Supporting Preceptor Needs

Linda Minella, MSN, RN
University of Chicago Medicine

BACKGROUND

- Preceptor’s are crucial in teaching and facilitating skills development for nurses new to the workplace.
- Preceptors guide nurses from the theory of nursing to the application of theory, functioning as a role model, teaching clinical skills and critical thinking.¹

Objective: To identify the preceptors’ perceived needs and ways they could be supported.

METHODS

- A needs assessment was performed to identify the areas that lack support for preceptors and develop new ideas to help support these needs.
- An online survey was used as the assessment tool to collect data.
- The survey was emailed to 240 nurses who completed the institution’s preceptor workshop during 2010 to 2012.
- The survey was open for 2.5 weeks.
- The survey consisted of 10 questions:
  - 3 experience questions
  - 5 preceptor questions
  - 2 demographic questions

REFERENCES


SURVEY RESULTS

- 40.4% response rate (97 nurses)
- 91 females, 6 males
- Age Ranges:
  - 64% of the nurses ranged from 25-39 years old
- Experience as a RN when becoming a preceptor:
  - 40% of the nurses had 1-2 years of nursing experience

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>In looking at your needs as a preceptor, what challenges do you have? (check all that apply)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I cannot provide continuity of care to patients when I am precepting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I do not feel supported as a preceptor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It is difficult to get my other work done when I have preceptor responsibilities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I do not feel prepared to be a preceptor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I am not asked to be a preceptor, it is assumed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other** Responses were related to communication/feedback, focus, incentive, time and no response available.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What would you find helpful to support you as a preceptor? (check all that apply)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Recognition on Unit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional literature regarding preceptors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Preceptor webpage on Intranet</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Live preceptor forum with other preceptors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Virtual preceptor forum with other preceptors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other** Responses were related to communication/feedback, focus, incentive, time and no response available.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

RESULTS

When asking about needs, over 50% stated it is difficult to get other work done when I have preceptor responsibilities. (See TABLE 1)

Other work consisted of committee meetings and additional roles like Charge RN. Additional responses included communication/asking to be a preceptor and not feeling supported. When asked about support, over 55% responded that they would like some sort of recognition on the unit. (See TABLE 2) Additional responses included a preceptor webpage on the organization’s Intranet, preceptor literature, and live preceptor forums.

IMPLICATIONS

The most common needs from the needs assessment survey were:
- receiving recognition/support
- improving communication
- providing feedback

These needs, along with ideas to help support preceptors, like a recognition board and a preceptor webpage, were presented to the Nursing Professional Development Specialists of the institution. The data was also presented to the Chief Nursing Officer of the institution.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Data were collected at Northwestern Memorial Hospital. I would like to thank Pamela Pfeifer and Nicole Gooding for their support during my research. This project was part of my capstone Research with Chamberlain College of Nursing.