Leadership and inter-professional practice**

The context of inter-professional and inter-agency working is described. The landscape of practice continues to evolve, and this chapter is about the shifts that are taking place in nursing and healthcare practice whereby integration is the key agenda – with new approaches coming into place nationally as we write. Leadership of people and organisations across professional boundaries is explored and you are offered the opportunity to look at some of the current changes in the national picture, and how these have (or will) impact on your own role as a leader.

## **Chapter 5: Leadership from the perspective of the public**

Currently, there is a real thrust to ensure that the views of the patient and the public are meaningfully integrated into all aspects of healthcare delivery. The aims of leadership in relation to the public user of care services are explored so that you can think

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about your own field of practice, and how this aspect of leadership can be further developed.

### **Chapter 6: Global issues for nursing leadership**

Nursing is a global profession and many of the challenges that we face here in the UK are mirrored elsewhere. This chapter discusses the evolving and changing global health-care systems, identifying the challenges for nurse leaders across the globe. The impact of population demographics, the changing focus of health and disease, and their impact on the nurse leaders of the future are explored.

## **Part Two: Skills, approaches and styles**

### **Chapter 7: The coaching leader**

This chapter takes a practical approach to the development of some of the skills for leadership – those of a coaching leader. As part of the approach in the chapter, you are asked to look at your ‘self’ and at how you can develop a range of skills. The chapter draws on a range of theory, and then homes in on the skills for effective and impactful leadership. There is an exploration of emotional intelligence and emotional labour and the application of these important constructs within the context of coaching leadership. In addition, the chapter aims to help you understand yourself as a leader and an individual practitioner. Coaching is, in essence, a two-way process that allows you to explore your input to others as well as to learn more about yourself through a reflective process.

### **Chapter 8: Networking and leadership**

Networking is becoming an ever-more-crucial skill (or skills) for contemporary nursing leaders. This chapter offers arguments which aim to convince you (if you need convincing!) of the importance of developing local, national and international networks. Practical examples of how to develop your networks are offered, and the place of social networking is explored. The aim of the chapter is to help you build a picture of your current networks, identify any gaps, and determine how best to increase your networks for particular purposes.

### **Chapter 9: Preparation for transition to leadership in qualified practice**

You may be reading this book as you come towards the end of your pre-registration nurse education, in which case you will be preparing for that transition into qualified practice. This chapter explores the exciting challenges that await you, and the ways in which you can be as well-prepared as possible for leadership and patient care. Some of the key areas under discussion in the chapter are preceptorship, revalidation and ongoing development as a leader.

## Chapter 10: Harnessing your skills as a future leader: Role models in action

This chapter is based around some semi-structured interviews in which nursing leaders – role models – tell us what leadership is for them, what makes good leadership, and how you can role model those behaviours. They talk about their own leadership journeys so that you can get a feel for the different routes through the profession, and so that you can hopefully feel inspired. Key themes of leadership are drawn from the interviews and summarised so that you can reflect on these themes and their applicability to your own practice. Finally, some light is shone on the need for a good clinical learning environment so that the future leaders of our profession (that's you!) can achieve their potential.

## Chapter 11: The student nurse as leader

This is an exciting chapter – you are hearing directly from student nurses. Your voice as a leader is crucial in an era where, for example, attention is focused on raising concerns. The students who contributed to this chapter tell their stories and offer their views on nursing leadership – both reflecting on what they have seen in their clinical placements, and their own experiences of leadership. The aim is to help you reflect on your own leadership styles, giving consideration to what kind of leader you want to be, and appreciating the kind of leader that you might need to be in different situations.

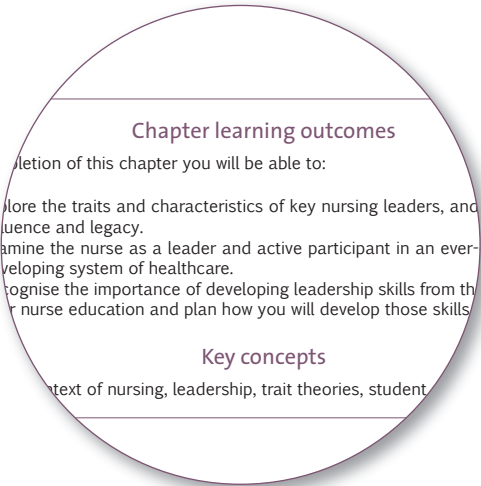
## Epilogue: Personal reflections

The two editors have written a short epilogue which tells the story of their own leadership journeys and learning. This is not a chapter which is based on the literature. Rather, it is based on their own personal experiences as nurses, academics and leaders.

