

PROVIDING A SUPPORTIVE ENVIRONMENT IN PACU THROUGH MENTORING

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Background Information: The size of the Post Anesthesia Care Unit (PACU) at the Cleveland Clinic warrants the use of a Staffing coordinator (SC). These nurses oversee the patient flow in the PACU and are very familiar with the strengths, weaknesses, and needs of the staff. The SCs saw a need among newer (PACU) staff members for additional support and learning opportunities related to their practice after orientation was complete.

Objectives of Project: The 2016 annual goal of the SCs was to implement a program in which the SCs and other senior staff members could volunteer to act as a mentors to the new staff members (mentees). This program includes:

- Development of professional goals for the mentee
- Promotion of open and confidential communication
- Assignment of a staff member to act as a mentor
- Advance the knowledge of PACU nursing for mentees

Process of Implementation: A request was sent to SCs and senior staff nurses recruiting volunteers for the new Mentor/ Mentee program. 17 nurses volunteered to act as mentors. 13 nurses who had two years or less of experience in the PACU were invited to participate as mentees. Both mentors and mentees used an assessment tool to identify their learning styles. Mentors were assigned to mentees based on the results of the learning style assessment. A brief questionnaire was given to the mentees to gauge the level of support they felt as staff nurses. Bi-weekly meetings were scheduled to establish goals, identify needs, and discuss progress.

Statement of Successful Practice: Mentors and mentees were matched in pairs in Spring 2016. In some instances, mentees were assigned to two mentors based on shifts and full/part-time status. The pairs began working toward the individual goals they identified at weekly meetings. Three months later the participants reevaluated the program using the same questionnaire to assess opportunities for improvement.

Implications for Advancing the Practice of Perianesthesia Nursing:

- Increase knowledge base of new PACU nurses
- Continue commitment to provide support to new PACU nurses
- Periodically evaluate progress and opportunities for program improvement