

# Making a Mentoring Match: Advancing the Profession Through Technology

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## ABSTRACT

The purpose of Sigma’s Mentoring and Coaching Program is to use technology to provide a conduit for nurses from different geographical backgrounds and experiences to become connected and provide constant support in a way that has not been done before. Web-based technology has allowed nurses from around the world to connect on a professional and personal level regardless of their career stage or experience.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

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## BACKGROUND

Globally, the populations of the world are experiencing poor access to care, insufficient resources, and nursing shortages of overwhelming proportion (Flinkman, Isopahkala-Bouret, & Salanterä, 2013). The integration of best available evidence is associated with improved patient outcomes, reduced treatment costs and need for clinical interventions. Lack of professional support and a dissatisfying work environment are associated with high levels of job-related burnout and nurses’ intent to leave their job (Allen, Holland, & Reynolds, 2015; Nantsupawat, Nantsupawat, Kunaviktikul, Turale, & Poghosyan, 2016; Yoon & Sok, 2016). A distance-mediated formal mentoring program has been shown to provide the support new nurses need to grow in the profession (Fyfe & Dennett, 2012; Johnson & Gandhi, 2015; O’Connell, Stoneham, & Saunders, 2016).

## STRATEGY

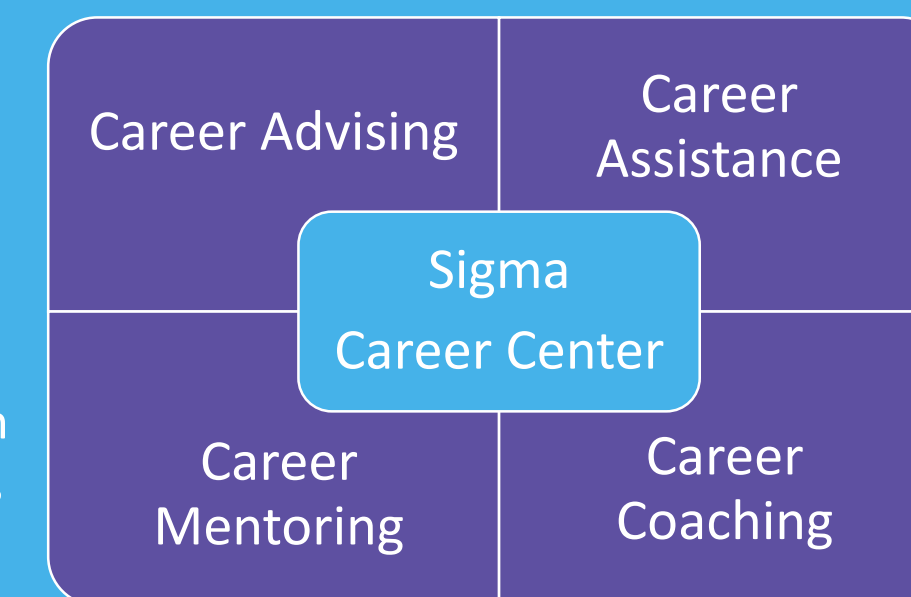
A task force was convened of nurse researchers, academicians, and clinicians from around the world to develop a distance-mediated career mentoring and career coaching program. The programs were designed to advance and encourage nurses to pursue lifelong learning opportunities, demonstrate new competencies in systems thinking, quality improvement, and care management that will better prepare them to improve health care outcomes in academic and/or clinical settings around the world. The task force developed criteria to match nurse mentors and coaches with nurse mentees from around the world based on the needs, or perceived needs, of the nurse mentee and the experience and expertise of the nurse mentors.



