

It is a "teaching strategy in which competencies of a scientific nature are promoted". J.J. Fitzpatrick.

It is a supportive and nurturing relationship between an expert and a novice. B.H. Owens

Mentorship is a form of socialization for professional roles. It entails a relationship in which the mentor works closely with the protégé for purpose of teaching, guiding, supporting, and developing the individual.

A mentor is an individual who takes a personal interest in assisting an individual over a period of time to develop the knowledge and skills needed to realize the protégé's full potential and major life goals.

Team mentoring, where two people work together for the purpose of achieving a common goal. A protégé is an individual who willingly enters into a relationship with a mentor and accepts the help and support offered by the mentor.

Role of a Mentor:

1. Teaching new skills and promoting intellectual development.
2. Serving as a guide to acquaint the junior individual with the values, customs, and resources of the profession.
3. Being an exemplar for the junior individual to emulate.
4. Providing counselling and moral support during times of stress.
5. Fostering personal development by believing in the junior person.
6. Supporting and facilitating the junior person's life dreams and goals.
7. Sponsoring the person for advancement.
8. The mentor serves subroles such as of a teacher, sponsor, host/ guide, counsellor, and an exemplar providing a standard of excellence.

In essence, mentors socialize the neophyte Nurses to the norms and

Author: Lecturer, Govt. College of Nursing, Bangalore - 560002.

[at the time of writing this article]

expectations of their own role. The mentoring relationship has been referred to as the "gray gorilla syndrome" Gray gorilla refers to characteristics of the silverback primate, who serves as a leader—teacher—

preceptor—role model for his group.

Importance of Mentoring Relationship:

The richness and value of mentoring relationships are important in the development of young professionals. As the gray gorilla-

- a) Teaches and advises, the neophyte gains knowledge and assessment skills.
- b) Models, the neophyte gains competency and confidence.
- c) Coaches and guides, the neophyte gains, problem solving and decision making skills.
- d) Facilitates and counsels additionally, the neophyte gains communicative and collaborative skills.
- e) Inspires and influences, the neophyte gains, humanistic values and creative ideas.
- f) Motivates and leads, the neophyte gains leadership skills and becomes a gray gorilla.

Conditions:

The mentoring system is appropriate in any setting where individuals are exposed to new role expectations. It is appropriate as a stepping-stone for new graduates who have had the opportunity to participate in a preceptorship or internship experience. The mentor-protégé relationship spans several years or even a life time and more intense. It is more than guidance; it is a relationship in which the mentor helps the protégé; facilitates the protégé's successful entry into academic and professional circles; and affords the protégé an opportunity to reach self-actualization in a leadership role. Mentorship varies depending on the stage of career development, the organization and the setting, and the profession.

A mentor-protégé relationship evolves from a close working relationship with another individual. When considering a mentor, criteria should be used as a guideline for selection. Findings

from research studies indicate that the ability to master concepts and ideas, as well as possessing integrity,

professional values, and trustworthiness, are important qualities of the mentor. Mentors are usually selected by the protégé, although reverse may occur. It is vital that one intentionally seeks a mentor who can contribute to one's professional development. It is voluntary relationship based on trust, compatibility, mutuality, and personal attraction.

Three major responsibilities of the protégé are : i) initiating – seeking and asking for advice/assistance, ii) sharing-only goals and needs, and iii) listening.

The mentor-protégé relationship be i) mutually established ii) consists of career functions such as coaching, sponsorship, and exposure, iii) consists of psychosocial functions such as, promotions of sense of competence and clarity of identity, and iv) consists of phases of the relationship and exits for a significant period, (L. Yoder, 1990).

The quality of patient care is generally improved in the setting with mentors. Units with a mentor are usually observed to be a quieter and more efficiently organized and to provide a more therapeutic environment than those without gray gorilla. Nurses who had the support and guidance of mentors report greater self-actualization, more job satisfaction, better peer relationship, and less stress than those without mentors.

References:

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