## PEDAGOGICAL APPROACH: HOW TO USE THE BOOK

We have used a number of different approaches to facilitate your interaction with this book. We expect that you will like some of them, but possibly not all. We are all different! What we hope is that the variety of approaches, with an emphasis on the relevance of the learning to your own practice as a student nurse and leader, will help you to think critically about the theory and enable you to make changes (where you want to) to the way you do things. The book also comes with a companion website (<https://study.sagepub.com/taylor>), with additional resources to help you learn – including video interviews with nurse leaders and students explaining their experiences of leadership. Below we provide an overview of the approaches we have used, and suggest how these might be useful to you as you dip into and out of the book. We think that one of the most important aspects of this volume is that we have offered insights into 'real-life' practice – through vignettes, research findings, and discussion with students and nurse leaders, both in the book and in the videos on the companion website – so that you can really start to think about how the learning can impact on your own practice.



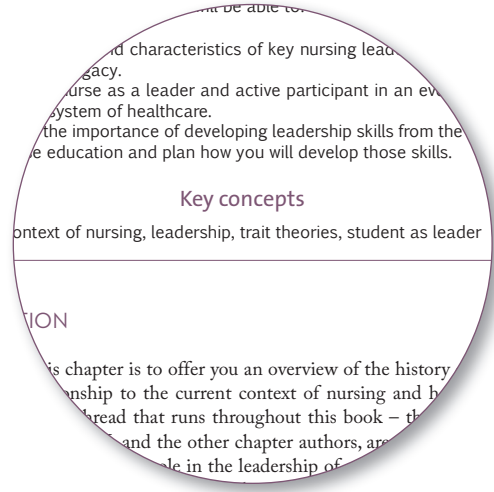


**Chapter learning outcomes**

We have provided these at the start of every chapter so that you are clear about what its focus is, and what you might expect to get out of engaging with the theory and the activities.

**Key concepts**

A list of key words or phrases gives you an ‘at a glance’ overview of the main areas under discussion in that chapter.

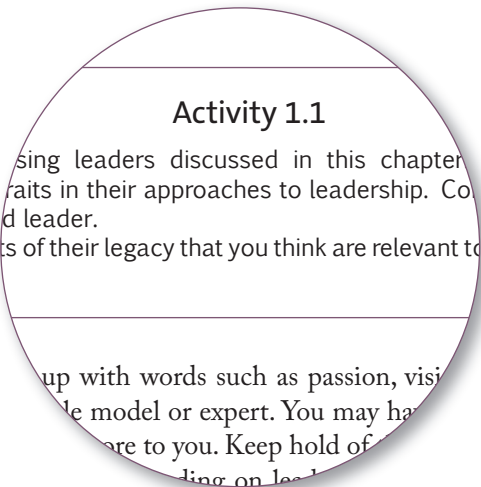


**Key concepts**

context of nursing, leadership, trait theories, student as leader

**INTRODUCTION**

This chapter is to offer you an overview of the history of nursing leadership to the current context of nursing and health care. A thread that runs throughout this book – the author's perspective and the other chapter authors, are all about the role in the leadership of...



**Activity 1.1**

Reflect on the nursing leaders discussed in this chapter. Consider the traits in their approaches to leadership. Consider the traits of their legacy that you think are relevant to your practice.

Start your reflection with words such as passion, vision, role model or expert. You may have your own ideas. Write them down. Keep hold of them. Use them as a starting point for your reflection on leadership.

**Activities**

These are usually reflective in nature and offer you a chance to think about the theory, about your practice, and about yourself as a leader - aiming to facilitate critical thinking and potentially identifying areas where you might want to make changes to the way you do things.

**Case study 3.1: Safe Staffing**

...of years prior to the founding of the Safe Staffing...  
 ...nurse staffing levels were dropping. In 20...  
 ...stretched. Under-resourced (Buchan and S...  
 ...the workforce and concluding that:

...scenarios in NHS England strongly point to t...  
 ...ses over the next five to 10 years. (Buchan...

...the RCN and the Council of Deans of J...  
 ...urse education places were stor...  
 ...d nurses. These reports and...  
 ...for the NHS in Engl...  
 ...



**Case studies and examples from research**

Real-life examples - based on evidence - are offered as a way of ensuring that you appreciate the evidence-base for leadership theory and how it is applied in practice. They illustrate the concepts and link to the theory that the authors discuss within the chapters.

