

**DON'T JUST LEAN IN:
STAND UP AND STAND OUT**

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Empowerment & early experiences

My interest in empowerment was awakened by:

- My experiences in a variety of clinical agencies (1969-1972);
- The influences of nursing faculty and other university faculty;
- Experiences in my first nursing position as a staff nurse in an OB/GYN unit in a small hospital.

Empowerment

1. the act or action of empowering someone or something : the granting of the power, right, or authority to perform various acts or duties
2. the state of being empowered to do something : the power, right, or authority to do something

Merriam-Webster Dictionary Online (2019)



A book by Sheryl Sandberg, an executive with Facebook and formerly of Google, wrote “Lean In” a few years ago to help empower women in the workplace. The book was embraced by many nurses.

A photograph of three people in a meeting. A man in a dark patterned shirt is leaning in towards a man whose back is to the camera. A woman in a patterned blouse is also leaning in, looking towards the man with his back to the camera. The scene is dimly lit, and the text is overlaid in the center.

“Lean In” refers to assuming a posture in groups that represents a position of power.

Sandberg discussed empowerment as a jungle gym... not a ladder.



Sources of empowerment

Empowerment can come from external sources: mentors, supervisors/administrators, peers, faculty, colleagues in the workplace

Empowerment can come from within the individual:
assuming power over one's professional and personal life, often influenced by family, faculty, peers, role models

Empowerment in nursing

- Florence Nightingale: a woman ahead of her time; while her ideas on sanitation and patient care were embraced, her plans for nursing education were not embraced in the US.
- Early nursing education in the US was largely controlled by those outside of nursing, particularly hospital administrators and physicians.

Empowerment in nursing

- Nursing historians have addressed the issues around control of nursing education and practice in the late 19th and throughout the 20th centuries.
- Nurses were among the first wave of feminists, the suffragettes, and pushed for changes in nursing education.

Empowerment in nursing

- The rise of the second wave of feminism, beginning in the 1960s, launched a reform movement in nursing.
- Jo Ann Ashley's 1976 book, "Hospitals, Paternalism, and the Role of the Nurse," addressed the roots of nursing's issues in using power to control its education and practice.

Empowerment in nursing

- Ashley's research, during a time of feminist awakening in nursing, examined the pervasiveness of gender and class bias in health care delivery in the US through history and the impact on nursing as a profession and on nurses as individuals.

Empowerment in nursing

Men in nursing: influenced by many of the same cultural barriers as women because of the impact of socialization into nursing within schools of nursing, biases against nurses in general and men in nursing in the workplace, and cultural myths that are held by patients, family members, the general population.

Empowerment in nursing

Men now compose about 12% of recent graduates.

Auerbach, D., Buerhaus, P., Skinner, L., & Staiger, D. (2017).
2017 Data Brief Update: Current Trends of Men in Nursing.
Center for Interdisciplinary Health Workforce Studies,
Montana State University.

Empowerment in nursing

Despite the increasing numbers of men in nursing and greater diversity (e.g., age, ethnicity), nursing and nurses still struggle with empowerment.



Empowerment in nursing

The continuing problem of workplace violence, including bullying and sexual harassment; high nursing turnover; especially among new graduates; job satisfaction problems; and weak nursing leadership in some health care organizations are part of the evidence of a need to improve empowerment in nursing for nurses.

Empowerment in nursing

Nursing education measures success by the percent of graduates who pass the NCLEX. Faculty members work to ensure their curricula reflect state of the art science, incorporate the best content to teach and support evidence-based practice, and use technology that enhances student theoretical learning and clinical practice. But...

Empowerment in nursing

Empowerment isn't directly tested on NCLEX and certification exams.

Empowerment often gets lost in the professional education of students, especially pre-licensure students.

How do we as nurses empower ourselves?

Empowering Ourselves

The American Nurses Association (ANA, 2017) offers recommendations for primary prevention of incivility in “Best Civility Practices for Nurses.” These are ***empowering*** behaviors that can be used by nurses in any nursing role, including when one is representing nursing in the community.

Empowering Ourselves

1. Use clear verbal & nonverbal communication.
2. Treat others with respect, dignity, collegiality.
3. Think about how one's words and actions affect others.
4. No gossip, no rumors.
5. Stick to the facts, not conjecture.

Empowering Ourselves

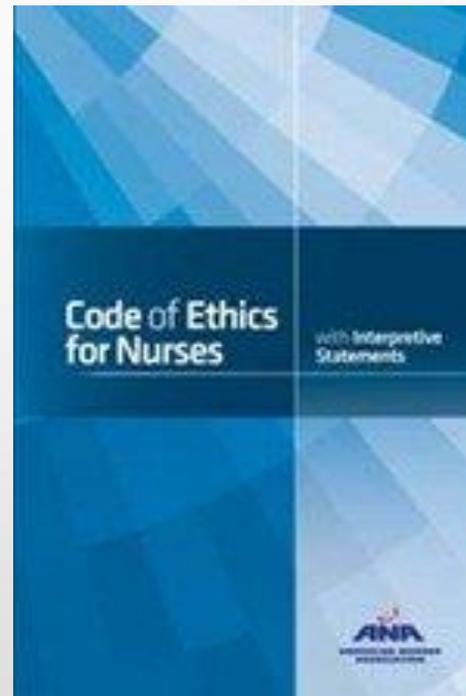
6. Collaborate with others and share information as appropriate.
7. Offer to assist others but accept refusal gracefully.
8. Take responsibility for one's actions.
9. Recognize that abuse of power/authority is never acceptable.
10. Speak directly to the person with whom one has an issue; no end-runs.

