

Preceptor News

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Mentoring programs have benefits to both the mentor themselves and also the sponsoring organization.

Benefits to Mentors

- opportunity to 'give back'
- recognition for contributions to the culture of the unit
- development of mentoring and coaching skills
- practice active listening skills
- new perspectives on your mentoring and precepting role
- opportunity for self-reflection and development
- opportunity to share knowledge
- personal fulfilment and satisfaction
- boosts commitment to the job

Benefits to Organizations

- ensures ongoing support of new employees
- builds a culture of caring
- creates opportunities for professional development for new and experienced staff

References:

Fox, K. (2010). Mentor program boosts new nurses' satisfaction and lowers turnover rate. *Journal of Continuing Education in Nursing Education*, 41(7), 331-316.

Jokelainen, M., Turunen, J., Tossavainen, K., Jamookeeah, D. & Coco, K. (2011). A systematic review of mentoring nursing students in clinical placements. *Journal of Clinical Nursing*, 20, 2854-2876.

The Meaning of Mentoring

Mentoring programs have gained attention in both the business world and in health care settings. Mentoring programs have been shown to decrease turnover of new graduate nurses. In one study, turnover rates decreased from 31 percent to zero after just one year (Fox, 2010).

In nursing, mentoring typically is a role function of a more experienced person who acts as a guide or facilitator to a less experienced person. Nurses can benefit from mentor relationships before, during and after new employee orientation programs. Preceptors and mentors can work together to assist a new employee as they transition to their new work environment. After orientation, mentors pick up where precepting ends, and often, preceptors become new mentors.

Benefits to Mentees

The benefits to nurses who find mentors or participate in formal mentor programs are numerous. As preceptors, we should encourage our preceptees to seek a mentor. Here is a short list of benefits of mentor programs to discuss with your preceptee.

- being encouraged and empowered in personal development
- identify and remediate gaps in skills and knowledge
- gain a broader perspective of the culture
- access to a role model
- increases commitment to the work setting
- increases self confidence
- opportunity to be heard
- practice accepting feedback
- increase in networking

Nursing students also benefit from mentors. In a recent synthesis of the literature, mentoring was found to facilitate nursing student learning by creating supportive learning environments, individualizing the learning process, strengthening students' professionalism and enhancing students' professional competence in nursing (Jokelainen, et al., 2011).

Mentor selection

Mentor relationships either evolve naturally or can be formalized by managers or educators who review needs of mentees to match with qualifications and characteristics of mentors. Criteria of mentors have been described by Fox (2010): current on practice standards; considered an expert on the unit; a good listener; promotes a positive environment and is optimistic; and is nurturing, kind, considerate and trustworthy.

*See Fox (2010) article for a full list.