

Represent

REFLECT RESPECT RESPOND

2023-2025 Organizational Call to Action

The Sigma 2023 -2025 Call to Action is REPRESENT.

Merriam-Webster's online dictionary defines **represent** in part as "to serve as a sign or symbol, counterpart or image, or example or instance of, and as having a specified character or quality."

Every day in our personal and professional lives, we have an unprecedented opportunity to **represent** all aspects of the glorious humans we are.

As individuals, each of us brings a unique set of identities and experiences—elements of our own personal culture—to our role as a nurse. We can choose to be defined by those, or we can decide to leverage them.

Rick Zoucha, PhD, PMHCNS-BC, CTN-A, FAAN, wrote in a March 2021 *Transcultural Nursing Society* blog post, "It is important to note that who we are and how we care is based on how we have been raised and nurtured in the culture of nursing... We are indeed living in an unusual time. A time of weather extremes, political divisions, racial justice, COVID-19, vaccine administrations, isolation, uncertainty... and of course hope!"

As professional nurses and Sigma members, we have the credibility and visibility to speak and act on behalf of nursing and Sigma, and the opportunity to **represent** the vast diversity and capability of the nursing profession to shape the world as we would like to see it.

The powerful quote, "Be the change you wish to see in the world," is attributed to several individuals, including Mahatma Gandhi, Arleen Lorraine, Ernest Troutner, and Diane Kennedy Pike. The authorship of the quote may be widely debated, but the meaning and intent of the quote is clear: Words alone do not often produce change, but providing a model for emulation often does.

We, Sigma, have an opportunity to embrace all that the profession and culture of nursing embodies in the 21st Century. As an organization of nurses connected, empowered, and leading the way in transforming global healthcare we are well-positioned to **represent** the change we want to see in the world.

Robin Sharma, a globally recognized humanitarian, devoted to helping human beings recognize their native gifts writes, "Leadership is not about executive position or title. It is about connection and influence. At its highest, leadership is all about adding value to the world and blessing lives through the work you do."

Therefore, I challenge you to represent the best of your individuality and shared contributions to our profession in three ways:

- **REFLECT** – show the change we want to see by Communicating a Caring Culture
- **RESPECT** – show respect for everyone by Cultivating Cultural Humility
- **RESPOND** –address the demand for current, relevant practice approaches by Championing Contemporary Practice

We are all leaders, and we must *represent* our unique selves and collective change in our shared world.

Let's delve into the Call to Action in terms of Reflect, Respect, and Respond.

REFLECT - Communicating a Caring Culture

Madeline Leininger, a nursing theorist who developed the Cultural Care Diversity and Universality Theory, defines culture as "...the learned, shared, and transmitted values, beliefs, norms, and life way practices of a particular group that guides thinking, decisions, and actions in patterned ways..." The profession of nursing is about caring, and over the last several years, our culture of care has evolved. There are still so many wonderful qualities and aspects of caring, but there are also many difficult aspects that have shaped and transformed some of our learned and shared beliefs and practices.

Matt Tenney wrote in a *Business Leadership Today* article that, "A caring culture is an organizational culture in which leaders consistently act in ways that help team members to thrive, and team members consistently act in ways that help other team members to thrive. As a result, the organization can care very well for customers."

Caring is who we are and what we do, as individuals and as a caring culture. By **reflecting** the change we wish to see, we have the chance to communicate the hope that lives in a caring organization. We can and should model and **reflect** our commitment to care of self, care of others, and care of the environment.

Care of Self

The World Health Organization, in 2018, defined self-care as "the ability of individuals, families, and communities to promote health, prevent disease, maintain health, and to cope with illness and disability with or without the support of a healthcare provider."

Moira Lawler, in a May 2021 Everyday Health blog post titled "What Is Self-Care and Why Is It So Important for Your Health?" made several points about self-care that fit with the World Health Organization definition of self-care and clearly communicate an opportunity to **reflect** our commitment, most importantly, to ourselves. Lawler wrote: "Self-care is taking the steps to tend to your physical and emotional health needs to the best of your ability, and ... all the steps an individual can take to manage stressors and take care of own health and well-being."

"Self-care requires checking in with yourself and asking yourself how you're doing and what your body is asking for... Self-care does not mean the same thing for everyone. Different people will adopt different self-care practices..." Self-care is an individual practice and should be shaped to fit who we are... but as Sigma nurses we all have the opportunity to reflect self-care.

