

Mentoring: A Key Role for Nurse Educators

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Background

An important component of the Cohen grant proposal is the provision of qualified mentors to work with Cohen Scholars while they are participating in the graduate nursing program at Stevenson University. The role of mentor is identified as critical or important to the success not only of new nurses, but of new nurse educators. The intent of the grant is that mentors be full-time faculty members in an academic setting or full-time educators within a hospital with a minimum of a master's degree in nursing that includes education courses. Mentors are selected mainly from among faculty at Stevenson University and partnering community colleges. Other full-time nurse educators, especially those who are alumni of Stevenson's Nurse Educator Concentration, are also eligible for selection. It is anticipated that most mentors from academic settings will be doctorally-prepared. Enough mentors will be recruited such that mentors will be assigned no less than three and no more than five mentees.

One problem identified within year two of the Cohen Scholars Grant, is a shortage of qualified mentors to serve within nursing education roles. A parallel challenge is how to teach Cohen Scholars to be strong mentors.

Purpose

This poster will highlight the problems of inadequate numbers and proficiency of mentors, identify challenges in mentoring new nurse educators, share benefits of mentoring, and will suggest content and behaviors that must be modelled for Cohen Scholars.

Objectives

1. Illustrate the necessity of mentoring to the role of nurse educator.
2. Examine methods that support the mentor's key roles such as role modeling, teacher, ally, psychosocial support, and career development

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Benefits of Mentoring

- Career advancement (National Center for Professional & Research Ethics, 2017)
 - Serve as network connection, advisor, guide scholarship, provide professional visibility
- Psychosocial support
 - Function as confidant, emotional supporter
- Cultivates mentee's professional self-acceptance
- Develop problem solving skills
- Provides friendship and support
- Role modeling and identification
- Analyze what works
- Develop capacity to reflect on what works and what does not and accept the need for change
- Fulfilling commitment to profession
- Attention to feelings, attitudes, & beliefs as part of affective learning development
- Promote the advocacy role resultant in ethical practices (Robinson, 2022).

Challenges Faced in Mentoring New Nurse Educators

- The COVID-19 pandemic highlighted, and worsened, the nurse educator deficit (Organization of Nurse Leaders, 2020).
- Nursing students are often unable to complete the requested hours in inpatient clinical settings to provide the hands-on experience required to be safe, critically thinking practitioners upon graduation and licensure (Casey et al., 2021; Robinson, 2022).
- There are not enough clinical nurse educators to lead learners into the hospital setting providing invaluable education, skill, and mentorship.
- The lack of education mentors impacts the students' ability to hone critical thinking skills, psychomotor skills, and other affective domain understandings foundational to professional nursing practice (Robinson, 2022).
- Consequently, current faculty need to prepare new nurse educators for teaching contemporary nursing students who necessitate more individual mentorship and educational support.
- As nursing institutions are short on faculty and clinical instructors (NACNEP, 2020), there is little opportunity to orient, precept, or mentor new faculty into these critical mentoring roles.
- Novice nurses of two years or less are asked to precept the graduate nurse, yet this young nurse does not bear the skill and experience to serve as an effective mentor
- Compensation for educators & mentors is below clinical rates
- Resources: people, time, funds, interest, return on investment, preparedness to mentor

Implications

- Career advancement is tied to the Cohen Scholars program, it helps support nurses wanting to transition into a nurse educator role.
 - The influx of new nurses into the nurse educator role creates a significant need for mentoring by experienced nurse educators
 - The art of practicing as a nurse educator is transmitted through the one-to-one mentor sharing of all three learning domains, affective, cognitive, & psychomotor with the novice educator through support and collaboration
 - Encourage mentoring as volunteerism or service profession
 - Mentor program should support the institution's mission & vision
 - Administration's role in supporting the mentoring process is critical
- Recommendations**
- Provide mentor coordinator (Nowell et al., 2017).
 - Utilize standard evaluation through all state programs (Nowell et al., 2017)
 - Encompass Emotional Intelligence & resiliency training, reflection, networking
 - Mentors improve orientation success for new nurses which in turn aids retention. Mentors can ease the transition from clinical to academic practice & increase number of prepared nurse educators which fulfills Cohen Scholar's purpose in seeking to ultimately fill the growing nurse deficit.
 - Offer incentives & recognition programs (Robinson, 2022).

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