



Strategy 8

Strengthen opportunities and incentives for later-career nurses to participate in mentor and preceptor roles

Strategy 8.2 North Carolina nursing associations should promote the concept of nurse mentor as a professional identity for experienced nurses and identify standards and practices for nurse mentorship and existing trainings.

Desired Result

More nurses will value the role of nurse mentor and be recognized for engaging as nurse mentors.

Why does the task force recommend this strategy?

It is essential for experienced nurses to recognize the value of mentorship and envision themselves as future mentors to foster a culture of continuous learning and support within the nursing profession. By embracing mentorship roles, experienced nurses can pass on their knowledge, skills, and insights, contributing significantly to the development of novice nurses. This not only enhances patient care quality but also strengthens the nursing workforce by ensuring that newer nurses are well-prepared, confident, and capable of facing the challenges of modern health care environments.

Context

There is growing awareness of the benefits that mentorship brings, not just in skill enhancement but also in fostering a supportive work environment. However, challenges such as time constraints, staffing shortages, and the lack of formal mentorship programs in some settings may limit its implementation. Despite these hurdles, many within the nursing profession are advocating for stronger mentorship structures to ensure the transfer of knowledge and the nurturing of future nursing leaders.

“Whatever stage you’re at in your nursing career, there are benefits to being or having a nurse mentor. As a mentor, you’ll guide and oversee less experienced nurses and help facilitate their career development. This dynamic, supportive relationship provides tremendous growth opportunities and can be conducted formally or informally.”

The importance of mentoring in nursing includes the opportunity to challenge the mentee and their mentor to think differently while considering areas for professional improvement. This one-on-one relationship sometimes lasts for years and benefits both the mentor and mentee.”

-ANA Enterprise. Mentorship in Nursing: Benefits & Why It’s Essential. <https://www.nursingworld.org/resources/individual/benefits-of-mentorship-in-nursing/>

To further embed mentorship within nursing culture, there needs to be a paradigm shift that elevates mentorship as a core value and integral part of nursing identity. This involves creating a culture where continuous professional development and team support is prioritized, and where experienced nurses are encouraged and trained to mentor effectively. Recognizing and rewarding mentoring efforts can affirm their value, inspiring more nurses to take on these roles. Ultimately, fostering a culture that celebrates knowledge sharing and collaboration can significantly enhance the nursing profession’s growth and the quality of patient care.

Nursing associations can promote the concept of nurse mentorship by creating platforms for networking and knowledge exchange, offering resources and training for potential mentors, and recognizing outstanding mentorship through awards and acknowledgments.

EVIDENCE SUPPORTING MENTORSHIP

Although much of the research related to outcomes of nurse mentorship is anecdotal, one study highlights the potential benefits. The **Be1Support1 mentorship program** “offers individualized mentorship through culturally congruent customized pairing between experienced nurse mentors and novice nurses”.¹⁰ A study of the program found that:

- 60% of survey respondents who participated said that “their mentoring relationship had positively influenced their decision to stay in nursing”.
- 64% said that “the mentoring relationship had provided a positive influence on their self-confidence”.
- 56% said that “their mentorship had provided a positive influence on their problem-solving ability”.
- 58% said that “their professional communication skills had been enhanced as a result of the mentorship”.¹⁰