

# Nursing Leaders' Tools for Patient Care

## Leadership Training Goals and Purpose

Welcome to NYSNA's Leadership Training Program.

Your commitment and leadership make it possible to build a united, organized, and involved membership at your worksite.

The New York State Nurses Association is the voice of 42,000 thousand frontline nurses. We are New York's largest union of registered nurses. Our power together comes from member involvement and member leadership.

Together, we can win improvements for our patients and for nurses. We can win better contracts with fair wages and health benefits, retirement with dignity, employment security, safe staffing, and more. And we can win legislative victories for safe staffing, quality patient care, and health care for all.

As a member leader and patient advocate you play a key role advocating for our patients, our families, and our communities.

This four-part training program is designed to provide you with practical information to enforce the contract, advance the interests of the membership, and ensure that nurses and patients are respected. The training covers a range of topics including organizing co-workers to take action to resolve worksite issues, representing co-workers during investigatory meetings with managers, the legal rights of shop stewards, recruiting members to be involved in union actions, winning a safe staffing, and more.

We encourage you to take back the ideas and sharpened skills you develop in the education program--share them with your co-workers and apply them in your worksite! The result will be a stronger union.

We look forward to working with you to build an even more powerful, democratic, member-driven union. With the strength of the members, we will be able to win at work and beyond, for our patients and for care givers, today and tomorrow!

## About this training

This leadership education program provides a foundation for worksite leaders to develop the strategies and skills needed to win at work and beyond. It provides an opportunity to build new skills and refresh the ones you already have.

This program is sometimes referred to as “stewards” or “delegate” training because it covers the foundational skills and information for nurses who will, with additional support in the facility, educate and inform your co-workers about the contract and how to enforce it, bring information to your co-workers about NYSNA actions, events and activities, and begin representing your co-workers when they are being questioned by management about alleged violations and in the grievance procedure. We recommend this training for any nurse who is interested in learning more about the union and how to build workplace power.

The four three-hour parts can be taken independently or combined in any order to make two full days of training. The program can also be customized to specific needs of your facility.

Topics covered:

### **Part 1: Introduction to Organizing, Advocacy and Leadership (3 hours)**

1. Nurse Leaders and Patient Advocacy (35 minutes)
2. Organizing for Power: Our Member-Driven Union (25 minutes)
3. Roles and Rights of Nurse Leaders (70 minutes)
4. Understanding a Contract (30 minutes)

### **Part 2: Grievances and Representation (3 hours)**

1. Identifying Grievances and Organizing Issues (30 minutes)
2. Duty of Fair Representation (15 minutes)
3. Weingarten Rights (30 minutes)
4. Just Cause (10 minutes)
5. Representing Members at Investigatory Meetings (40 minutes)
6. Grievance Process (50 minutes)

**Part 3: Organizing Nurses for Collective Advocacy to Build Unity and Engage the Healthcare Worker Community (3 hours)**

1. Why We Organize (20 minutes)
2. Getting Members Involved (95 minutes)
3. Taking Action: Worksite Campaigns for Change (55 minutes)

**Part 4: Advocating for Nurses' and Patients' Needs through Effective Contractual Committees (3 hours)**

1. Involving Members in Effective Committees and Safe Staffing Task Forces (50 minutes)
2. Meeting with Management (70 minutes)
3. Responding to Member Questions (60 minutes)

## The Training Method

NYSNA member leaders and staff will conduct these workshops using a method designed specifically for union members who are patient advocates. It is based on small group discussions. This participatory method puts nurses and other healthcare professionals at the center of every workshop. Participants work together in small groups during the workshop, analyzing information, solving real-life problems, and building upon their own skills and experiences. It allows us all to learn together by doing.

Each section has a **purpose, tasks, factsheets**, and a **summary** of the main points.

**Group Discussions:** Once the facilitator has introduced the activity, participants work on the task in **small groups**. Very often, there is more than one right answer; the tasks require that the small groups use their experiences to tackle the problem and make judgments on key issues. Part of the tasks often includes looking at factsheets and applying new information--working together to find solutions, just like in our work together in the union.

**The Report-Back:** For each task, the group selects a **reporter** whose job is to take notes on the small group discussion and report back to the workshop as a whole. During the report-back, the reporter tells the entire workshop how his or her group tackled the particular problem. The facilitators will record these reports on flipcharts so all can refer to it. After all the groups have reported, facilitators will open the general discussion about the problem at hand.

**The Summary:** At the end of the report-back and discussion, the facilitators will highlight key points, bring up points that may have been overlooked in the report-backs, and clarify issues that may have come up during the discussion.

## Three Basic Learning Exchanges

This education program is built on the idea that every workshop is a place where learning is shared. Learning is not a one-way street that runs from trainer to participant. Nor is the training method simply a free-for-all discussion where we all just sit around and talk. Rather, the training method is a structured allowing us to share information, reflect on our experiences, and make plans for action on job. It is based on three learning exchanges involving RN worksite leaders, or stewards, and the trainer:

- **Steward to Steward**
- **Steward to Trainer**
- **Trainer to Steward**

**Steward to Steward:** Most of us learn best from each other. We should never underestimate how much real education takes place between members talking to each other. This participant-to-participant learning exchange is a key element of all of our workshops. We do this by first creating space for people to learn from each other by solving problems in their small groups.

**Steward to Trainer:** Lecture-style training assumes that the trainer knows all the answers. On many subjects, a group of bedside nurses will often have as much, or more, collective knowledge and experience as any one expert. So, in our training method, a key goal is to learn as much as possible from the workshop participants. Because this training method is based on facilitators listening to those we are training, facilitators learn more and more about the realities people face in their healthcare facilities.

**Trainer to Steward:** This is the traditional learning procedure of school and it has its place in our training method. Trainers help to clear up confusion, ensure that all the key points are covered during an activity, and share new information with the group.