Preparing Preceptors to Pave the Way for New Hires
Kimberly Guthrie, PhD, MS, MSN, RN and Maryann Windey, PhD, MS, MSN, RN-BC

The Problem:
Failure to sufficiently develop nursing preceptors may lead to increased turnover rates and significant cost to health care organizations (Anderson, Linden, Allen, & Gibbs, 2009). Health care organizations are also challenged with an overwhelming number of new nursing graduates entering the market. Efforts must be made to meet new graduates’ needs and the needs of experienced nurses entering the system.

Literature Review:
The need for preceptor development is established in the literature (Luhanga, Dickieson, & Mossey, 2010). One study reported that 86% of preceptors do not feel prepared (Yonge, Hagler, Cox, & Drefs, 2008). Preceptor educational programs can also increase retention of newly-licensed nurses (Sandau, Cheng, Pan, Gaillard, & Hammer, 2011). Luhanga et al. (2010) state that the success of the orientation depends on the preparation of the preceptor. The authors also describe a need for formalized preceptor programs.

The Solution:
Offer education opportunities that would provide the preceptor with strategies specific to the assigned orientee. Each class is offered at least every other month in order to provide just-in-time training.

An Inventory of Learning Strategies

The Competency Orientation Model
- Purpose: To provide a foundation for understanding the application of the competency process for both inexperienced and experienced new hires
- Objectives: Define the three domains of competency, demonstrate bedside validation of critical thinking, interpersonal, and technical skills
- Strategies: Lecture, role play, case study, job aids

Preceptor Epic Proficiency Training
- Purpose: Develop skills to promote and support new hires in providing care
- Objectives: Demonstrate correct documentation of patient care and determine methods to instruct new hires
- Strategies: Interactive computer training, case study, role play, job aids

Coaching the Newly Licensed Nurse (NLN)
- Purpose: Focus on the need of the NLN
- Objectives: Develop preceptor ability to assess NLN needs, use various teaching strategies to develop critical thinking, and prepare the NLN to transition to professional practice
- Strategies: Lecture, guided discussion, reflection, case study, job aids

Using DISC for Precepting
- Purpose: Develop awareness of workplace behaviors and how they affect communication and teamwork
- Objectives: Determine one’s behavioral style, assess peer’s styles, demonstrate how to flex style to meet other’s needs
- Strategies: Lecture, Reflection, role play, job aids

Preceptor Journal Club
- Purpose: Introduce highest level of evidence to develop preceptors’ abilities
- Objectives: Enhance preceptor knowledge of the research process and the ability to critique research, improve practice and collegial relationships
- Strategies: Discussion guide, Socratic questioning, research critique template

Outcomes of Implementation of Learning Strategies

The Experienced New Hires
- Assessed competence has improved by 32%
- Length of time needed for orientation has decreased by 57%
- Turnover at 1-yr anniversary at 11%

The Newly Licensed Nurse New Hires
- Assessed competence has improved by 33%
- Length of time needed for orientation has decreased by 27%
- Turnover at 1-yr anniversary at 2%

Preceptor Epic

Proficiency Training

Purpose: Develop skills to promote and support new
hires in providing care

Objectives: Demonstrate correct documentation of
patient care and determine methods to instruct new
hires

Strategies: Interactive computer training, case
study, role play, job aids

Coaching the Newly
Licensed Nurse (NLN)

Purpose: Focus on the need of the NLN

Objectives: Develop preceptor ability to assess
NLN needs, use various teaching strategies to
develop critical thinking, and prepare the NLN to
transition to professional practice

Strategies: Lecture, guided
discussion, reflection, case
study, job aids

Using DISC for Precepting

Purpose: Develop awareness of workplace
behaviors and how they affect communication and
teamwork

Objectives: Determine one’s behavioral style, assess
peer’s styles, demonstrate how to flex style to meet
other’s needs

Strategies: Lecture, Reflection, role play, job aids

Preceptor Journal Club

Purpose: Introduce highest level of evidence to develop
preceptors’ abilities

Objectives: Enhance preceptor knowledge of the
research process and the ability to critique research,
improve practice and collegial relationships

Strategies: Discussion guide, Socratic questioning,
research critique template

References:
  graduate RN work satisfaction after completing an
  interactive nurse residency. JONA, 39(4), 165-169.
  preparation: An investment in the future
  generation of nurses. International Journal of Nursing
  Education Scholarship, 7(1), 1-15.
- Sandau, K. E., Cheng, G., Pan, Z., Gaillard, P., & Hammer,
  Quantitative results of a hospital-wide study. The Journal of
  Continuing Education in Nursing, 42(3), 117-126.
to preceptors. Journal for Nurses in Staff development,