**Vignettes**

We have worked with students and nurse leaders to include their voices in vignettes that bring to life the theory and represent the differing perspectives that exist around leadership. There are also video interviews on the companion website for the book (<https://study.sagepub.com/taylor>).



**VIGNETTE 10.1**

**MBE, Consultant Nurse Cornerstone He**

...e at Cornerstone Health in England. I have...  
 ...rking in both community learning disabili...  
 ...nursing career within an inpatient learn...  
 ...community. That's where the bulk of my o...  
 ...s a clinical nurse specialist with le...  
 ...city of Southampte...

**Information box 2.3: The NHS Board**

The role of the NHS Board is to:

- Be collectively responsible for the success of the organisation's affairs.
- Provide active leadership of the effective controls which enable
- Set the organisation's strategy human resources are in place review management perfor
- Set the organisation's v to patients, the local



**Information boxes**

Key pieces of information are provided and defined within the chapters.

## SUMMARY

Some key points from this chapter

- The skills of listening, reflection and communication are essential for effective nursing care.
- The use of a structured coaching model can improve interactions with patients, staff and colleagues.
- Not to over-emphasise the importance of reflection as a skill that requires practice.

### Summaries

End of chapter summaries can be used for quick reference or revision of key points.

### Further resources

The authors have identified further sources of information that you may wish to access to deepen your understanding and help you in assignments. Alongside the book itself, resources are available on the companion website (<https://study.sagepub.com/taylor>) and include links to useful journal articles, other websites, books, tools and templates.

## FURTHER RESOURCES

Kline, N. (2009) *More Time to Think*. Leadership. This book provides a further expansion on reflection as a source for developing your skills.

To access further resources related to this chapter visit <https://study.sagepub.com/taylor>

## REFLECTION

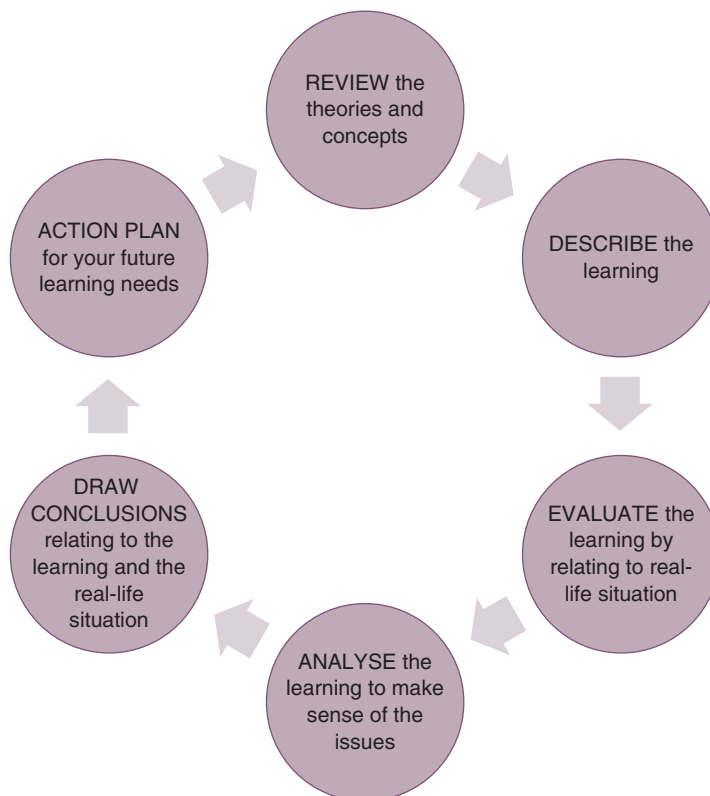
It is recommended that you come to this book (as to all of your learning) with the aim of critically reflecting on both the theory and your practice. A short overview of an approach to reflection is therefore provided in the box below for you to use as a starting point and to remind you of this key skill.

### Reflection for learning

You are asked to undertake reflective exercises within this text. The aim of these exercises will vary, but overall we hope that the act of reflection will facilitate a deeper understanding of the key concepts and ideas that are being explored.

In the context of the learning that you will undertake as you engage with the activities in the book, we have defined reflection as a process that involves six stages based on Gibbs' reflective cycle (Gibbs, 1988):

1. Review the theories and concepts addressed within the activity.
2. Describe the learning gained from the activity.



Reflective learning cycle, adapted from Gibbs (1988)

3. Evaluate the learning by relating it to a real-life situation (for example a practice situation, a learning situation in the university, the findings from a research article).
4. Analyse the learning so as to make sense of the issues you are exploring.
5. Come to a conclusion relating to the learning/real-life situation.
6. Action plan for your future learning needs.

