Preceptorship: Supporting our Future Colleagues

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Objectives

By the end of the session, the participant will be able to:

- Distinguish between *preceptorship* and *mentorship*.
- Identify the benefits of preceptorship as a teaching – learning approach.
- Discuss the benefits and challenges of being a preceptor.
- Identify strategies for providing feedback.
Preceptorship versus Mentorship
What’s the Difference?

- These terms are used interchangeably.

- Both are ways of using role modelling to support the learning and professional growth of nurses and to promote the overall quality of practice environments.

- They are different!
Mentorship Defined

- Is a voluntary, mutually beneficial, and usually long-term professional relationship.

- In this relationship one person is an experienced and knowledgeable leader (mentor) who supports the maturation of a less-experienced person (mentee).

(Canadian Nurses Association, 2004)
Preceptorship Defined

- Is a planned teaching and learning model using registered nurses as role models.

- Is a formal one-to-one relationship (of pre-determined length) between an experienced registered nurse (preceptor) and a novice (preceptee).

(Canadian Nurses Association, 2004)
Preceptorship

- Provides learning opportunities, which are individualized to a student’s learning needs.
- Provides the student (preceptee) with the opportunity to experience day-to-day clinical practice with guidance from a role model and resource person.
BN (Collaborative Program)

Preceptors are utilized in:

- **NURS 3523: Preceptorship**
  - all students assigned a consistent preceptor for the 8 week experience

- **NURS 4516: Consolidated Practicum**
  - some students assigned a consistent preceptor for the 10 week experience, others are assigned a preceptor on a daily basis
Purpose of Preceptorship

Preceptorship provides students with clinical experiences and opportunities to:

- acquire new competencies;
- enhance their confidence and competence in clinical practice;
- develop knowledge, skills, and attitudes of a professional nurse; and
- facilitate professional socialization of nursing students.
Positive Outcomes of Preceptorship Programs

There are numerous benefits for:

- students
- preceptors
- organizations
- the nursing profession

(Muir et al., 2013)
Benefits for the Preceptor

- Personal and professional growth
- Increased job satisfaction
- Improved patient outcomes
- Improved self-esteem and increased self-awareness by being a role model
Benefits for the Organization

- Facilitates recruitment of new nurses
- Exposes seasoned nurses to new clinical knowledge and ideas
- Improves retention of nurses in the organization
- Increases organizational loyalty
Benefits for the Profession

- Enhances support of new graduates
- Strengthens teaching and leadership skills for nurses
- Improves retention of nursing in the organization and the profession
Who is a Preceptor?

- A skilled professional nurse with an interest and commitment to the education of nursing students.

- A clinical teacher who acts as clinical educator, supervisor, colleague, and a role model.

(DeWolfe, Laschinger, & Perkin, 2010)
Preceptor as a Role Model

Preceptors help students develop:

- Critical thinking skills
  - Problem-solving
  - Clinical judgement
  - Decision-making
  - Creativity
  - Evidence-informed practice
- Empathetic caring behaviors
- Communication skills
Role modeling involves...

- Observation
- Imitation
- Internalization
Responsibilities of a Preceptor....

- Assess student learning needs
- Facilitate learning by assisting students to set and meet realistic learning goals
- Plan and implement clinical learning activities
• Guide critical thinking and reflection about experiences and performance

• Support student’s emotional, practical and informational needs

• Evaluate student progress on a continuous and summary basis
Challenges of being a Preceptor

- Increased workload
- Lack of support from peers
- Inadequate preparation for the role of preceptor
- Conflict with the student

(Currie & Watts, 2012)
Challenges of being a Preceptor

- Lack of support from faculty
- Feeling ‘responsible’ for the student’s success and failure
- Providing feedback
Giving and Receiving Feedback

*Feedback* ...

- is an interactive process
- is an informed and objective appraisal of performance
- provides students with insight about their performance
- should confirm and increase awareness of strengths
- is intended to improve practice
Tips for Providing Feedback

- Establish at the beginning of the placement how the feedback will occur.
- Provide feedback informally and immediately.
- Feedback should be direct, concrete, and frequent.
- Feedback should be constructive, not destructive.
• Provide specific instructions of ‘how to’ do things, including both practical and professional skills.

• Promote student self-reflection.

(Wilkinson, Couldry, Phillips, & Buck, 2013)
3 Steps to Effective Feedback

- Let the learner go first
- Share your perspective
- Develop a plan for next time
S- specific  
T- timely  
O- objective and based on observed behaviors  
P- plan for improvement discussed with the student
Written Feedback

- Should reflect course objectives and expectations
- Include positive feedback/identification of strengths as well as areas requiring improvement
- Provide suggestions for improvement
- When possible support with examples
- Avoid general terms like ‘good’, ‘appropriate’ ‘excellent’
- Faculty are always available to support you
Responsibilities of Clinical Faculty

- Maintain frequent and regular contact with the student and preceptor
- Act as a resource for the preceptor and student
- Identify student learning needs and challenges and develop strategies for improvement
- In collaboration with the preceptor, evaluate the student and assign the grade for the course
Summary

- Preceptorship is an excellent teaching-learning model.
- Becoming a preceptor can be a rewarding experience for registered nurses.
- One of the challenges of being a preceptor is providing constructive feedback.
- The ability to provide constructive feedback develops over time!
References

References are available on request

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