Empowering Ourselves

11. Be open to other's point of view, experience, and ideas.
12. Be polite & respectful; make apologies when indicated.
13. Encourage, support, & mentor others.
14. Listen to others with interest and respect.

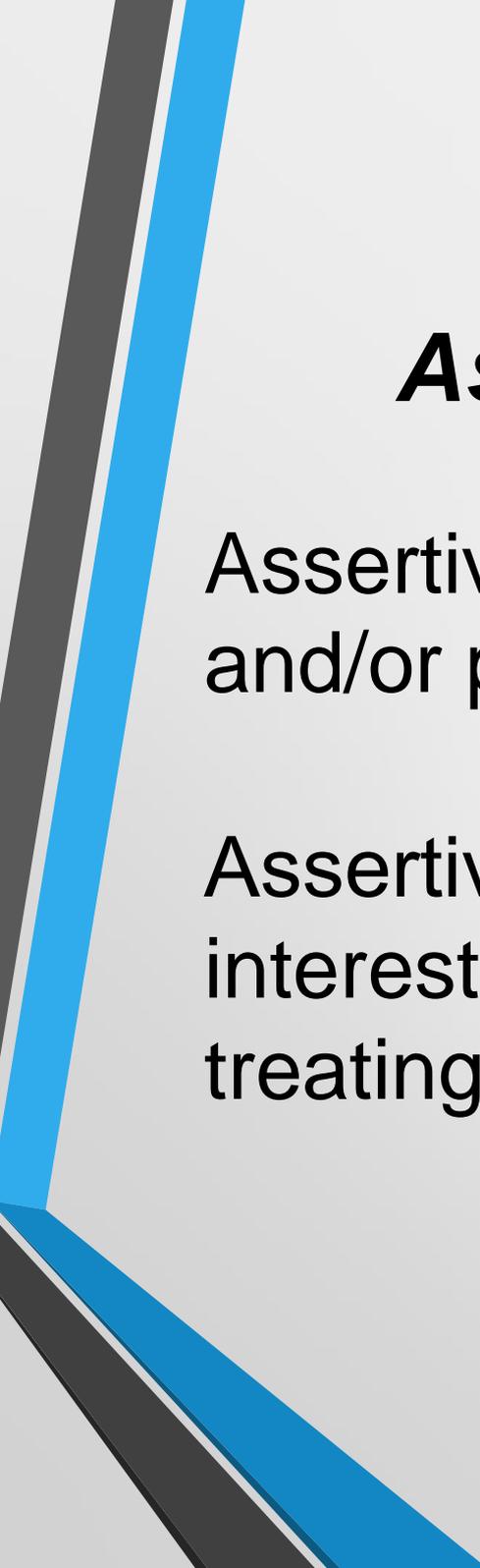
Empowering Ourselves

15. Aspire to uphold the ANA Code of Ethics, which is noted in the Illinois Nurse Practice Act 2018 (225ILCS 65/60-35) as a standard of RN practice.



Empowering Ourselves

Assertiveness training was a product of the women's movement in the late 1960s into the 1970s. Such skills training was integrated into some nursing curricula during that era (Chenevert, 1993; Grohar-Murray & Langan, 2011). The goal of assertiveness training was to empower women (and men) through verbal and nonverbal behavior skills.



Assertiveness is not aggression!

Assertiveness seeks to prevent or stop verbal and/or physical aggression.

Assertiveness allows one to act in one's own interests without violating the rights of others or treating others disrespectfully.

Empowering Ourselves

Unempowering behavior includes:

Lack of appropriate eye contact, looking down or away;

Soft or whining voice, rapid speech, quiver in one's voice, hesitancy when speaking;

Shaking or shivering, slumping posture (“getting small”), swaying.