This brief overview gives you a basic framework that you can apply as you do some of the activities in this book. We are sure that you will be actively reflecting as part of your overall learning process, so this won't be news for you! We do think that it is worth saying that the development of rigorous reflective skills is a lifelong process – we are still working on this and finding that as we progress through our careers the value of reflective activity continues to inform our own practices.

## WHAT SORT OF BENEFITS DOES THIS BOOK AIM TO BRING TO YOU?

The situation in nursing and healthcare is that change is happening on a daily basis across all services, that there is a strong focus on nursing leadership within all these changes, and that you need to be prepared to stand up and be counted as a leader in your own right. We don't necessarily mean that you will want to be a Chief Nurse (though why not?!), but that you are accountable for all that you do and that every day you have amazing opportunities to make big and small differences to people's lives. This is a huge responsibility and one that requires the development of leadership attributes and skills. As we said at the beginning of this introduction, we passionately believe that you as a student nurse are well-placed to make significant differences to care through your own personal leadership – whether that is by identifying and highlighting concerns, through the development of innovations in practice, or through role modelling in which others see just how nursing should be practised. How exciting to be part of a profession where you can make such a difference!

We go back briefly to the overall objectives for the book – just to unpick these a bit more in readiness for what we explore within the chapters, and so that you can think about how your learning in university and clinical practice can prepare you for what lies ahead.

### 1. To develop your understanding of theories of leadership and management in healthcare practice

The theoretical basis of leadership and management is crucial to your developing understanding of your own leadership practice. There are multiple books and articles on these topics, as well as websites with excellent information and perspectives. This book aims to provide a broad overview, pointing you towards other resources, and offering a particular

perspective – that of *you* at the centre of the learning so that when you go out into your clinical placements you will consciously develop your leadership skills and attributes.

## 2. To appreciate your role as a leader and a student nurse and how you can impact positively on practice

Linked to what we have just said, we are certain that the greater the critical mass of good role models for leadership at all levels within an organisation, the greater the capacity for excellent care. We show how good leadership is integrally tied to care, compassion and other attributes which have the patient at the centre of care. The exciting part is, as we say, that you can make a difference every day.

## 3. To apply knowledge of, and skills in, leadership to practice

We have taken a theoretical stance throughout the book as we see evidence-based practice for leadership in the same way that we would see evidence-based practice for the management of particular healthcare needs as vital. What we have done is offer practical situations that enable you to think about that theoretical underpinning in real-life situations. We think that this will help you to take the learning into your own practice so that you can apply these skills in your own everyday practice.

## 4. To value how your role as a leader can impact positively on the care of service users, carers and relatives, as well as how you can be a role model for colleagues.

Have you thought of yourself as a role model? You may well have, and that's a great thing. We ourselves continually strive to be role models, knowing that we always need to do better – but owning up to it when we make mistakes. What we know is that by striving to be a role model, by working with integrity and strong values, you can make a difference to the team you are working with, and to the care of patients and others.

## SUMMARY

This chapter has provided you with an overview of the rationale for our particular approach to the creation of a textbook on leadership for nursing. As you can see, we are passionate about student nurses as leaders and truly believe that *you* can make a difference to healthcare practice through the positive use of your leadership knowledge and skills, and leadership style.

Some key points from this chapter include:

- Leadership is vital for the further development of healthcare practice.
- Student nurses need to develop their leadership skills from the moment they commence their academic programme of study.



- This book is designed to help you in your leadership journey and can be used throughout your university programme.
- Finally, self-awareness, the ability to reflect, eagerness to learn, and the aspiration to be a compassionate care giver, are all equally important contributing attributes of a leader.

## FURTHER RESOURCES

For the other chapters, the authors have offered a number of key texts or websites which they feel will enable you to delve more deeply into the theory and into the application of that theory in practice. For the purposes of this introduction, we suggest that you simply revisit literature on reflection so that you feel fully prepared to engage with the learning in this book. We have already offered a summary of reflection based on Gibbs' work, but you may have other literature that you prefer to access. Go ahead and choose whatever works best for you.



To watch Ruth and Brian discussing the origins, key messages and features of the book, as well as giving you tips on how to be a good leader, please visit the companion website at <https://study.sagepub.com/taylor>

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