Care of Others

In a 2021 *International Journal of Human Caring* article, titled *Art and Science of Caring of Nursing: Art Based Learning*, Amendolair writes: “Nursing is an art and a science. The art of nursing is grounded in... the nature of relationships and the connection between nurses and those in need (Watson, 2018). Nursing science, based on nursing knowledge, research, and theory (Barrett, 2002; 2017), explains what nurses do, how they do what they do, and why they do what they do.”

With a mission of “Developing nurse leaders anywhere to improve healthcare everywhere” and a portfolio of programs, resources, and networking opportunities that purpose to ensure an organizational culture that provides opportunities for nurse leaders focused in the art of nursing and nurse leaders focused in the science of nursing to thrive equally, Sigma is **representing** care of others in communicating a caring culture.

We all, as Sigma members, have an opportunity to **reflect** Sigma’s inclusive, integrated art-and-science of nursing approach to developing nurse leaders anywhere to improve healthcare everywhere as we mobilize our skills, expertise, and experiences in our day-to-day lives and connect with others to transform global healthcare.

Care of the Environment

Care of the environments of our organizations as well as the environment on our planet.

Sigma is committed to providing education, support, resources, and opportunities to engage in advocacy and be the change we want to see in Care of the Environment. Advocacy here means “any action that speaks in favor of, recommends, argues for a cause, supports or defends, or pleads on the behalf of others.”

Two areas of Sigma advocacy I would like to mention here are our commitment to advancing the Sustainable Development Goals and our Creating Healthy Work Environments initiatives. As we **represent** the change we want to see in our world, we have excellent opportunities to **reflect** care of the environment:

- Understand as much as we can about the many ways to get involved, and then contributing to the advancement of the Sustainable Development Goals individually, within our chapters, at our organizations, or within our communities.
- Equip ourselves to develop, implement, and maintain strategies to improve our organization's work environment, by getting involved with Sigma’s healthy work environments initiatives.

RESPECT - Cultivate cultural humility

Melanie Tervalon, MD, MPH, and Jann Murray-Garcia, MD, MPH, first introduced the concept of *cultural humility* in 1998 as an alternative approach to cultural competence in provider-patient interactions, calling it “a lifelong commitment to self-evaluation and self-critique, to redressing... power imbalances... and developing mutually beneficial... clinical and advocacy partnerships with communities on behalf of individuals and defined populations.”

Since its introduction in 1998, the term cultural humility and this initial definition have been adopted and/or adapted around the globe, in multiple settings, as an approach to “treating everyone with respect.” In a 2021 *International Journal of Development Education and Global Learning* article, titled *Bowing Down and Standing Up: Towards a Pedagogy of Cultural Humility*, Habashy and Cruz wrote, “Cultural humility is a critical skill for effective intercultural interactions... Prioritizing cultural humility can yield enhanced respect for others, providing a focus on lifelong learning, more meaningful global understanding, and more fruitful intercultural relationships. In an increasingly interconnected globe, cultural humility offers a meaningful framework to support substantive interactions between individuals across the globe or down the street.”

In a 2022 *International Journal of Intercultural Relations* article, titled *Stay humble and enjoy diversity: The interplay between intergroup contact and cultural humility on prejudice*, authors Marika Rullo, Emilio Paolo Visintin, Stella Milani, Alessandra Romano, and Loretta Fabbri surmise while discussing the concept of cultural humility, “Cultural humility can therefore be considered the key to understanding, respecting, and appreciating cultural differences in order to develop and maintain respectful relationships based on mutual trust.”

As a global organization, Sigma is well positioned to **represent** the value of **respect** by cultivating cultural humility and shaping a caring culture “in which leaders consistently act in ways that help team members to thrive, and team members consistently act in ways that help other team members to thrive”.

To cultivate is to acquire, develop, demonstrate, define. As a caring culture we have an opportunity to model keys to cultivating cultural humility, as we commit to:

- *Listen* - Through an ongoing process of compassionate self-awareness, others awareness, self-evaluation, and self-critique.
- *Learn* -With humility, grace, and a growth mindset, learn about others’ culture/cultural influences/identities but start with an examination of our own culture/cultural influences/identities.
- *Lead* - Commit to a lifelong process of cultural humility; recognition of power dynamics and imbalances and a desire to fix those imbalances; and develop partnerships with people and groups who advocate for others.

