

Title:

A Mentorship Program to Enhance Leadership Skills in Early Career Nurses

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Leadership Posters Session 2

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References:

Ali, P. A., & Panther, W. (2008). Professional development and the role of mentorship.

Nursing Standard, 22(42), 35–9. <http://doi.org/10.7748/ns2008.06.22.42.35.c6579>

Nowell, L., Norris, J. M., Mrklas, K., & White, D. E. (2016). Mixed methods systematic review exploring mentorship outcomes in nursing academia. *Journal of Advanced Nursing*, (September), 1–18. <http://doi.org/10.1111/jan.13152>

Abstract Summary:

Learners will be informed of the process of developing and implementing a mentorship program to enhance leadership skills among nursing students and early career nurses.

Learning Activity:

LEARNING OBJECTIVES	EXPANDED CONTENT OUTLINE
The learner will be able to explain the process of designing and implementing a mentorship program for early career nurses and nursing students	The learner will be presented with information about the conceptualization and implementation of a mentorship program
The learner will be able to evaluate the efficacy of a mentorship program in achieving mentee and mentor goals	The learner will be shown participant feedback used as part of program evaluation

Abstract Text:

Mentorship is an important aspect of nursing. Mentors help novice nurses

navigate the transition to professional practice, answer career-related questions, and clarify professional misconceptions (Ali & Panther, 2008). Mentors serve as coaches, problem solvers, advocates, teachers, supporters, and counselors for mentees (Ali & Panther, 2008). Mentors also gain valuable skills through the mentor-mentee relationship in the areas of leadership and career development (Nowell, Norris, Mrklas, & White, 2016). Overall positive mentoring relationships are characterized by positive outcomes in several key areas including career, attitudes, behavior, and motivation (Nowell et al., 2016).

Recognizing the important role of the mentor-mentee relationship, the leadership of the Upsilon Chapter of Sigma Theta Tau International at New York University Rory Meyers College of Nursing developed a structured mentorship program to address the needs of nursing students and early career nurses. The program was a collaboration between the Mentorship Committee and the Upsilon Chapter executive board. Planning for the mentorship program began in September 2014. The first step was to organize a seminar to highlight the importance of mentorship for career development and progression. In February 2015 an expert on educational leadership led a 2-hour seminar on the attributes of good mentor-mentee relationships. The program was well received and served as an opportunity to identify potential mentors and mentees for the mentorship program.

In September 2015 a notification was sent to Upsilon Chapter members about the launch of the mentorship program. The Mentorship Committee decided to test the feasibility of the mentorship program by starting small - only 10 mentor/mentee dyads. The application process began in October 2015 and all applicants had to commit to attending mandatory mentorship workshops. After a competitive selection process, the 10 mentors and 10 mentees were chosen, with notification of acceptance being sent in

November 2015. In December 2015 mentors and mentees participated in a mandatory mentoring workshop, which consisted of two distinct phases. In the first phase, mentors and mentees were separated into their respective groups to cover:

- An introduction to key concepts related to developing an effective mentoring relationship, including attributes of good mentors and mentees.
- Review of Upsilon Chapter's Mentoring Handbook, developed by the Mentorship Coordinator and team.
- Completion of worksheets to help develop goals and expectations for the mentoring relationship.

In the second phase, mentors and mentees then participated in a speed networking session. During the session, the 10 mentees were able to meet with each of the 10 mentors for 5 minutes, during which time they were given the opportunity to ask key questions about each other's interests. After the speed networking session, each mentee and mentor were then asked to rank their top 3 partner choices. Finally, dyads were matched by the Mentorship Coordinator based on mentor and mentee rankings, career objectives, and prior experience.

After the workshop and matching process, program participants were given one month to establish goals for their relationship as well as guidelines for communication and conflict resolution, which were then submitted to the Mentorship Coordinator. A quarterly progress report was sent to all participants to assess barriers and facilitators encountered in the mentoring relationship. Two networking sessions were hosted to allow mentors and mentees to meet each other in an informal environment. They were asked to reflect on the progress of their goals and ways they feel they can improve their relationship. Thus far one mentor-mentee relationship was terminated due to the mentee moving out of the country. The first cohort will conclude in January 2017, at which time

the formal mentoring relationship will terminate, although dyads may wish to continue in an informal capacity. A closing mentoring event will be hosted in February 2017 to highlight program successes and challenges. In addition, the mentors and mentees who participated in Upsilon Chapter's first mentoring cohort will be honored at our induction ceremony in April 2017. Also, plans are underway for the second cohort of the program, in which we hope to increase to 20 mentor/mentee dyads.

This program can serve as a model for other STTI chapters to follow. We used an innovative speed networking session that allowed mentors and mentees to assess potential matches prior to assigning pairs. The use of progress reports and networking events allowed for monitoring of mentor-mentee relationships and the opportunity for the Mentorship Coordinator to intervene when needed.

References

- Ali, P. A., & Panther, W. (2008). Professional development and the role of mentorship. *Nursing Standard*, 22(42), 35–9. <http://doi.org/10.7748/ns2008.06.22.42.35.c6579>
- Nowell, L., Norris, J. M., Mrklas, K., & White, D. E. (2016). Mixed methods systematic review exploring mentorship outcomes in nursing academia. *Journal of Advanced Nursing*, (September), 1–18. <http://doi.org/10.1111/jan.13152>