Preparing for a Successful Preceptorship:
A Toolkit on Precepting Nurse Practitioner Students

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Identification & Evidence of Problem
- Nationally, graduate schools of nursing (SON) and nurse practitioner (NP) students experience great difficulty securing qualified, willing preceptors
  - Competition for clinical sites and preceptors
  - Distance programs
  - Same geographic area
  - Advance practice program growth
  - Shortage of doctoral-prepared advanced practice faculty to supervise
- 96% of SONs either moderately concerned or very concerned about securing clinical sites for students
- 94% of SONs either moderately concerned or very concerned about supply of qualified NP preceptors
- NP training opportunities limited by the one-to-one preceptor-student model
- The American Association of Colleges of Nursing (AACN) desires:
  - Increased preceptor training through a repository of preceptor orientation materials
  - Innovative partnerships for NP clinical education
  - Incentives for practices sites and preceptors
- Preceptors consistently report desire for preceptor training
- As enrollment and the demand for clinical training sites continue to rise, coupled with the lack of preceptors, who will provide the clinical training for students?

Purpose of Project
The purpose of this project is to positively impact nursing practice and improve patient outcomes by:
- Increasing the supply of NP preceptors by offering no-cost continuing education (CE) in the form of an advanced practice preceptorship education toolkit
- Addressing the barriers and issues NP preceptors encounter when mentoring a student
- Preceptor confidently prepared to mentor student

Description of Project
The project encompasses two parts:
1) Develop and administer the Nurse Practitioner Preceptor Survey to local NPs
   - Assess barriers and motivators for precepting NP students
   - Assess need for educational preparation to develop the clinical preceptor role
2) Develop an advanced practice preceptorship toolkit
   - Provide preceptors with professional development and free CEs
   - Top three topics NPs desire for preceptor development
   - Toolkit comprised of voice-over PowerPoint presentation

Methodology
- Cross-sectional study design of a convenience sample of three groups of NPs
- Members of three groups of NPs completed the Nurse Practitioner Preceptor Survey including:
  - West Alabama Nurse Practitioner Association (WANPA)
  - Central Alabama Nurse Practitioner Association (CANPA)
  - NP faculty at Samford University’s Ida Moffett School of Nursing
- Pen and paper survey at group’s monthly meeting
- The survey asked 22 questions regarding:
  - Years of experience
  - Organizational support
  - Incentives and barriers
  - Role preparation
- Qualitative and quantitative data collected and analyzed for meaning using descriptive statistics

Theoretical Framework
Patricia Benner’s Model of Skill Acquisition: Novice to Expert Theory
- Provides framework for NP student
- Progress through the different stages of skill acquisition
  - As RNs, may be in the proficient or expert stage
  - As a NP student, thrust back into the novice stage
  - Preceptor fulfills role of the expert personified
  - Past experiences to actively and holistically engage care for patients
  - Training the preceptor
- Emphasizes importance of not only retaining but rewarding nurses for expertise

Organization Support:
- 61% encouraged to serve as a preceptor by employer
- 50% not recognized for precepting on job evaluation
- 54% work more hours on days precept a student

Incentives and Barriers:
- 77% previously served as a preceptor to NP student
- 77% precept to “give back” to the nursing profession
- Loss of productivity and time constraints tied at 39% as the greatest barrier to precepting
- Top incentives preceptors most appreciate from a SON
  - Free continuing education credits (43%)
  - Financial remuneration (37%)

Role Preparation:
- 84% never participated in a preceptor development course
- 75% believe that receiving preceptor development in the form of CE credits would increase the likelihood of serving as a preceptor
- Top three topics in preceptor development toolkit
  - Developing critical thinking skills
  - Time management strategies
  - Assessing student’s learning style and needs

Organization
Participants
WANPA 12
CANPA 15
NP Faculty 43
Total sample size: 69
Average years of experience: 11

Clinical Relevance
- A preceptorship toolkit can positively impact nursing practice and patient outcomes
- SON faculty and NP students less difficulty finding willing preceptors for clinical experiences
- NPs benefit
  - Acquisition of CEs for no cost
  - Knowledge gained from the professional development course on preceptorship
- NP students benefit from highly qualified and trained preceptors who apply the lessons learned from the toolkit to precepting students
- Patients benefit
  - NPs improve patient outcomes
  - Without preceptors, students not afforded opportunity to apply the information learned from academia into a clinical setting
  - Dramatic decrease in NP providers
  - Patients will have less access to quality health care and poorer health outcomes

Recommendations
- Disseminate the toolkit to local, regional, and statewide agencies such as local chapters of NP associations, the Alabama Board of Nursing, the Alabama State Nurses Association and SONs
- Evaluate effectiveness:
  - Do preceptors gain skills on eliciting critical thinking skills, time management strategies and assessing the student’s learning style and needs?
  - Does the pool of NP preceptors increase as a result of the professional training?

References Available Upon Request