

Response to “The Value of Mentoring in Nursing: An Honor and a Gift”

I would like to thank Marcia Gruber-Page, MSN, MS, RN, for highlighting the value of mentorships for the profession of nursing (Gruber-Page, 2016). As she emphasized, mentorships in the workplace contribute to the professional success of the mentor and mentee. Another population that is in need of sound guidance during a critical stage of professional development is undergraduate student nurses.

While pursuing my bachelor of science in nursing, I was fortunate to participate in an independent professional writing study on preparing articles for publication in nursing journals. In addition to having papers published, we worked on résumé construction and what to say, wear, and do while interviewing for our first professional positions. We also made and presented a poster at a professional conference.

My instructor immediately took on the role of mentor, and I the role of mentee. Throughout the course, she provided academic and professional guidance that extended past graduation. She has proven to be an invaluable resource as I have encountered the challenges that most new graduate nurses face. She also has provided the professional guidance and encouragement to continue to write for publication and consider graduate nursing degrees, new positions, and other professional opportunities, such as joining the Oncology Nursing Society.

In any mentor–mentee relationship, part of the process is the mentees subjecting themselves to constructive criticism. This requires a large amount of vulnerability by the mentee and trust in the mentor. Finding an effective mentor and developing the rela-

tionship requires time (Ferguson, 2011). This time may not be available to new graduates in the first months of new positions, and other stressors may preclude developing the relationship. Having an existing mentor in place prior to students' graduation and employment may be beneficial because the mentor can provide support and guidance outside the workplace dynamic.

As a novice nurse, having an existing mentorship as I started my first job was vital. I was able to debrief after patient care experiences in a comforting, trusting environment and received honest feedback regarding my performance and ways to improve. Not only did I receive the benefit of an expert clinician's judgment in patient care areas, I was also able to receive advice on professional advancement and development opportunities. I do not believe that my growth as a nurse would have progressed as quickly without this trusting relationship.

Nursing faculty should carefully consider all of the research when creating and implementing a mentorship program. Mentorship programs should be offered early in undergraduate nursing students' education to provide adequate time for an effective mentor–mentee relationship to develop. That way, the novice nurse can experience the maximum amount of benefit as he or she enters into the workforce.

References

- Ferguson, L.M. (2011). From the perspective of new nurses: What do effective mentors

look like in practice? *Nurse Education in Practice, 11*, 119–123.

Gruber-Page, M. (2016). The value of mentoring in nursing: An honor and a gift. *Oncology Nursing Forum, 43*, 420–422.

*Adrienne Schleisman, BSN, RN
Staff nurse
Children's Hospital and Medical Center
Omaha, NE*

The Author Responds

I agree wholeheartedly with Adrienne. Mentoring new graduate RNs will not only benefit the new nurse, but also patients, colleagues, and the hospital. An invested, experienced mentor, through example and direction, will help a new nurse take the next step, particularly in learning how and when to effectively use the skills and knowledge acquired as students. Patients can be confident that an experienced nurse is guiding their care. I have great memories of my patients enjoying the mentor–mentee nursing team providing their care. Patient care is not the only instance in which a mentor can be beneficial. Developing relationships with colleagues and establishing effective communication are also valuable lessons. A mentored graduate also will likely become a fully contributing colleague. From the hospital's perspective, mentoring reduces turnover, which can be calculated as a return on investment.

*Marcia Gruber-Page, MSN, MS, RN
Vice president of Oncology Services
University of Arizona Cancer Center
Dignity Health at St. Joseph's
Phoenix, AZ*

The authors take full responsibility for the content of the articles. No financial relationships relevant to the content of these letters have been disclosed by the authors or editorial staff.

ONF, 43(6), 677.

doi: 10.1188/16.ONF.677