Peer-to-Peer Mentoring Toolkit

See Me, Be Me, Be Yourself

Spring 2021
Toolkit Purpose

The Mentoring Toolkit, developed by the IN NEEDS Initiative Mentorship Subcommittee, offers nursing programs tools and resources for implementing a Peer-To-Peer Mentoring Program during prelicensure nursing education. Mentoring has been found to have a positive impact on student outcomes including integration and transition, academic support, guidance and advice, future preparation, and emotional, social, and personal support (Miller et al., 2019). This toolkit builds on the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation and the American Association of Colleges of Nursing’s [AACN](2012) New Careers in Nursing Mentorship Program Toolkit posted on the Indiana Center for Nursing website at [https://www.ic4n.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/02/Mentoring-Toolkit-2017.pdf](https://www.ic4n.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/02/Mentoring-Toolkit-2017.pdf). The three critical aspects of a formal mentoring program include the matching process, training and orientation, and interaction frequency (Cornelius et al., 2016).

What is Mentoring?
Mentoring is defined as “a reciprocal learning relationship in which a mentor and mentee agree to a partnership where they work collaboratively toward achievement of mutually defined goals to develop a mentee’s skills, abilities, knowledge, and or thinking” (Fain & Zachary, 2020, p. 6-7).

- Mentoring is reciprocal- Mentor and mentee fully engage in the relationship.
- Mentoring involves learning- Mentees must go into the relationship as a learner and the Mentor must come into the relationship as both a learner and learning facilitator.
- Mentoring requires a strong relationship between mentoring partners- Building a collaborative relationship that is open and trusting and honors each other’s uniqueness is essential to a successful mentorship. Mentors must create a safe and trusting space; a place for mentees to take risks, engage with a mentor, and ask for what they need.

Toolkit Components
Existing resources, grounded in research and best practice, are included in this toolkit to assist nursing programs in developing and implementing a Peer-To-Peer Mentorship Program that best fits their school’s individual needs. The four modules of this toolkit include Recruiting and Screening, Matching and Training, Monitoring and Support, and Closure and Evaluation. Each module contains tools and resources.

Module I: Recruiting and Screening

Recruiting
Nurses are continually growing and mentoring their peers through informal mentoring in a preceptorship or through more formalized mentoring programs and nurse residency programs. Therefore, student-to-student peer mentoring offers an opportunity to begin learning this professional skill. Tying peer mentoring to the profession of nursing is an important recruitment strategy. Additionally, connecting peer mentoring to clinical leadership hours could incentivize students to participate. When recruiting peer mentors, it is essential that a clear understanding of the mentor role is explained.

Screening
Peer mentor screening should be directly related to the institution’s policy on nursing student background checks, academic, and student life policies. Mentoring should always occur in public settings and all participants should be comfortable with the pairing. Peer mentoring can also transpire in a group format which may create an additional layer of safety to your program.
Module II: Matching and Training

In a peer-to-peer mentoring program, both mentors and mentees will need early clarification of the program’s expectations and responsibilities. They will also need guidance on the logistical and interpersonal components of their participation. Participants may be hesitant to sign on without a clear idea of the time commitment. Appropriate timing of training activities supports engagement, eases the assessment process, and improves the participant experience. This section includes research findings pertinent to developing peer-to-peer mentor training and examples of mentoring program training timelines.

Training Timelines
Your program’s needs and goals will be central to developing your timeline. To plan when you are going to take each step in the process, you need to know the intended outcome. It may be helpful to work backward by addressing the following questions. When do you hope to implement your program? What structures and processes need to be in place from the beginning and what can be developed as you go? Who will be responsible for carrying out the required tasks? How will you be assessing your program? These questions uncover the “what,” “who,” and “when” for your program. First, you will need to know what you want to happen and how you will assess when and how well it happened. Then you will need to coordinate with the people who will be responsible for making it happen. They are your collaborators in setting up a timeline that works and drive the “when,” allowing you to develop a realistic timeline for training your mentors.

As you are collaborating with mentors, consider the following factors in your timeline.

- **Mentor schedules**
  As you are developing mentor training schedules, consider what timing would be most open for them. In a peer based, or even a faculty based, mentoring program, the calendar of the academic year could impact the availability and engagement of your mentors.

