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Clinical Exemplar

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GUIDING NEW RN GRADUATES TOWARD A FEEDBACK-FRIENDLY MINDSET

The landscape of nursing is shifting. With the growing demand for nurses in specialized areas, new graduates are increasingly entering fields such as the ICU, ED, PACU, and other high-acuity environments right from the start of their careers. Many of these new nurses are eager to learn, embrace challenges, and use them as opportunities for growth, but for other new nurses, fast-paced environments such as the ICU, ED, Med-Surg, and PACU can leave them feeling overwhelmed or under pressure, which may cause them to interpret guidance as criticism and respond defensively.

So, what do we do with the new graduate who struggles with feedback? How do we guide those who resist coaching or have difficulty developing humility? As educators and preceptors, we must explore strategies that help new nurses understand the value of feedback, cultivate self-awareness, and build the professional resilience needed to thrive in today's complex clinical settings.

As a nursing student, I was taught early on to seek feedback. Each week, I would ask my preceptors for guidance, and even after becoming a Registered Nurse, I continued to actively request feedback. As a new graduate, I sought input from my manager, my CN IV, and my preceptor, especially in areas where I struggled—such as time management—so I could learn specific ways

to improve. Unfortunately, many new graduates today do not seek feedback as readily, which can hinder their growth and development.

As educators, it is our responsibility to ensure that new graduates arrive at the bedside with a flexible mindset—one in which feedback is not viewed as a personal attack but as an opportunity for growth. We must encourage feedback-seeking behaviors throughout their training and residency, helping them understand that feedback is a powerful tool for professional development and, ultimately, a gift.

Unfortunately, many seasoned nurses perceive the provision of unsolicited feedback to new graduates beyond the scope of their role. Consequently, new nurses may develop ineffective or unsafe habits, and the unit culture may fail to cultivate an environment that encourages feedback-seeking behaviors or promotes the practice of asking for assistance when needed.