Peer-To-Peer Mentorship: Easing Transition for Newly Hired APNs in the Hospital Setting

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BACKGROUND
- Successful transition to the advanced practice nurse (APN) role in a pediatric academic medical center influences retention and job satisfaction.
- Peer-to-peer mentorship provides a collaborative relationship to help build clinical and professional connections.
- Rapid expansion of APNs in our institution in the last decade, and a lack of APN preceptors in some areas, indicated a need for a mentorship program. (Figure 1)

AIMS of SERVICE CHANGE
- A Peer-to-Peer APN Mentorship Program was created in 2014 to facilitate successful role transition for new hires.
- The purpose of the program is to cultivate a supportive environment for new hire APNs to improve role transition and job satisfaction.

DETAILS OF INNOVATION
- Recruited mentors with a minimum of 2 years APN experience, and NPII on the CHLA NP Career Ladder
- Invited new hires to request an APN Mentor
- Mentor pairs matched by practice setting, specialty area, professional interests, and certification

OUTCOMES
- 31 APN Mentors recruited and 25 mentor-mentee pairs formed.
- Post-mentorship surveys revealed positive experiences for both mentors and mentees, with a desire for an improved matching process.
- Mentor-mentee self-matching program developed, with online mentor profiles. (Figure 2)

IMPLICATIONS
- As hospitals continue to increase APN hires, mentorship is critical for new hires to facilitate clinical and professional development, and to improve job satisfaction and retention.
- A peer-to-peer mentorship program may reduce barriers to successful role transition, and be applicable across work settings.

REFERENCES


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Online mentor profiles include: APN work area, contact information, years of practice, and a bio sketch: Career Positions, Clinical Background, and Professional Interests

Figure 1

Figure 2
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Background: Successful transition to the APN role in a pediatric academic medical center influences retention and long-term job satisfaction. Peer-to-peer mentorship can provide a synergistic, reciprocal relationship between mentors and mentees to foster a sense of community, establish clinical and professional collaborations, and enable positive role transition. The impact of consistent, well-defined mentorship program on successful role transition for APNs remains elusive.

Aims of service change: An advanced practice nurse (APN) Mentorship Program was created to facilitate successful role transition for new hires at an urban academic pediatric medical center, due to a rapidly expanding APN Group in the institution. The purpose of this program is to cultivate a supportive environment for newly hired APNs to increase job satisfaction and reduce turnover.

Details of Innovation: The APN Orientation Committee implemented a mentorship program in 2014 after a review of existing literature, a limited assessment of similar programs at comparable pediatric institutions, and team consensus of how to initiate a mentorship program. The committee coordinated with Human Resources to generate and maintain a list of new APN hires. A goal was set to recruit 25% of practicing APNs in the institution to serve as mentors. Onboarding information was uploaded to the APN intranet site for dissemination to new and practicing APNs. The Orientation Committee contacted all new APNs within three months of hire, and paired available mentors with new APNs interested in the program. Mentorship pairings were based on practice setting, specialty area, professional development interests, and type of certification. Mentors and mentees were encouraged to meet monthly for 6 months. Guidelines were developed to provide a framework for these meetings, including: meet and greet role development, support systems, continuing education, professional development/research, and evaluation.

Outcome: Since the inception of the program, 31 APN mentors have been recruited, and 25 mentor-mentee pairings have been formed. The mentorship program is continuing to expand as APN recruitment within the organization increases. The APN Orientation Committee conducted a follow-up evaluation of mentors and mentees related to job satisfaction, retention, and ease of role transition for mentees in the mentorship program. The evaluations indicate positive experiences for both mentors and mentees, and a desire for improved and expanded processes for mentor-mentee matching. Based on this feedback, the next planned phase in the program is to create an online mentor-mentee match program, which was recently launched.

Implications: Mentorship is critical for new APN hires in hospital settings to facilitate acquisition of clinical skills, professional development and satisfaction, and job retention. Transitioning into the APN role, particularly as a new graduate, remains challenging as hospitals continue to increase the hiring of APNs, and create new roles for them within tertiary care institutions. Development of a mentorship program can help address barriers such as time constraints during orientation, lack of onboarding consistency across departments for new hires, and cohesive leadership for APNs across the institution. A comparable mentorship program is broadly applicable to other health professions and professional settings.

Open-Ended Question: What are different methods of implementing a peer-supported mentorship program for newly hired APNs in a hospital setting?

References: