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Tracey Thornley

University of Notre Dame Australia, Tracey.Thornley@nd.edu.au

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Clinical Leadership: A Matter of Trust?

Tracey Thornley. RN BN (Hons) Grad Cert in Ed Studies (Higher Ed) PhD MRCNA

One of the many challenges facing the nursing profession in 2011 is the visibility of clinical leadership. Clinical leadership is essential for positive patient outcomes and a productive work environment; given this, the need for strong and effective leadership has never been more urgent. The attributes of leadership and how they are used to inspire and lead others are often overlooked. A research study (Thornley 2007) exploring the concept of expert, found that many personal characteristics were used by nurses to facilitate their expertise and it was these characteristics that expert nurses used to lead and inspire others.

One of the major themes identified in the research was the way expert nurses supported other nurses and used *working together* to assist other nurses with knowledge and skill development. Expert nurses were seen to be trusting and trustworthy; they encouraged other nurses and this enabled them to practice effectively. Ultimately, as in clinical leadership, expert nurses modelled the way for others to copy, they inspire and encourage the heart by creating a culture of recognition and excellence (Cain 2005).