- **Modality**
  Determining whether your training will be online, hybrid, or in-person should be very intentional. An online modality is very convenient but gives less control over the training environment. Hybrid or in-person training provides program staff with more direct engagement with the mentors and greater control over the learning environment. However, hybrid and in-person training may be less convenient for the mentors and require an increased flexibility from the trainers.

- **Marketing and Recruiting**
  How you choose to train your mentors should be directly linked to the intended outcomes of the training and likewise to the program’s intended outcomes. The selected method to train mentors should be a key marketing and recruiting strategy for obtaining mentors. Communicating how you will prepare mentors to have fulfilling experiences can be a powerful recruiting tool. Good mentors want to know that they will have the tools they need to be successful. However, you should be deliberate about deciding the best timeframe to deliver that information in a reasonable way. A yearlong training commitment is likely to dissuade some high-quality mentors, especially if they do not see the extended training value. Similarly, if all training is held in person and during business hours only, mentors in certain life situations will
self-select out, even if the training can be completed in a short timeframe. As you develop your training timeline, consider who your processes will attract and who they will dissuade. Securing a diverse, well-qualified mentor pool without early attention to how to market the mentor experience to the candidates you hope to attract may be challenging.

**Execution of the Timeline**

Identifying a designated point person for your mentoring program will benefit the execution of the training timelines. When one person or a small team is actively engaged in maintaining the program’s momentum, mentors will be more engaged, and actions and details will be prevented from falling through the cracks. You may also consider the use of technology to manage your timeline. Using learning management systems, task centers, dashboards, and other technology driven organizational strategies may keep the project on track. Technology can also create a history of the project, allowing it to continue with minimal disruption if the person coordinating the process is no longer available to you. The use of technology may also aid in creating data sources for future evaluation.

**Continued Training**

In general, a short-term initial training schedule is recommended to support effective, marketable training requirements, but you must also consider your mentors’ long-term needs. In a peer mentoring program, there should be a distinct benefit to the mentor and the mentee. As you consider the goals of your program, you should build objectives related to the mentors’ development. Then integrate check-ins, communication points, workshops, or other activities that support the intended goals for mentors in your long-term training plan.

**Related Research**


**Resource Links**


**Cultural Intelligence (CQ)**

CQ is more than cultural competence. It is the capability to function and relate effectively in culturally diverse situations. Cultural diversity includes: Race, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, gender, sexual orientation/sexual preference, life experiences, age, educational access, and other personal characteristics. CQ builds on IQ and Emotional Intelligence (EQ). Before one can understand other cultural values, they must understand their own values. Developing CQ will help students and nursing professionals to work effectively across cultures. CQ predicts personal adjustment and adaptability, judgment and decision-making, and leadership effectiveness as well as trust, idea sharing, and innovation (Cultural Intelligence, 2020).
As described in Livermore’s research (2015), there are four components to CQ: drive, knowledge, strategy, and action. Drive, or motivation, involves having interest, confidence, and determination to adapt cross-culturally. Knowledge, or cognition, is the understanding of intercultural norms and differences. Strategy, or metacognition, is making sense of culturally diverse experiences and planning accordingly. Action, or behavior, involves changing verbal and nonverbal actions appropriately when interacting cross-culturally.

Resource link

Cultural Intelligence in Mentor Matching
Cultural intelligence (CQ) is an essential factor to consider when designing and implementing mentoring training for administrators and participants. By incorporating CQ principles into mentor training, both mentors and mentees are introduced to this valuable concept and learn how CQ principles can enrich the mentoring relationship. To support diverse student groups, administrators must consider the contexts and prior experiences that participants bring to practice. Likewise, participants may still be learning what it means to incorporate various worldviews into their perspective. They will need guidance on utilizing differences to build positive momentum in mentoring relationships. This section includes scholarly articles on the cultural components of mentoring training and examples of CQ training for mentoring program participants.

Importance of CQ in Matching
The concept of cultural intelligence is interwoven throughout our discussion of how to build an effective mentoring program. Matching is an area where CQ is a necessary skill for everyone involved, including the mentors and mentees and the staff and faculty working with mentors and mentees throughout the program. It is not possible to know whether a pair will “hit it off” in advance. There is no reasonable way to predict a perfect personality match, even between people you know well. Capitalizing on CQ strategies during matching increases the odds of a successful match by infusing a positive perspective on differences from the beginning.

