



# THE ROI OF A LEADERSHIP MINDSET STARTING AT THE FRONTLINE

*A Mentor-Enabled Framework Yielding 3,400% ROI*

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Are health systems missing a key skill when preparing their frontline nurses? Much focus for frontline nurse training is on clinical skills – and for good reason. But, while clinical proficiency is a mandatory element of nurse practice, it doesn't fulfill the full scope of competencies necessary to ensure nurses are empowered and practicing at the top of their licenses. In short, clinical skills are not enough.

Leadership is a mindset, not a job title. It is a set of skills that enable you to be a better communicator, critical thinker, navigate interpersonal relationships effectively, manage emotions and behaviors, and influence others in a positive way. These are skills that everyone, and certainly our nursing workforce, can benefit from.

## **Why is Leadership Ability so Important in Frontline Nurses?**

Research has shown that when clinical nurses develop their leadership abilities while at the bedside, they actually provide better care (e.g., lower HAIs, reduced mortality rates, fewer readmissions). By arming bedside nurses with leadership skills, nurses are more empowered to lead from where they are, get more involved in their organization and profession, and are retained at a higher level – an outcome every healthcare organization is focused on improving.

With the plethora of benefits that come with leadership growth, why do we see this area of development absent from nearly all bedside roles? Historically, leadership development is expensive, time-consuming, and hard to scale to a large workforce. Most often, this development is only offered to those who already hold a formal leadership role. Yet, one of the biggest opportunities in healthcare is to grow the leadership abilities of the frontline.

In this paper, we'll share how one hospital had a desire to infuse leadership confidence into bedside nurses through the Lead for Care Program which marries microlearning content with guided mentorship and real-time application for deep learning. Their goal? Simple, they wanted bedside nurses to see themselves as bedside leaders. And, in doing this, they saw so much more impact than they thought imaginable. Here's what they saw:

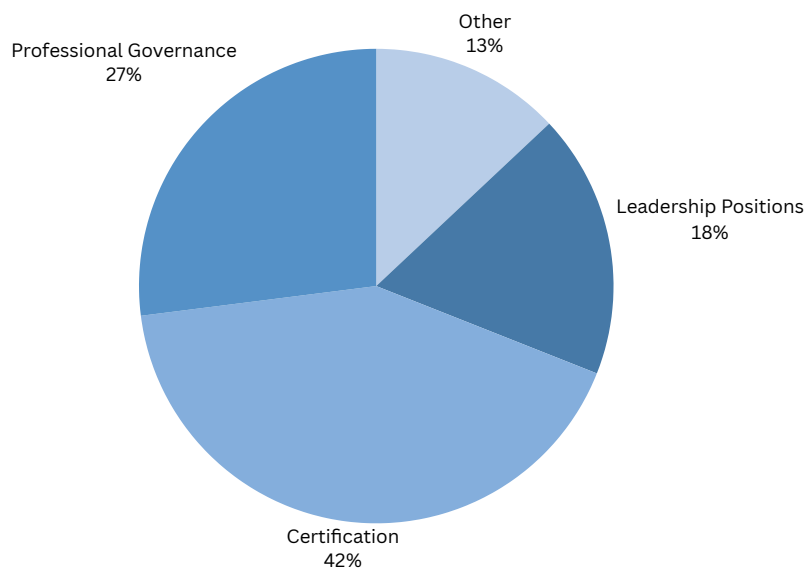
## A Cascading Impact of Growing Leadership Confidence

89% OF PARTICIPANTS ARE CONFIDENT IN THEIR LEADERSHIP SKILLS  
UPON COMPLETION OF THE LEAD FOR CARE PROGRAM

When nurses are confident leaders, they're empowered in their current roles as evidenced by their open-ended feedback and their expanded involvement in the organization and profession. Since completing the program, nearly 60% of all mentee and mentor participants have: joined committees or professional governance opportunities, taken on a support role, obtained additional specialty certifications, or moved into a formal leadership role.

While many organizations struggle to fill seats in professional governance, gain interest in obtaining more certifications, or get nurses to step into leadership roles, what we see is that when there's clarity of how nurses can lead, and confidence in their skills to do so, they naturally want to be more involved. It sparks a desire to continue to invest in the profession.