Empowering Ourselves

Assertive communication focuses on:

Verbal skills;

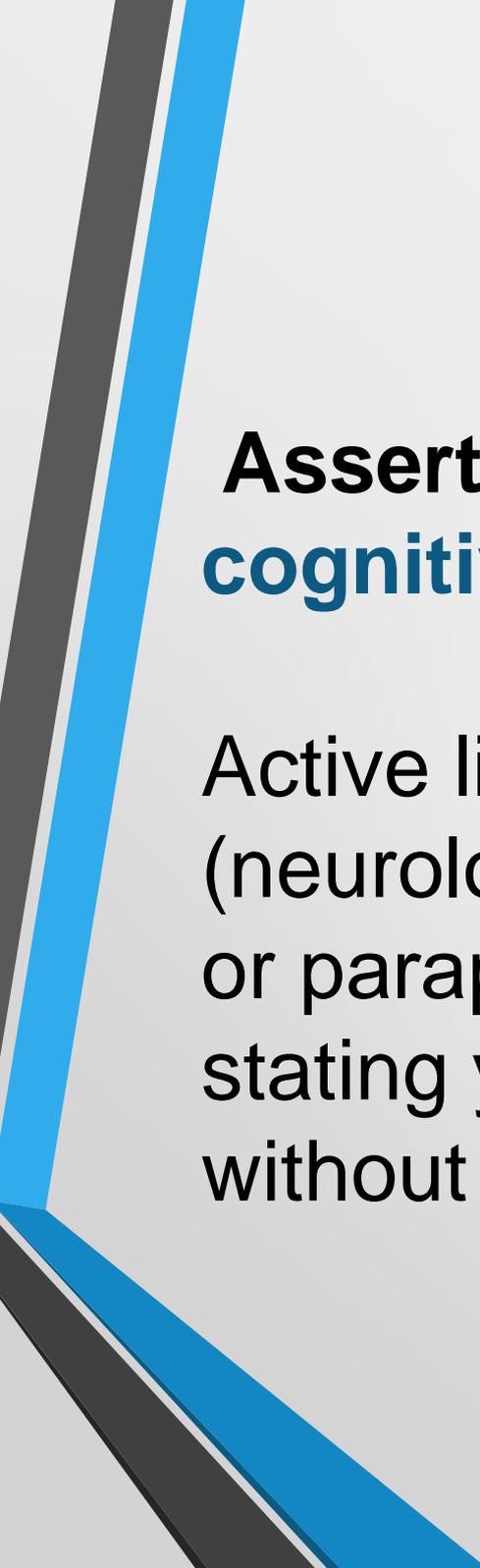
Facial expression;

Eye contact;

Posture, position, and movement;

Gestures; and

Tone of voice/pace of speech.



Assertiveness is characterized by certain cognitive processes:

Active listening, not just hearing the other person (neurological processes), includes reflecting or paraphrasing the other's ideas and feelings & stating your position/feelings/perceptions clearly without accusations.

Cognitive Processes Continued

- Exploring possible solutions, evaluating pros and cons.
- Consider the role that cultural differences may play in a situation, with misinterpretation of cues/behaviors.

Empowering Ourselves

Empowering behavioral skills include:

Relaxed posture, position;

Facial expressions that are friendly or neutral, as appropriate;

Maintain appropriate space between you and the other person;

Appropriate gestures, minimal gestures;

Empowering Ourselves

Appropriate eye contact (no staring!);

Attentiveness;

Well-modulated voice, calm speech, moderate flow of speech, moderate volume; and

Practicing verbal skills outside of workplace:
rehearsal!

Empowering Ourselves

Empowering verbal skills include:

Saying “no” graciously, politely, firmly, without making excuses.

Being a broken record: repeating your position/need/response without anger.

Agree with the aggressor on even the smallest truth or point of agreement.

Empowering Ourselves

- Self-disclosure and “I statements” to give information about you: “I have worked here for 10 years” or “I need you to stop calling me names so that we can work together.”
- Seek a workable compromise.
- Use “fogging” by accepting valid criticisms of yourself and move on with the discussion (Chenevert, 1993; Grohar-Murray & Langan, 2011).

Empowering Ourselves

Other empowering behaviors:

- Working in Magnet organizations;
- Advancing one's nursing education;
- Restate your point when someone talks over you; speak assertively and make eye contact with the person speaking over you;

Empowering Ourselves

- When your idea is challenged (e.g., “That will never work!”), ask the speaker “Why do you think that?”
- Be aware of your nonverbal behaviors and voice;
- Seek allies and mentors who demonstrate their own empowerment;

Empowering Ourselves

Be persistent in empowering yourself, because...
“...when power is absent or not utilized, others are more likely to step in and decide what nursing is and what nurses do.”

(Ponte et al., 2007)

powerful
assertiveness
Driving-change
Nursing
Opportunity
driving-change
Staffing
Radical-change
discrimination
empowering-nurses
nurses
Transformational-leadership
racism
Competencies
power
Self-confidence
presentation-of-self
Nurses
Career
political-action
prejudice
positive-patient-outcomes
Lean-in
registered-professionals
educators
Self-care-for-nurses
Microaggressions
nursing
workplace-violence
sexism
empowering-self
Inspirational-learning
educational
staffing-laws
passion
Politics-policy
productivity
staffing-ratios
staffing-by-acuity
transformational-leadership
voluntary-turnover
Self-empowerment
nursing-leadership
Advocacy-skills
Pivotal-role
Colleagues
Stand-out
Empowerment
Administrators
Assertiveness



**Don't lean in:
Stand up and stand out!**

Questions or comments?



**Don't lean in:
Stand up and stand out!**

Thank you!