Ways to Infuse CQ
One of the best ways to learn about your participants’ cultural needs is to ask them. The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation and the AACN’s Mentoring Toolkit (2012) recommends having participants meet and provide input into their matches. Participants who feel that they had a say in their match tend to be more satisfied with the match and with the program overall (Packard, 2003.) If a meeting is not possible, you can gather information about participant’s perspectives and values through surveys.

Another critical factor in engaging CQ in matching is to bring a diverse range of participants to the table. Marketing and recruiting strategies should involve attracting people from a broad range of experiences and backgrounds, both as mentors and mentees. The more experiences are represented, the more those experiences can be leveraged to foster culturally engaging, mutually beneficial relationships among your participants. This is especially true if your participants will be engaging with the larger group rather than just their mentor or mentee. While a mentee may prefer a mentor with a similar background, they could benefit from engaging with other participants with different perspectives in other settings, such as meetups or training events.
Managing Assumptions in CQ Focused Matching
A holistic perspective to matching, including the application of CQ, is supported by research. There is some evidence that matches based on similarity are necessarily more successful than matches between people who are demographically different. Yet when a pair is demographically different, the relationship may take longer to build trust (Johnson-Bailey & Cervero, 2002). As you are creating a pairing mechanism, you must balance these considerations. Even demographically similar students will need to engage in culturally intelligent approaches to get the maximum benefit from mentoring relationships. Pairing demographically similar students does not absolve the responsibility to ensure that participants have the tools they need to navigate cultural and personal differences. Likewise, pairing demographically dissimilar participants may require more attention to building rapport and cultural knowledge development, yet it still allows participants to have helpful and meaningful interactions.

Related Research
(This article describes qualitative student outcomes in a composite mentoring program that established mentor pairings with multiple people and was designed to engage students with a strategically diverse mentor pool.)

(This article qualitatively discusses various aspects of cross-cultural mentoring relationships, specifically across race, and describes some of the potential benefits and challenges for the mentor and mentee.)

Coordination of Training and Matching
Training and matching are some of the more labor-intensive portions of coordinating a mentorship program. The coordination responsibility falls to the participants during active mentoring, while the program bears the responsibility for preparing them for the mentoring phase of the process. Training for both mentors and mentees sets the tone for the mentoring relationship and prepares participants for their roles, expectations, and challenges. Matching is also an essential part of setting the tone. Effective coordination of the matching activities can significantly improve the experience for mentors and mentees.

If you have the option to do so, designate a single person or office to be the point of contact for training and match coordination. While many people can, and often should, share in the decision making and execution of a successful mentoring program, coordinating the logistics through a central source will avoid misunderstandings and create consistency for participants as they onboard into the program.

Coordination of Training
Training should be intentionally designed to facilitate engagement with the most critical takeaway points. Those points should be communicated to the participants frequently. Consider your program’s priorities and how you can embed those priorities into the training structure. Then, identify multiple
communication methods for sharing those priorities. For instance, consider if there are opportunities to convey critical points in person and in writing, or if on-demand videos would be a good resource for your population. Also, you will need to identify the follow-up needs of your participants.

Important takeaway points for a nursing undergraduate mentoring program may include:

- Basic understanding of the purpose and process of mentoring
- Expected commitment for the program
- Ethical expectations
- Cultural intelligence considerations
- Resources available to participants

In addition to the overall main takeaway points that you choose to emphasize during training, you will want to ensure that the program’s goals are transparent. Mentors and mentees should have a clear idea of the expected outcomes and their role in achieving them. Furthermore, keeping participants involved in the program’s mission encourages them to fully engage in its success.

**Coordination of Matching**
Coordination of matching should also be intentionally linked to the goals and mission of the program. For example, suppose one of the goals of your program is to help students in a particular ethnic or cultural group meet successful peers who are also members of those groups. In that case, your recruitment and matching strategies should reflect that goal. Thereby, assessment of your program’s success will be connected to your goals. It may not be feasible for every pair to be matched in a way that reflects each goal, but each match should be set up for success as measured by the program assessment strategies.

As you are constructing the matching process, select tools that will best reflect your desired outcomes for the pairs. First you will need to determine if you are aiming to match participants who are demographically similar or different. A survey tool may be an effective way to compare demographic characteristics. If continuing friendships are a desirable outcome, then face to face matching strategies may help to gauge chemistry. No matter what strategies you use, matches tend to be more successful when the participants feel that they have a say in the match. While easy for the coordinator, random pairing does not contribute to a feeling of connection between participants. Whether or not the participants meet prior to matching, matching should include elements specific to the participants’ personalities and goals. Also, you should ensure that the participants are aware of how their information is used in the matching process.

