5.3: Organizational Vision, Mission, and Values

Organizational leaders provide a sense of direction and overall guidance to their employees through the use of organizational vision, mission, and values statements. An organization’s **vision statement** defines why the organization exists, describes how the organization is unique and different from similar organizations, and specifies where the leaders hope the organization is going (Sanders, 2013). The **mission** describes how the organization will fulfill its vision and establishes a common course of action for future endeavours. Finally, **values** are developed to assist with the achievement of the vision and mission and provide strategic guidelines for decisionmaking, both internally and externally, by members of the organization (Hibberd, Doody, & Hennessey, 2006). The vision, mission, and value statements are expressed in a concise and clear manner that is easily understood by all the members of the organization. The vision, mission, and values provide guidelines for every person participating in all activities occurring within the organization, encouraging them to “walk the talk.”

Canadian health care is an open system that is undergoing constant change while responding to the surrounding environment. Complexity science requires leaders and staff to handle this rapid change in a thoughtful manner. As health care continues to evolve and new models of care are introduced, managers need to consider innovative approaches that meet the needs of change while complying with their individual organization’s vision, mission, and values. According to Porter–O’Grady and Malloch, “the language of leadership must reflect the requisites of embracing the mission, identifying how individual work effort contributes to it, and ensuring that work outcomes advance the organization’s mission and purpose” (2011, p. 233). Leaders look through the lenses of the vision, mission, and values statements for guidance when determining appropriate responses to critical events and unforeseen challenges, common in a complex system. Successful organizations require each employee to be committed to following these strategic guidelines during the course of their work activities. Employees who understand the relationship between their own work and the mission and purpose of the organization will contribute to a stronger health care system that excels in providing first-class patient care. The vision, mission, and values provide a common organization-wide frame of reference for decision making for both leaders and staff (Kotalik et al., 2014).
An organization’s mission, vision, and values do not remain static and unchanging over the years, thus the strategic organizational guidelines are regularly reviewed and adapted. This revision process ensures that the services offered by an organization meet the needs of its consumers or patients. Evidence of this process of revision is discussed by Conger, Knuth, and McDonald (2014), who describe a health care response to the design and implementation of an electronic health records system. The implementation of this system eventually led to the refreshment of the health care agency’s vision, a redefinition of its goals, and, finally, the reinvention of its performance measurement and reporting system. Transformations, sparked by changes in the external technological environment, met the health care agency’s mission and vision to engage, enroll, and empower care providers, and led to the development of a “culture of transparency and clinical excellence” (Conger et al., p. 55).

Essential Learning Activity 5.2.1

Watch this video “How to Write a Mission Statement” (4:00), presented by M3 Planning, then answer the following questions:

1. What is a mission statement?
2. What are five characteristics of a mission statement?
3. Who needs to be involved in writing a mission statement?
4. What information do you need to write a mission statement?
5. What should the process of writing a mission statement involve?