



NP Mentorship Program Introduction

Welcome to RNAO's *NP Mentorship Program*. Mentorship is a relationship that facilitates professional growth and development.¹ A mentoring relationship pairs two people, one with more experience (the mentor) with someone else in need of support and encouragement (the mentee).² When transitioning from the role of experienced registered nurse (RN) to novice nurse practitioner (NP), many NPs find their new role to be challenging and overwhelming.³ The challenges of navigating a new role are often compounded by other factors such as practicing in geographic isolation, or being the only NP within an organization. Mentorship programs are one strategy for novice NPs to bridge the gap between their educational preparation and the realities encountered during their transition to practice.⁴ It is at the discretion of the individual pairs of mentors and mentees if they wish to utilize the NP Mentorship Resources provided. It is not a mandatory requirement of the program to utilize these materials, instead they are meant as a guide to help in the formation of a productive and supportive relationship.

What are the goals of the NP Mentorship Program?

1. To connect a novice NP with a NP mentor
2. Facilitate the formation of a mutually beneficial relationship for the mentee and mentor

What function will the mentors have?

- Mentors are role models, guides, teachers and coaches
- They provide leadership, patience, caring and loyalty to mentees throughout the mentorship process

Who should be a mentor?

- Someone with the desire to share knowledge and experience
- Should possess the ability to believe in the mentee's potential for success
- Be able to reflect on the question "*why do I want to be a mentor?*"⁵

Who should be a mentee?

- Someone in need of a resource to help navigate questions and concerns related to the NP role
- Someone in need of support or guidance in achieving career goals
- Be able to reflect on the question "*why do I want a mentor?*"⁶

Expectations of mentors and mentees

- Each mentorship pair will establish their individual relationship terms, taking into account the unique needs of each pair
- The time commitment and duration will be unique to each pair



- The pair may choose to utilize the resources provided in this package to facilitate in defining the terms and time commitment of their relationship, but they are not obligated to do so
- Please note that the mentorship program is not intended to provide problem solving around clinical issues and RNAO takes no responsibility for the clinical practice of the mentee or the mentor

Resources in this Package:

1. NP Mentorship Program information sheet “The Mentorship Process”
2. NP Mentorship Program Relationship Agreement Template
3. NP Mentorship Program Action Plan Template

Additional Resources:

1. Caring, Connecting, Empowering: A resource guide for implementing nursing mentorship in Public Health Units in Ontario. Found [here](#).
2. [Careers in Nursing: Mentorship Matters](#) Website
3. [Coaching and Mentoring Framework for Nursing Leadership Development](#)

The NP Mentorship Program Process

- Cooper and Wheeler (2010) have developed a model for nurses to build a mentoring relationship called the Five-Phase Mentoring Relationship Model
- The process begins by the mentee and mentor reflecting on, and articulating a clear **purpose** for wanting to enter into a mentorship relationship.⁷
- The process then moves through the remaining four stages, with the **purpose** informing each stage of the process. The process is an iterative one, which involves assessing and reassessing goals throughout.

Five-Phase Mentoring Relationship Model⁸

Stage	Process	Reflection Questions
1. Purpose	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Informs all phases of the mentoring relationship • Development of a clearly articulated purpose for mentoring relationship that aligns with career vision, goals and plan 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Why do I want a mentor?</i> • <i>Why do I want to be a mentor?</i>
2. Engagement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Involves finding a mentor or mentee • May be a formal process (e.g. matched pairings within an organization) or informal (e.g. self-identified mentor or mentee) 	
3. Planning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop a mentoring action plan • Plan includes goals, action steps, resources, timelines and measures of evaluation • Discuss terms of the relationship and expectations of each other • Establish a “Mentoring Relationship Agreement” (This is a framework for meaningful discussion regarding how the pair will work together to create a climate of trust and respect) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>How can I achieve my goals?</i> • <i>How will we work together?</i>



4. Emergence

- Involves engaging in conversation
- Iterative process with **planning phase**
- Document reflections in a mentoring journal
- *How am I doing*
- *What are we learning?*

5. Completion

- Celebrating accomplishments
- Time for redefining the relationship and examining next steps
- May reduce frequency of interactions
- May decide both are ready to move on



NP Mentorship Program Relationship Agreement Template

When entering into a mentorship partnership, there is a shared understanding and commitment to making the mentoring relationship productive for both parties. As part of this agreement, we have developed a NP Mentoring Program Action Plan.

1. Purpose of Mentoring Relationship: Develop a clearly articulated purpose for mentoring relationship that aligns with career vision, goals and plan

2. Expectations: Outlines clear expectations of how you will work together to achieve the goals set out in the NP Mentoring Program Action Plan



3. Mentoring Encounters: Develop a plan for initiating and maintain contact throughout your relationship

Expected Length of mentoring relationship (e.g. one year)	
Frequency of meetings (e.g. weekly, monthly)	
Method of meeting/venue (e.g. telephone call, email, in-person, e-conference etc.)	
Preferred time of day and length of meetings	
Responsibility for initiating contact	
Contact outside of planned meetings (yes/no) (e.g. contact regarding urgent concerns/issues)	
Process for cancellation/rescheduling of mentoring meetings	
Frequency of reevaluation of Mentoring Agreement (e.g. quarterly)	

4. Identify: signs there may be problems in the mentoring relationship

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5. Actions and Timeframe: for addressing problems in mentoring relationship

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6. Management of Differences: Outlines clear commitment of plan moving forward if you are unable to resolve differences or it is not a good match to achieve your mutual goals.

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We agree to enter this mentoring relationship as outlined above

Mentee:

Date:

Mentor:

Date:



NP Mentorship Program Action Plan Template

1. Career Vision: What do you see yourself doing in your career? Where do you envision yourself?

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2. Medium-term career goal(s):

Blank area for writing medium-term career goals.

3. Long-term career goal(s):

Blank area for writing long-term career goals.



Short-term Goals	Action Steps	Resources	Timelines	Indicators of Success

References

¹ ANDSOOHA/PHRED (n.d.). Caring, Connecting, Empowering: A resource guide for implementing nursing mentorship in Public Health Units in Ontario. Retrieved from http://neltoolkit.rnao.ca/sites/default/files/Caring_Connecting_Empowering_%20A%20Resource%20Guide%20for%20Implementing%20Nursing%20Mentorship%20in%20Public%20Health%20Units%20in%20Ontario.pdf

² RNAO (n.d.). Careers in Nursing: Mentorship Matters. Retrieved from <http://careersinnursing.ca/late-career/mentorship-matters>.

³ Gerhart, L. (2012). *Mentorship: A new strategy to invest in the capital of novice nurse practitioners*. . *Nurse Leader*, 10(3), 51-53

⁴ Harrington, S. (2011). Mentoring new nurse practitioners to accelerate their development as primary care providers: a literature review. *Journal of the American Association of Nurse Practitioners*, 23(4), 168 -174.

⁵ Cooper, M., & Wheeler, M. (2010). Building successful mentoring relationships. *Canadian Nurse*(September), 34-35.

⁶ *Ibid*

⁷ *Ibid*

⁸ *Ibid*