

Put out the Welcome Mat!

- Before your preceptee arrives, plan with your peers on how to greet them. Help make new preceptees feel welcome.
- Be there to support, teach and empower!
- Make sure preceptees have someone to lunch with during their orientation period. Don't leave them behind!
- Make a special effort to introduce the new nurse to other staff members *even after* the first day on the job.
- If it's not already your unit's process, negotiate with your co-workers for some free time on their first day.
- Have the orientation packet and materials prepared and ready to go.
- Celebrate successes!
- Spend some time each week reviewing the preceptee's achievements.
- Facilitate their connection with the unit by asking the preceptee to identify two things they have encountered on the unit that they like.

References:

Alspach, J. (2000). Preceptor handbook: From *staff nurse to preceptor: A preceptor development program*. 2nd Edition. American Association of Critical-Care Nurses.

The Importance of Preceptee Socialization

Nursing literature frequently infers that, "There is a nursing shortage, but there also may be a shortage of environments in which nurses choose to work." There is certainly truth to this statement, and as professionals, we must recognize the importance of building and supporting the environment in which we work. Nurses have more power in establishing an affirmative work environment than they may realize. Remember, "no action" is "an action."

Given this knowledge, socialization of our preceptees must be a priority. Successful socialization of the preceptee is the responsibility of all staff; however, as the preceptor, YOU are the pilot. Help foster the preceptee's enthusiasm by having them plan their preceptorship with you. Recall your own orientation(s) and preceptor. Identify what made them a good preceptor, and do the same.

There are multiple methods by which to facilitate the socialization of your preceptee. Begin by determining if your preceptee is socially comfortable in their new environment. If so, they are more likely to ask questions, learn, grow professionally and become a competent member of your team.

Identify elements in the orientation that might be new to the preceptee. Ask them about past work experiences. Discuss their preferred learning style. Determine how you will assist the preceptee in integrating socially and professionally. Think about the present strengths within your unit and your staff.

Promote co-worker participation in the socialization process, and utilize their areas of clinical expertise. Getting your co-workers involved will assist in the establishment of a positive relationship between the staff and your preceptee.