

**Title:**

Virtual Mentoring for Early Career Nurses, Educators, and Researchers

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**Session Title:**

Education of Nurses

**Slot:**

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**Scheduled Time:**

10:45 AM

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**Keywords:**

e-Mentoring, professional development and virtual education

**References:**

Button, D., Harrington, A., & Belan, I. (2014). E-learning & information communication technology (ICT) in nursing education: A review of the literature. *Nurse Education Today*, 34(10), 1311-1323.

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**Abstract Summary:**

Mentoring is central to nursing development and career successes practiced across the world and cultures for centuries. Explore a range of experiences with two practitioners' e-Mentoring relationships using a narrative engagement framework of virtual mentoring connecting professionals across the globe through a suite of social media improving confidence and outcomes.

**Learning Activity:**

LEARNING OBJECTIVES	EXPANDED CONTENT OUTLINE
The learner will improve the ability to connect professionals through a suite of social media.	The logistics and tools will be discussed for managing a successful e-mentoring relationship with ease and connecting remote professionals with experienced professionals for long term relationships.
The learners will increase knowledge of a particular subject area and provide confidence and encouragement.	Implementing professional development through social media savvy for career building and professional confidence.
The learner will foster national or global professional educational growth and perspectives.	Fosters a national or global health perspective with professional standards and health outcomes.

**Abstract Text:**

**Background:** The importance and the extensive use of mentoring in nursing has been widely acknowledged. Mentoring is defined as a long-term learning relationship between a novice and an expert. With the rise and popularity of social media, mentoring has been taken on both in-person and virtual bases. The uptake of e-mentoring has occurred in nursing educational programs at both undergraduate and postgraduate levels (Raman, 2015; Rand & Pajarillo, 2015), continuing education for registered nurses (Faiman, 2011), and in supporting student transition into the clinician role (Edwards, Hawker, Carrier, & Rees, 2015). The effectiveness of these structured virtual mentorships for teaching and learning purposes is ambivalent, attributing to technological difficulties, faculty pedagogies, faculty seniority and time difference (Button, Harrington, & Belan, 2014; Faiman, 2011; Raman, 2015). Meanwhile, empirical evidence in tertiary education suggests that academics are more accepting and committed to the use of a suite of social media for sharing knowledge, establishing professional identity and informing professional development rather than for teaching activities (Manca & Ranieri, 2016). Research findings also emphasises that health professionals including nurses become more and more social media savvy for career building purposes (Moorley & Chinn, 2014; Wilson, Ranse, Cashin, & McNamara, 2014). More particularly, the benefits of using Twitter, Lindekin, blog, and SlideShare are profound for early career nurses, educators, and especially researchers who are in need to introduce themselves to the field and to shape their professional development in the future (Wilson et al., 2014). Thompson, Jeffries and Topping (2010) mention that electronic communication forms have been found to have some advantages over traditional face-to-face mentoring. Electronic media such as email can mitigate against social and cultural constitutions such as status getting in the way of mentoring relationships. However, apart from the aforementioned drawbacks related to technology, the effectiveness of social media among health professionals is further dependent on the willingness and confidence to engage in web-based interactions (Wilson et al., 2014). Professional uncertainty in the beginning of career can also impact nurses, educators and researchers' confidence in seeking mentoring.

**Purpose:** The purpose of this abstract is to encourage the culture of virtual and informal mentoring for its potential influence on individual development as well as health outcomes of different populations.

**Methods:** Personal experience of the two professional participants with virtual informal mentorships is to be shared using narrative engagement framework.

**Results:** From informal mentoring experiences through web-based platform, the professional participants were substantially benefited from knowledge gained, support received, role modeling provided and opportunities for collaboration in nursing. Demonstrated qualities contributed to the flourishing of these informal relationships and non-direct interactions. Awareness of both advantages and initial difficulties related to virtual mentoring was also necessary. By facilitating mutually beneficial mentoring relationships, the partnership empowers professional growth through sharing advice, knowledge and experiences. The mentor is equally benefited from innovative practice discussions and challenged at the same time.

**Conclusion:** The use of technology serves to connect mentors and mentees from different part of the world. The use of virtual mentoring is not only impactful for early career individuals' development but also contribute to cultural understanding and the advancement of health education and health practice. In virtual programs, the training needs to address the usual topics plus how to maximize the virtual relationship, including suggested frequency of contact to facilitate engagement. Experienced and expert clinicians, educators, and researchers thus are encouraged to lead, share and mentor despite geographical distance. Inexperienced counterparts are encouraged to take initiatives and commit to seek guidance and mentoring for their personal and professional growth. The benefits of the mentoring relationship are mutual with a shared mental model of professional excellence. Mentors develop an appreciation for sharing perspectives, vision, bringing about change and cultural understanding.

**Recommendations for future research:** It is recommended to propose and develop a guideline and model for nurses, educators and researchers to participate virtual mentoring. In longer term, future research can be conducted to create evidence on the effectiveness of the guideline/model for virtual mentoring relationships.