

BACKGROUND

In the United States, at the start of 2022, there was a projected need for 1.02 million *new* nurses with 30% of nurses planning to leave their current role within one year and 57% planning to leave their current role in the next two years.⁵ Mentoring is a retention practice utilized in nursing; however, confusion and inconsistencies exist regarding the differences between precepting and mentoring. While clear definitions for mentoring exist, and is an effective intervention, significant gaps surround structured mentorship programs, including training and education to mentor. This project aims to define mentoring, implement a structured, evidence-based mentor development program and examine how the program will affect self-efficacy, retention rates, and perceived-competence level of nurse mentors.

Definition of Mentoring: developing a long-term relationship between two individuals, such as novice and expert, competent and expert, and nurses from different units. This relationship is founded on emotional support and trust, where the mentor aids in the mentee's professional growth and long-term goals²

Benefits of Mentoring:

- Professional growth
- Increased confidence
- Increased job satisfaction
- Increased retention
- Decreased stress
- Grows meaningful relationships

METHODS

The Johns Hopkins Evidence-Based Practice (JHNEBP) model was used to implement this project. Effective collaboration during the creation and implementation of mentoring is vital from various stakeholders, such as potential mentors, mentees, and nursing leadership. The JHNEBP model will be used for this project implementation to promote a focus on evidence-based practice as a shared activity among interprofessional groups, therein driving collaboration. This model will be effective for this project as the project will be performed first on a unit basis to finesse the process before being launched at an organizational level, which is one of the strengths of the JHNEP model. Steps for the project are as follows:

- Meet with unit management to receive approval for project and present project materials/timeline
- Deliver presentation in monthly Leadership meeting (mentor group) and schedule workshop
- Facilitate workshop, organize new mentor groups, and introduce mentor program to the unit
- Mentor Program Evaluation Tool sent to mentor and mentees to review in monthly check-ins
- Project leads set up monthly check-ins with each mentor/mentee pair to identify impact of program.
- Evaluate efficacy of program and report findings to hospital administration for potential expansion

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EVALUATION

A mentor development project will be implemented first on a unit level and, once success is established, be taken to other units throughout the organization. The achievement of this project will be determined by the level of preparedness a mentor feels following training, the level of support and growth the mentee experiences from the guidance of their mentor, and ultimately how it affects retention and engagement in the workplace. Mentors and mentees will utilize surveys developed for this project to evaluate the efficacy of the mentor development program. The evaluations for the mentors will aid in identifying how prepared the mentors continue to feel as they mentor, any gaps they identify, and their overall job satisfaction. The evaluations for the mentees will help determine their mentors' strengths and areas of improvement, if they have an enriching and trusting relationship with their mentor, how they could better be supported by their mentor, and their overall job satisfaction. Additionally, annual staff experience survey ratings, especially regarding job satisfaction and job related stress, will be used to examine if mentoring increased satisfaction and decreased stress. Hospital retention rates will aid to evaluate if mentoring impacts retention.

DISCUSSION

Three themes were identified in the evidence regarding mentoring:

- 1) **Characteristics of Successful Mentors**
 - 1) Mutual respect, trust and emotional support^{3,4}
 - 2) Effective and consistent communication³
 - 3) Competence to mentor and readiness⁷
- 2) **Education Themes for Mentors**
 - 1) Professional Development^{1,6}
 - 2) Dyad model most successful for relationship building^{1,6}
- 3) **Mentoring Program Structures**
 - 1) Provide training workshops with didactic and interactive activities (i.e. role play, small work groups, etc)^{1,6}
 - 2) Formal applications to be a mentor^{1,6}
 - 3) Utilize standardized mentor/mentee evaluation tools^{1,6}



CONCLUSIONS

- Differentiating between precepting and mentoring is important due to differences in roles and responsibilities.⁴
- Mentoring is an evidence-based practice that promotes retention, job satisfaction, confidence, professional growth, and decreased stress.³
- Successful mentors build meaningful relationships with their mentees that include mutual respect, trust, effective communication, and emotional support.^{3,4}
- Mentoring provides the most consistent outcomes when mentors receive training and ongoing evaluation.^{1,6}
- Common mentoring program structures include training workshops for mentors, formal applications to be a mentor, and evaluation tools.^{1,6}
- Currently, there is a gap in the literature reflecting a standardized mentor development program, especially within nursing. This gap demonstrates a need for ongoing research in order to create a concrete development program to promote efficacy and consistency throughout nursing for this highly effective retention tool.