## CAREER CENTER

## METHODS

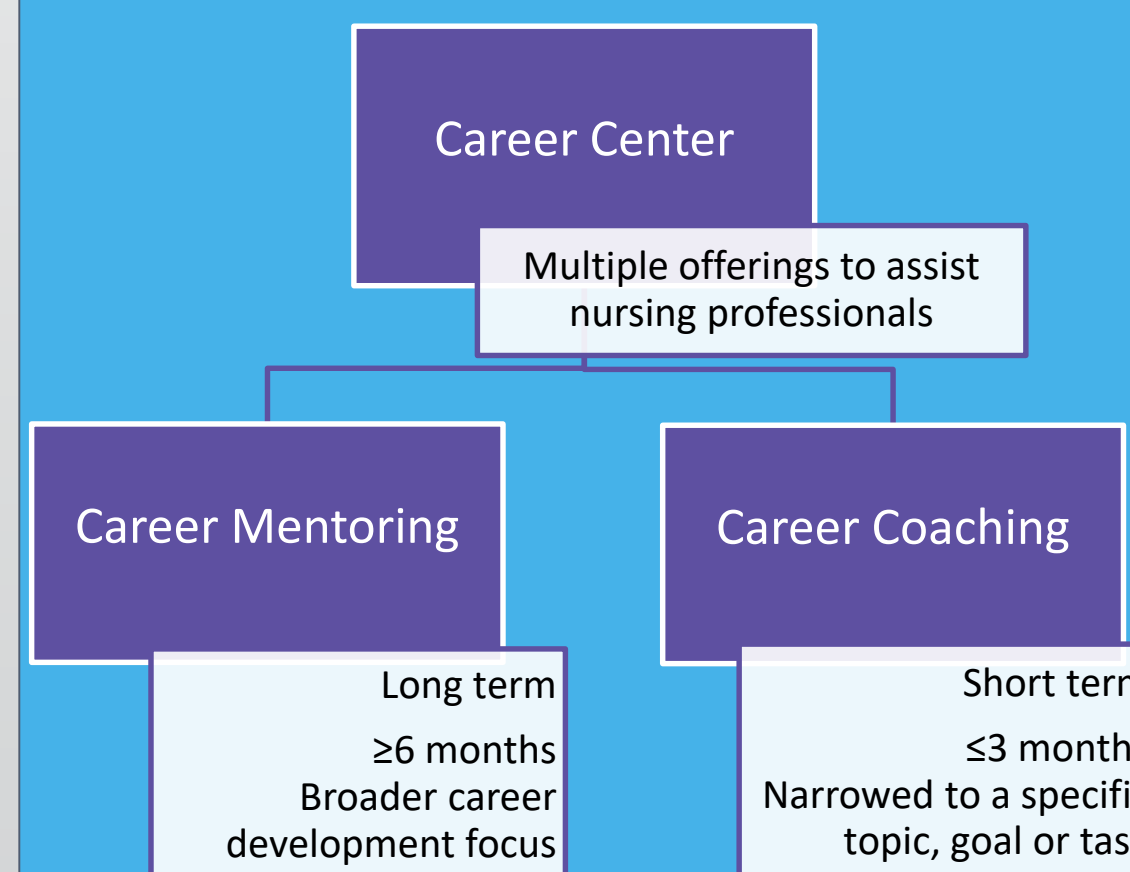
- Developed through the career center, the Career Mentoring and Career Coaching program was launched.
- An online educational course was developed to ensure that program expectations are known and agreed to prior to enrolling in the program.
- Utilizing new technologies, nurses are matched based on specific criteria. The software then allows nurse mentors and mentees to agree to be matched.



## PROCEDURES

Mentors, coaches, and mentees enroll through the same process.

1. Complete profile
2. Enroll by selecting the following:
  - Mentoring or coaching topic areas
  - Nursing specialties
  - Mentoring or coaching venue(s)
  - Current career stage
  - Global region of interest or experience
  - Language(s) comfortable speaking
  - Career mentoring or career coaching
3. Search for a mentor/coach or a mentee
4. Request a match via the software. Both parties must agree to the match separately.
5. Complete the initial assessment and ongoing evaluations which occur every three months during the match.



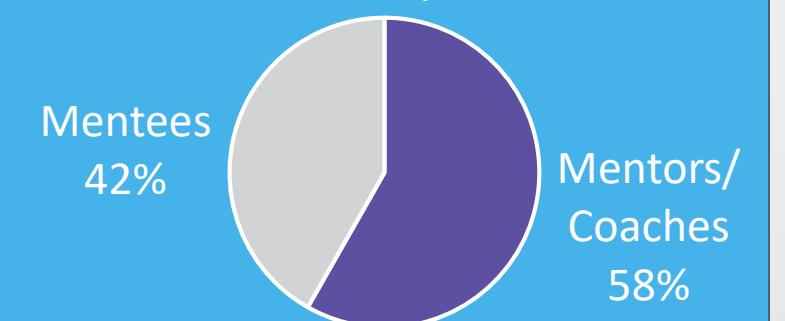
Experience levels of mentors and coaches include:

- Undergraduate Student/First-Year (0-1 year)
- Emerging Professional (2-5 years)
- Experienced Professional (6-15 years)
- Expert Professional (16+ years)

## IMPLEMENTATION

The program was piloted from July–September 2017 and subsequently launched in October 2017.

- More than 90 participants from many areas of nursing including academia, clinical arena, students, retirees, and more
- Data is measured via online evaluations performed four times during the first year and each year after that based on the initial match date
- Along with demographic data, several tools are used throughout the evaluation period



## IMPLICATIONS

This distance-mediated formal mentoring program

- provides an avenue for support and encouragement;
- creates a positive environment to promote individual nurturing and well-being;
- provides an avenue for professional development;
- will add to the very limited body of knowledge related to nursing mentoring through the research and evaluative portion;
- provides an opportunity to retain new and experienced nurses through their commitment and increased engagement.

## REFERENCES

Allen, B. C., Holland, P., & Reynolds, R. (2015). The effect of bullying on burnout in nurses: The moderating role of psychological detachment. *Journal of Advanced Nursing*, 71(2), 381-390. doi:10.1111/jan.12489

Allen, T. D., Eby, L. T., & Lentz, E. (2006). The relationship between formal mentoring program characteristics and perceived program effectiveness. *Personnel Psychology*, ... Find a full listing of references at: <http://hdl.handle.net/10755/623717>