Title:
Building Effective Mentorship Dyads with the Use of Attachment Theory

Carann Elizabeth Tribbett, MSN
CICU, Main Line Health - Lankenau Medical Center, Wynnewood, PA, USA
Vicky H. Becherer, PhD
Lincoln University, Jefferson City, MO and Chamberlain College of Nursing, Downer's Grove, IL, Rocky Mount, MO, USA

Session Title:
Poster Presentations

Slot (superslotted):
PST: Saturday, 18 March 2017: 7:30 AM-8:00 AM
Slot (superslotted):
PST: Saturday, 18 March 2017: 9:45 AM-10:15 AM
Slot (superslotted):
PST: Saturday, 18 March 2017: 1:30 PM-2:00 PM
Slot (superslotted):
PST: Saturday, 18 March 2017: 3:45 PM-4:15 PM

Keywords:
Attachment Theory, Formal Mentorship Program and New Academic Faculty

References:


Utilizing Bowlby and Ainsworth's Attachment Theory to pair mentorship dyads, addressing personality differences the number one reason reported as to why formalized mentor relationships fail. Review of mentorship as an evidence based practice and a sample formalized program will also be demonstrated.

Abstract Summary:

Learning Activity:
LEARNING OBJECTIVES | EXPANDED CONTENT OUTLINE
---|---
1. Learners will be able to identify personality differences as the number one reason given for the failure of formalized mentor relationships and possible consequences for the mentor and protégé if the relationship fails. | Data will be presented from numerous studies on the consequences for both mentors and protege if a mentorship relationship fails. The number one reason given for the failure of mentor relationships is personality differences. Literature Review on personality tests was completed to provide a recommended instrument.

2. Learners will be able to defend application of Attachment Theory concepts to mentorship and how these will contribute to strategies that enhance mentor relationships and healthy work environments. | Application Theory developed by John Bowlby and Mary Ainsworth is discussed with application of the Adult Attachment Tool to a formalized mentorship program to specifically address the issues identified in the literature.

Abstract Text:

Scope of Abstract
New nurse educators often characterize their transition into the professional faculty role as being fraught with anxiety, uncertainty, and a general lack of confidence (Ferguson, 2011). A frequently identified factor that hinders the role transition is a lack of formal pedagogical education (Schoening, 2013). One evidence-based solution to combat this emotionally tumultuous challenge is through the use of formalized mentoring programs (Ferguson, 2011). According to Brody et al. (2016), 82% of mentored nurse educators report a willingness to mentor others, and 95.5% of the mentored nurse educators would recommend mentorship to new nurse educators. Unfortunately, despite the many benefits of formalized mentorship programs, they are not common in nursing education and faculty culture.

Significance
Informal mentorship has existed in practice professions throughout history, with nursing being no exception (Ferguson, 2011). Formalization of the mentor relationship originally appeared in business literature and again spread to nursing (Chen, Watson, & Hilton, 2016). Formalized mentor relationships between professional nurses have become more popular and have proven extremely effective in the socialization of new nurse educators (Nick et al., 2012). Despite the many benefits to mentors and protégé, there is no preparation for these roles in postsecondary educational institutions (Schoening, 2013). This Capstone project proposes the inclusion of formal preparation for mentorship in masters’ programs, with the inclusion of Attachment Theory and attachment style testing to enhance personalization of goal setting and assist in pairing of mentorship dyads.

Mentorship in the literature has been proven to shape new nurse faculty by producing improved job performance, early and more successful career socialization, increased career advancement, retention of talented nurse educators, increased publication rates, improved scholarship, and development of leaders (Ghosh & Reio Jr., 2013). Findings also indicate that there are benefits for mentors as well as protégés when participating in mentor relationships (Ghosh & Reio Jr., 2013). Among the mentor benefits were improved job satisfaction and increased commitment to organizations (Ghosh & Reio Jr., 2013).

Conversely, failure of the mentoring relationship has been shown to negatively affect both mentors and protégé (Straus, Johnson, Marquez, & Feldman, 2014). Protégé of failed mentorships reported decreased job satisfaction, greater rates of anxiety, decreased work life balance, and intention to or having already left a position where the mentor relationship took place (Straus et al., 2014). Mentors of failed mentor
relationships report decreased job satisfaction, feeling unsupported by organization, decreased lack of commitment to organization, increased rates of anxiety, decreased scholarship, and decreased work life balance. The number one reason given for failure of the mentor relationship is personality differences (Straus et al., 2014).