### Role Growth After LFC



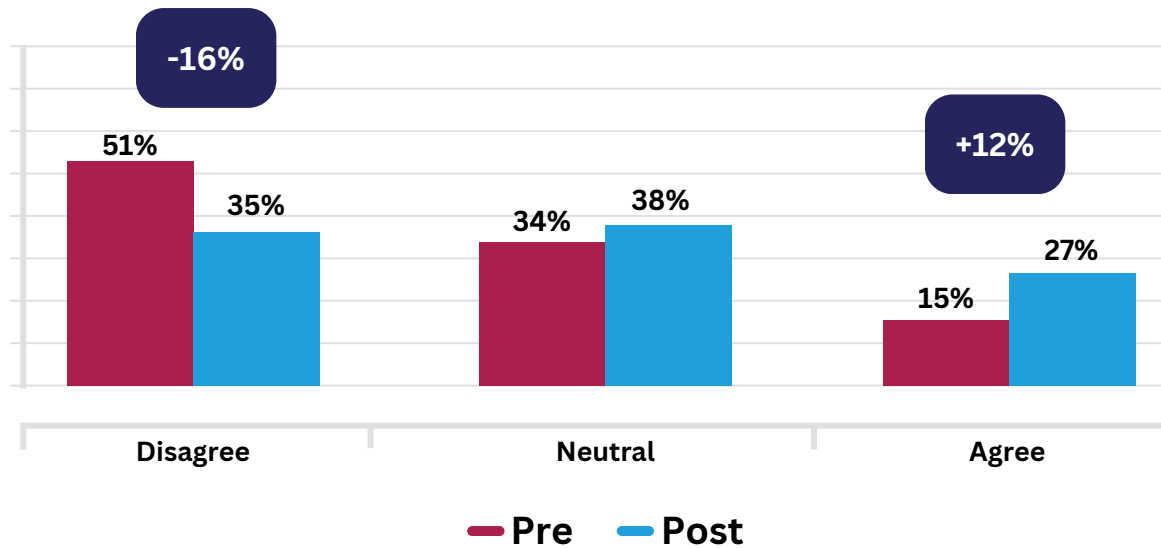
### A Surprising Insight into a Nurse's Career Path

Historically in nursing, we take our best, most clinically proficient nurse off the floor and tap him/her for leadership. The problem is that being a great nurse does not equate to being a great manager. Either the leadership role isn't a good fit, or we aren't preparing our first-time leaders appropriately prior to putting them in the role.

However, a profound insight we found was that when nurses are trained in leadership abilities, they are able to more fully understand which career path is best for them! While we find this scenario across every client, in this particular example, we found that 28% adjusted their perspective on where they see themselves over the course of their careers.

Meaning, some who thought they could only advance their careers through formal leadership realized they could stay at the bedside and grow in other ways. And, those who may not have seen themselves as leaders come away being more confident and interested in pursuing leadership opportunities in the future.

### I am best suited to remain a bedside caregiver throughout my career.



*“The most beneficial part of the program for me was that I could strengthen my leadership skills from any role in the hospital.” – mentee participant*

What this means for organizations is that their nurses can help guide the next “best fit” step in their careers, and organizational leaders now have insight into who is ready and interested in leadership and understand who may be best developed as an informal leader to stay at the bedside. This is incredibly powerful for nurse leaders because you’re able to retain and empower bedside caregivers who will be critical in delivering safe, high-quality care, while also being resources to their peers. Further, insight into the best succession decisions can prevent costly missteps of putting the wrong nurses into a leadership role. Research is inundated with findings on the substantial negative impact of poor management – getting in front of that mistake can have a profound influence on your nurses, organizational outcomes, and ultimately your patients. In knowing the largest driver for nurse turnover is tied to management, this organization is now proactively getting ahead of turnover of nurses in roles they’re not a fit for.

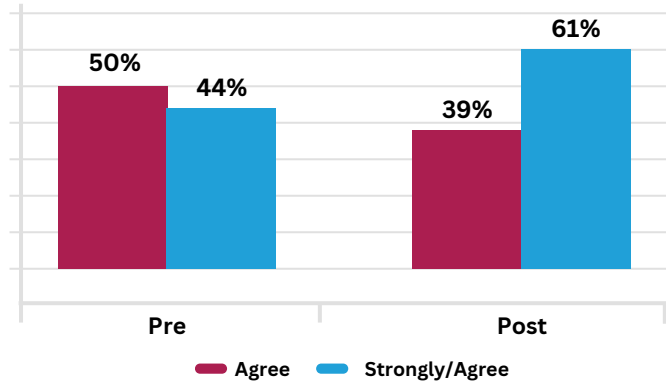
### Connecting and Applying New Skills to Patient Care

When leadership skills are infused at the bedside, 98% of participants are able to connect leadership skills to patient safety behaviors after completing the program - with 95% of them indicating they are making a change in practice based on what they learned!