**Fostering Engagement During Training**
Engagement of mentors and mentees during training sets a positive tone for the entire program. By facilitating strong participant buy-in early on, you encourage the participants to engage with the program and their mentoring partners. Engaged mentors and mentees develop skill and efficiency in their role. As they gain confidence and begin to see the effectiveness of the program, they may become strong advocates for the program. Training is not one-and-done; it is a powerful support and engagement tool that evolves throughout the mentoring program experience.

According to Comer (1980), people are generally motivated to learn by connection to a significant person, connection to the material, or connection to their sense of purpose. Mentoring is, at its core, a relationship-based learning experience for both mentor and mentee. In theory, the participants will develop a connection to a person in the mentoring relationship. However, that connection is not
automatic. By reinforcing the connection to the tasks, the experience of mentoring, and the participant’s personal mission during training, the mentor can facilitate an experience that will support the development of the personal connection that pushes the participant to learn about themselves and their role within the profession of nursing.

Sharing the program’s goals, purpose, and benefits early on supports engagement of the participant’s sense of purpose. Participants need to know how the program will support their personal objectives. Participants who feel that their goals are aligned with those of the program are more likely to remain fully engaged. For example, suppose one of your program goals is to support leadership development. In that case, your training materials might include information on using the leadership experience they have gained in the program to market themselves to employers. By sharing your objectives early and reinforcing how those objectives are being addressed, your participants can see what they are getting from the experience in real time.

Connecting to the material manifests in two ways for program participants: engagement with the skills of mentoring and engagement with the relationship. The training coordinator’s role is linked to mentoring skills which allow participants to effectively engage with their partner and learn and grow from the relationship. As the participants move through the program, consider:

- How much guidance do participants want and need?
- What training needs will be different between mentors and mentees?
- Where are opportunities for fun and relationship building?
- What drew your participants to the mentoring program?
- How can you ensure they are getting what they wanted out from this experience?

**Related Research**


**Modulating Unconscious Bias** - Bias, although inherent, can be managed. Affinity bias is the tendency to gravitate or give preference to people in our in-group or people like us. Having self-awareness of how we think and act can help to prevent harmful actions, thoughts, and feelings. Most people function with a fast-thinking brain which involves intuitive thinking. Fast thinking is characterized as unconscious, automatic, emotional, fast, and effortless. On the other hand, a slow thinking brain lends to rational thinking which is conscious, deliberate, systematic, slow, and effortful (Kahneman, 2013).

**Resource links**


**Resource links Implicit Bias**


Module III: Monitoring and Support

Support resources for mentors and mentees are available in section three of the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation and the American Association of Colleges of Nursing’s [AACN](2012) New Careers in Nursing Mentorship Program Toolkit, https://www.ic4n.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/02/Mentoring-Toolkit-2017.pdf. It provides definitions and discusses how to prepare, set goals, and build rapport as well as how to support and empower. The toolkit discusses the stages of learning and the levels of confidence that a mentor can apply to help the student succeed. It also includes information on how to evaluate feedback and maintain relationships.

Monitoring is also an essential component of mentoring and should include accountability for both mentor and mentee. Regular feedback and surveys that gather qualitative data surrounding the relationship for both individuals may also provide a means to monitor the process.

Research and Resources:

Academic Persistence Resources

Anxiety
- How to Reduce Test Anxiety for College Students (Purdue University Global, 2019)
- Test Anxiety: Crash Course Study Skills #8 (Crash Course, 2017)

Concentration
- 12 Hacks that will Improve Your Studying (Purdue University Global, 2018)

Information Processing
- Information Processing Theory (Cengage Learning, n.d.)
- Information Processing Model: Sensory, Working, and Long-term Memory (Khan Academy Medicine, 2013)

Motivation
- How to Stay Motivated and Prevent Burnout in Nursing School (RegisteredNurseRN, 2016)

Main Ideas
- Selecting Main Ideas (Vener, 2002)
- Main Ideas (Townsend Press, 2014)

Test Strategies:
- Test Taking Strategies for Nursing Students (Education Corner, n.d.)
- Test Taking Tips for Nursing Students (McClintock, 2013)

Time Management
- One Thing I Wish I Would Have Known about Nursing School Before I Started (RegisteredNurseRN, 2018).

