



# Peer Mentorship for Unit Based Council Chairs

## Denise White, RN, MSN, CCRN, GC-C

### *Clinical Practice Council – Wentworth Douglass Hospital, Dover NH*



## Background

An important facets of a healthy work environment (HWE) include staff empowerment and shared decision making (AACN, 2016).

Unit Based Councils (UBC) are the foundation of our facility's shared governance model supporting staff empowerment and shared decision making. Volunteer chairs of UBCs (direct care providers) often lack experience with leading meetings (Shiskowsky, 2016).

Effective mentoring is an important catalyst in the enhancement of leadership skills (Holliday, Dawson & Hall, 2017).

## Implementation

Based on a successful unit level peer support program, an organizational level mentorship was developed for Unit Based Council chairs. The program promotes true collaboration, effective decision making, appropriate staffing, meaningful recognition, and authentic leadership.

Goals: (1) strengthen supportive peer relationships, (2) build partnerships between chairs and leaders, and (3) mutual learning.

**Objective:** *To create a program where Unit Based Council Chairs support each other in developing leadership skills, including communication, organization, prioritization, and the ability to motivate and inspire others.*

## Timeline

### MAY – JULY

- Meet & self-assessment
- Attend other's UBC in 2-3 mos
- Share observations, set goals

### AUG – DEC

- Meet with managers, UBC chairs
- Share goals, gain agreement
- Check in with mentor 2-3x's

### JAN – MAR

- Revisit UBC: observe meeting
- Evaluate goals
- Evaluate mentor program
- Begin plan for succession

## Toolkit

- Program overview
- Timeline
- UBC self assessment tool
- UBC meeting evaluation tool
- Meeting agenda
- Goal matrix
- Example of UBC goals
- Example of leadership meeting agenda
- Program evaluation



## Preliminary Findings

The program is in its inaugural year, but feedback from the chairs has been favorable.

Comments from participants:

- "great program concept"
- "great addition"
- "very beneficial to myself and UBC"
- "creates a sense of unity between units"

Challenges identified:

- "hard to meet d/to low staffing and summer vacations"
- "hard to meet with different schedules, maybe groups of 3 -4 people would be more effective"

## References

- AACN Standards for establishing and sustaining healthy work environments 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. Retrieved July 1, 2018 from [website/nursing-excellence/healthy-work-environment/execsum.pdf?la=en](https://www.aacn.org/standards/healthy-work-environment/execsum.pdf?la=en).
- Holliday, L., Dawson, P., & Hall, C. (2017). How expert mentoring can pave the way to successful leadership. *Nursing Children and Young People* 29(3):20 – 22.
- Shiskowski, K. & Krugman, M. (2016). Jump starting unit based councils. *American Nurse Today* 11(1).