RESPOND - Champion contemporary practice

Despite what may be going on around us, professionalism, perspective, and perseverance are key as we respond to the demands of modern-day nursing and **represent** a group of influential nurse leaders, connected, empowered, and well-positioned to transform global healthcare and add value to the world.

Acting quickly, positively, and consistently in modeling professionalism, perspective, and perseverance **represents** a nursing profession and a Sigma organization in which leaders consistently act in ways that help team members to thrive, and team members consistently act in ways that help other team members to thrive. As a result, the organization can care very well for customers.

In a January 2022 *Journal of Nursing Regulation* editorial, titled *Nursing challenges continue in 2022*, Maryann Alexander, PhD, RN, FAAN, predicted:

- "... further disruption to the front-line nursing workforce will continue as hospitals and other institutions compete for staff..."
- "The need for employers to address workforce needs and assess workforce environments... will be ongoing"
- "There will continue to be a shift toward online/remote education..."
- "... Educators must teach the importance of social determinants of health and evidence-based practice so that nurses can address the complex aspects of patient care..."
- "Regulators, educators, and practitioners must continue to address the challenges of implicit bias and systemic racism," and
- "Expert technology and robotics will continue to advance and become routine aspects of nursing care..."

Most of these predictions were true for 2022 and continued to be challenges for the nursing profession, healthcare, and its customers in 2023.

In a January 2023 special issue of Sigma's *Journal of Nursing Scholarship*, titled *Health Policy Implications: Lessons Learned From COVID-19*, nurse leader contributors from around the globe illustrate how application of COVID-19 lessons learned from could and should influence **how we care**. The publication of this special issue is a great example of one of the ways Sigma is championing contemporary practice and responding to the demands placed on the nursing profession, healthcare, and its customers, by evolving issues impacting how we care in the 21st Century.

As Zoucha wrote in that blog post, "We are indeed living in an unusual time. A time of weather extremes, political divisions, racial justice, COVID-19, vaccine administrations, isolation, uncertainty... and of course hope!" A hope that can be represented by responding to "our current times" by championing contemporary practice with Professionalism, Perspective, and Perseverance. Zoucha also wrote, "who we are and how we care is based on how we have been raised and nurtured in the culture of nursing..."

And, in a 2021 virtual *Journal of Advanced Nursing* article, titled *Contemporary nursing education: Taking the inspiration from the present*, Morin and Yu not only under grid the influence of contemporary nursing education for preparing the next generation to thrive in the present; but also support the importance of responding to what is going on around us in healthcare by championing contemporary practice. They write:

- "Quality nursing care should reflect how nurses address contemporary trends and issues within the global healthcare context.
- "The COVID-19 pandemic, climate change, social justice issues, health disparities, gender and race discrimination, and aging of a global population highlight issues transforming healthcare and are examples supporting the need for contemporary nursing education..."

We know that recent and current disruptions to the world and to the nursing workforce, including COVID, systemic bias, burnout, violence against nurses, and staffing shortages will continue. We have yet to see what impacts artificial intelligence will have. As Sigma members we must respond to the demands of contemporary nursing practice with professionalism, perspective, and perseverance with support from our Sigma community and the many resources available to us.

Perspective will shape how we view our opportunities to “be the change we want to see” and individually and collectively model what professionalism should **represent** for 21st Century nursing. Perspective will also shape our ability to see the hope in the midst of everything else going on around us and persevere in representing the change we want to see.

One of the things I love about the word “represent” is that everyone can take it and make it personal. So, I will leave you with a question:

What does **represent** mean to you?

As Robin Sharma writes “... At its highest, leadership is all about adding value to the world.” Each of us can embrace the call to **represent** the change we want to see in the world.

We can **represent** by embracing our own uniqueness and the perspective we bring to our role. We can **represent** by helping others experience and enjoy the community and support. And we can **represent** by demonstrating our caring culture committed to help every nurse thrive.

Sigma has a plethora of professional development, lifelong learning, continuous relevant education, training, and alignment resources available to its members. Many of the resources are also available to nonmembers looking for opportunities to stay relevant and equipped for contemporary practice in the 21st Century.

I urge you to take advantage of all the organization has to offer as we **represent** together.



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