Often leadership programs that aren't tailored for nurses miss the connection to patient safety. However, when nurses go through the Lead for Care program they have a module dedicated specifically to connecting how leadership skills are paramount to patient care. We see these connections evidenced by the level of agreement nurses give on engaging in key behaviors paramount for safe care.

I work to quickly build rapport with patients to have an open dialogue of medical history and current health needs.

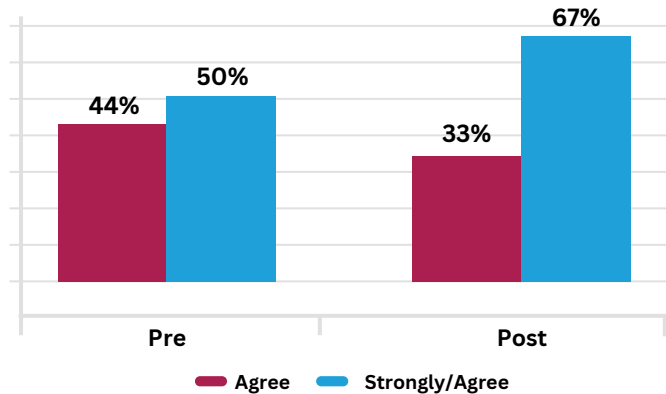
A 17% INCREASE FROM PRE TO POST ANALYSIS



“A key learning for me was that strong nurse leadership and safe patient care work hand in hand with each other. Strong leaders are critical in developing new nursing generations into great patient advocates, being considerate of cost-effective measures when performing patient care, and returning the act of developing new nurses they encounter to be great bedside leaders.” – mentee participant

I ensure and promote patient safety practices with my colleagues.

A 17% INCREASE FROM PRE TO POST ANALYSIS



“I enjoyed this program because it gave me the support for guided discussions with my mentee and cultivated development of that relationship.”- mentor participant

## What is the ROI for Organizations Investing in Developing the Frontline?

Not only do participants benefit, but organizations do too, to the tune of over 1,400% return on investment. For this organization, this means that for every \$1 spent, they saw \$1,400 put back in their pocket!

18 months after partnering with Lead for Care, this hospital saw turnover among those who completed the program at 2.5%, meaning retention of 97.5% of participating nurses! In an industry that sees an average of 18.9% turnover for staff RN's, this organization saw a loss of only 2.5% of their program participants. That equates to:

**INDUSTRY**  
**Cost Savings of**  
**\$818,160**  
**in 18 months**  
**ROI of over 3,400%**

**HOSPITAL-SPECIFIC**  
**Cost Savings of**  
**\$637,110**  
**in 18 months**  
**ROI of over 1,400%**

## How did they do this?

They partnered with Lead for Care, an ANCC NCPD accredited provider, to deploy the LFC mentor-enabled nurse leadership program. They created a custom program leveraging Lead for Care's framework, content, and technology (10-minute online content, real-time application, and guided mentorship) with their own on-site enrichment days throughout the program's duration. Through these efforts, this organization was able to see these results in 18 months.

Best of all, the feedback from their nurses showed:

**83%**

felt close to very close to their mentor/mentee following LFC's proprietary Quick Connect exercise

**93%**

rated the platform easy to use

**88%**

rated the length of the video lessons positively

**78%**

prefer mentorship coupled with leadership skill development (as compared to only mentorship or only leadership development)

**93%**

indicated they will make changes to practice based on what they learned

If interested in learning how your organization can deploy a program for bedside nurses that arms them with leadership skills to be applied while at the bedside and shown to improve patient safety, career path clarity, increase nurse involvement, and significantly lower turnover, contact Heidi Kamm ([hkamm@leadforcare.com](mailto:hkamm@leadforcare.com)).

*Lead for Care is an accredited as a provider of nursing continuing professional development by the American Nurses Credentialing Center's Commission on Accreditation.*