**Literature Review**

Database searches for the terms “Personality Testing” yield a variety of results. There were a large number of results debating the use of personality testing results, and a comparison of tools. With a huge variety of tests offered by an industry operating in the $500 million range, there is no shortage of studies (Psychometric Success, 2013). The use of personality testing for personnel selection is the topic most commonly found in the scholarly literature searches completed across multiple databases. There is a gap in research exploring the use of personality tests for team or group building and mentorship (Diekmann, König, & Saarlandes, 2012).

Chosen for inclusion in this literature review were the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI), Big Five Instrument, and the Experiences in Close Relationship Scale (ECR) the short form adapted for business. The three tools were chosen based on frequency of use reported by the searched literature and examined using reliability, validity, and social desirability. Reliability is defined as the reproducibility of the measurement of a scale (Chen, Watson, & Hilton, 2016). Validity is defined as to what extent a tool measures the concept that it claims to measure (Chen et al., 2016). Social desirability is defined as the tendency of respondents using self-rating inventories to score themselves with items perceived as more popular (Backstrom & Bjorklund, 2013).

**Myers Briggs Type Indicator**

The MBTI was the most frequently found tool on review of literature. Diekmann et al. (2012) reported the MBTI to be the instrument most frequently used by organizations, narrowly beating out the Big Five Personality Inventory. Grant (2016) described the MBTI as “the fad that won’t die” (p.1). Pittinger (2010) and Diekmann et al. (2012) list numerous issues with reliability and validity with the MBTI, and both disagree with the widespread use. The MBTI is not recommended by this author for use in a formalized mentorship program because of the reliability and validity (0.21-0.91) data and that much of the data is out of date to make it appropriate for scholarly inclusion, as well as a complete lack of data found on social desirability for the MBTI.

**The Big Five Personality Inventory**

The Big Five Personality Test was frequently resulted in the literature review. The Big Five is popular for use in organizations (Diekmann et al., 2012). Hee (2014) reports validity rates of 0.8- 0.9 and reliability rates of 0.71-0.77. With scores recommended above 0.6, the Big Five scores fair to good (Hee, 2014). Lee et al. (2009) recommends utilization of the Big Five for use in mentorship programs although the publication is several years out of date as it was originally published in 2000 and reprinted in 2009. Furnham et al. (2011) produced a study that illustrated a strong correlation between Big Five results and academic performance. Social desirability is a concern for this tool, as it prompted the change in category “Neuroticism” to “Emotional Stability” shortly after the introduction of the tool (Diekmann et al., 2012). Research by Backstrom and Bjorklund (2013) substantiated the continued effects of social desirability within the Big Five, even after renaming, but conclude that social desirability may not negate use of the tool for recruiting job candidates, and possibly for use in a mentorship program, but would be of considerable note for research purposes (Backstrom & Bjorklund, 2013).

**Adult Attachment Scale**

The Adult Attachment Scale (AAS) is a tool well supported by literature and backed by the Attachment Theory (Wei, Russell, Mallinckrodt, & Vogel, 2011; Miles, 2011). The Attachment Theory was developed
by John Bowlby and Mary Ainsworth (1969/1982) to examine the bond between children and parents (Germain, 2011). Multiple studies have successfully demonstrated the expansion of Attachment Theory to assist in the understanding of adult relationships, especially in times of stress (Germain, 2011; Miles, 2011). Several attachment measurement tools are available and most with good reliability and validity data (Friás, Shaver, Mikulincer, 2014). The AAS tool boasts fair to good reliability (0.78-0.93) and validity (0.77-0.87) rates. This tool is available online for free with extensive information on use of results (Miles, 2011; Paetzold, 2015). When examined for social desirability attachment studies have not been found to be contaminated with bias (Friás, Shaver, Mikulincer, 2014). Literature review does yield substantial data on recommendation for use in improving close relationships, and is even mentioned by Miles (2011) for use in mentoring (Paetzold, 2015). Based on support in the scholarly literature, reliability, and validity the author has chosen the AAS for application to formalized mentorship programs and dyad pairing.

**Evaluation Process**

Evaluation of the proposed change would be two-fold. Students of the course or seminar would be asked to complete a survey at the beginning and end of the course or seminar pertaining to mentorship, and a follow-up post graduation survey would also be implemented to see if the student participated in a mentor relationship, formal or informal, and if the coursework was of assistance. Measurement of this data could lead to further revision of coursework, and possible avenues of new research into professional nurse mentorship programs thus guiding further change according to Lewin’s change theory model (unfreeze-changing-refreeze) (Shirey, 2013). Qualitative analysis of the survey data would be gathered for publication and adaption to new areas of nursing where mentorship would be welcomed for staff retention or culture change is needed.