Medication Calculations
- Med Math for Nurses (Haws, n.d.)
Goal Setting Resources
- 4 Tips for Setting Powerful Goals: (Rohn, 2020)
- Smart Goals (Brigham Young University, n.d)

Professional Identity Resources
- Reconciling professional identity: A grounded theory of nurse academics’ role modeling for undergraduate students (Baldwin et al., 2017)
- An exploration of role model influence on adult nursing student’s professional development: A phenomenological research study (Felstead & Springett, 2016)

Self-Care Resources
- The College Student’s Guide to Stress Management (Purdue University Global, 2020)
- Nurses and Health-Promoting Behaviors: Knowledge May not translate into Self-Care (Ross et al., 2017)
- Practicing Self-Care for Nurses: A Nursing Program Initiative (Blum, 2014)
- Healthy Nurse Healthy Nation (American Nurses Association, 2021)

Sense of Belonging Resources:
- Stereotypical Threat
  - How to Overcome Stereotype Threat: Looking Beyond Society’s Expectations (Handel, n.d.)
  - Stereotype Threat (Digital Promise, 2018; Gross et al., 2018)

Support Circle
- Nursing Student Support Group Eases Stress (Alvy, 2010)
- Nurse Keith: Nursing School Study Groups are Always in Style (Carlson, 2016)
- Creating and Facilitating Peer Support Groups (Hampton, n.d.)
- Mentors: Cultivation phase Resources (UW Institute for Clinical and Translational Research, 2021)
- Exploring the student peer mentor’s experience in a nursing peer mentorship program (Vandal et al., 2018)

Networking Resources
  https://www.nursingworld.org/resources/individual/welcome-to-the-profession/
  https://www.nursebuff.com/social-networking-sites-for-nurses/

**Module IV- Closure and Evaluation**

The peer-to-peer mentoring relationship is built upon open communication, transparency, trust, and mutual support. The closure of the formal relationship is an influential part of the mentoring process and requires an intentional process that frames the closure in a manner that supports the ongoing success of both the mentee and mentor, recognizes the issues of loss that may be experienced by both, and proactively identifies future goals for the mentee that sustains their academic socialization,
As the mentoring relationship comes to a formal conclusion it is important that both the mentor and mentee communicate and recognize key constructs and outcomes of their mentoring relationship including but not limited to:

- Acknowledge the areas of progress and growth experienced by both the mentor and mentee.
- Reflect on mentoring relationship’s success and challenges.
- Revisit the goals of the mentee and recognize the skills and strategies they have developed to be successful.
- Identify systems and resources that provide support and validation, as well as, practical strategies for the academic and personal success of the mentee.

**Tools and Resources:**
- Mentoring Program- Mentor and Mentee Surveys

### Peer Mentee Evaluation Form

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Somewhat Agree</th>
<th>Somewhat Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Does Not Apply</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I felt I could trust my mentor.</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My mentor seemed genuinely concerned about me.</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I felt the activities I participated in with my mentor were worthwhile.</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My mentor made me feel comfortable and accepted.</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I believe that my mentor listened to what I had to say.</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My mentor helped me to clarify how I could reach my academic goals.</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My mentor helped me to clarify how I could reach my personal goals.</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My mentor helped me with my concerns.</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My mentor helped me with my academic performance.</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My mentor helped me stay in school.</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The issues and/or concerns that I discussed with my mentor were:

**What were the most helpful aspects of having a peer mentor?**

**What were the least helpful aspects of having a peer mentor?**

**Comments:**
### Peer Mentor Evaluation Form

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Somewhat Agree</th>
<th>Somewhat Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Does Not Apply</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I used active listening strategies to support my mentee.</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I provided constructive feedback to my mentee.</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I established clear expectations of the mentoring relationship with my mentee.</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I worked with my mentee to help develop academic goals.</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I worked with my mentee to help develop personal goals.</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I believe my mentoring and advocating helped increase my mentee’s self-efficacy and socialization to the academic environment.</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I helped my mentee develop a sense of belonging and independence.</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

I was able and supportive in addressing my mentee’s issues and concerns in the following areas:

**Academic**

**Personal**

Help finding services

If other, please explain.

Were you well prepared for the mentor role? If yes, how?

If no, what would have been helpful?

How did you benefit from being a peer mentor?

What were the most positive aspects of being a peer mentor?

What were the least positive aspects of being a peer mentor?

Comments:
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