



Mentoring Matters

Guest Editorial: Catherine Hardman

Mentoring and Mentorship for Nurses

Editor: Dr. Linda Nichols

As we reach the other side of a two year hiatus of face-to-face educational activities, it is time to take stock and evaluate our progress and lessons learnt during the Covid-19 pandemic. Traditional educational activities such as lectures, conferences, workshops and study days were rapidly halted during the pandemic. The result of this led to a boom in online teaching and learning experiences. As identified by Catherine, this boom has also resulted in an increase in mentorship programs. Mentoring has a long history, as early as Ancient Greece to the 1970's where there was an uptake of mentoring in the training context. The effectiveness of modern mentoring programs for nurses are now well published in literature and mentoring programs for nurses are growing in prominence.

Unlike traditional learning, be it in-class or during conferences, mentoring is a two-way activity that includes two participants; one being the mentor and the other being the mentee. The mentorship partnership should be focused on supporting, guiding, and advising the less experienced mentee and supporting their personal development. Goals are achieved by listening, sharing experiences, reflection and developing insight. Mentoring is mentee driven, with the mentee supported to take action towards the achievement of self-driven goals.

Mentoring programs in the setting of neuroscience nursing have the potential to strengthen the nursing workforce in a sustainable manner. Engagement with a mentor can help mentees shape their career and navigate the challenges faced during a nursing career. There are meaningful rewards for both the mentor and the mentee, with mentors giving back to the profession and supporting career development while mentees

Neuroscience nursing is a fulfilling yet challenging specialty. How we care for and support each other as a profession and in our workplaces has been greatly impacted over the past few years by the stressors of the global COVID-19 pandemic and other issues such as burnout and poor staff retention and recruitment. Our formal and informal processes for education, networking and support were moved online, put on pause or cancelled, with some still not back to pre-pandemic activity. It's in this difficult environment that mentorship programs around the world are gaining momentum.

Mentoring is a form of facilitated supervision. It most commonly involves a mentorship partnership between a more experienced mentor and a less-experienced mentee. The benefits of mentorship programs for healthcare and other professionals are becoming more widely recognised. The Burdett Trust's Nursing Now Challenge successfully launched their online mentoring platform in 2021, providing opportunities for nursing mentorship connections across the globe (1). The corporate sector has also seen an increased uptake of mentorship programs during the pandemic period. With utilisation of virtual meetings and other technologies, physical distance is no longer a barrier to connecting mentees with the most suitable mentor for them. The ANNA mentorship program was launched in 2019, and has had a slow but steady growth since then.

ANNA members volunteering as mentors are having a significant impact on the future of neuroscience nursing. Not only are mentors gaining new skills or further refining their skills in communication and coaching, they are also gaining the wellbeing benefits associated with volunteering. Mentees in the program have access to skilled and experienced neuroscience nurse mentors who are able to guide and support them as they work towards achieving their career goals. It's a win-win!

Mentoring matters, and it can make a difference. The ANNA mentorship program team



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gain knowledge, are introduced to new ways of thinking, build confidence and upskill to achieve their goals. As an example, one goal might be to publish one's work. Within this context a mentee can have the support to forge ahead, with a mentor helping to negotiate roadblocks and challenges faced during the conception, drafting and finalising of a manuscript ready for submission. Regular mentor/mentee meetings can provide a forum where there is regular guidance and feedback, keeping the mentee's accountable for progressing work and meeting deadlines.

The relationship between the nurse mentee and the experienced nurse mentor is empowering. Areas of academic and clinical practice can be enriched through the nurturing and development of nurse mentees. The development and success of the Australasian Neuroscience Nurses Association (ANNA) led mentorship program has resulted in growth within the organisation as well as within the workplace of the mentees. There are a myriad of benefits that result from well matched and successful nurse mentoring relationships. Benefits include job retention, advancement and promotion, improved morale and improved productivity. Nurse mentoring is important for the growth and development of the next generation of nurse mentors.

Linda

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is seeking mentors to be part of our volunteer pool for 2023 and beyond. Neuroscience nurses with a passion for sharing their knowledge are encouraged to apply. Our next intake for mentorship partnerships will commence in February 2023, so if you're looking for mentoring support please submit your application on the ANNA website. As we look forward to the upcoming 2022 ANNA conference as an opportunity for our own personal learning and growth, let's also consider how we can help to mentor our next generation of nurses as they dive into neuroscience nursing and keep swimming for many years to come.

Catherine

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Burdett Trust Nursing Now Challenge, 14/10/21, Nursing Now Challenge Launches New Mentoring Platform, viewed 29/09/22, Nursing Now Challenge launches new mentoring platform – Nursing Now Challenge

Catherine

on behalf of the ANNA Mentorship Team

