

Orientation Navigators: Leading the Way Through Mentorship

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Introduction: The preceptor focuses on developing the nurses' skill set and introduces unit-specific guidelines. In contrast, mentors focus more on peer support and developing one's role through relationships. Mentors can advise the orientee on how to deal with the stress of the unfamiliar environment and the demands of clinical practice.

Identification of the problem: Retention has been an issue in many areas of health care. Lack of long-term support for orientees was noticed by leadership and believed to contribute to lack of retention. Mentorship adds an additional layer of support to the orientation process.

QI question/Purpose of the study: The goal of the Orientation Navigator team is to support the orientees as a mentor throughout their orientation and beyond as they transition to established staff members, while also increasing retention throughout perianesthesia. Through this, we hope to enhance the new hires' experience by creating a larger support system during orientation to maintain orientee retention.

Methods: During the first weeks of orientation, a Navigator is paired with the orientee to coordinate a schedule for routine check-ins. Pre-orientation and post-orientation surveys distributed to orientees include Likert scale questions regarding comfort levels of the orientee, and a portion for feedback. As the program grows, positive and negative feedback is considered to improve the program.

Outcomes/Results: Retention rates and surveys completed by the orientees were used as evaluation mechanisms to measure the program's effectiveness. Since the initiation of the Orientation Navigator role in November of 2021, 24 RNs have completed orientation through September 2023, with 22 still currently working in perianesthesia. This represents a retention rate of 92% as compared to a rate of 67% of the new hires in the previous 2 years. Survey results show an increased level of comfort with the new team, and peri-anesthesia specialty, asking questions for their learning experience and increasing confidence to access unit resources.

Discussion: As mentors, Navigators interact with orientees in a more informal setting modeling organizational values, unwritten expectations, and unit norms. The addition of the Orientation Navigator role assists in increasing the orientee's confidence, feelings of support, and retention rates of new hire nurses.

Conclusion: Providing mentorship through an evidence-based program, encouraging peer support, socialization with colleagues, and modeling professional behaviors will lead to a seamless enculturation of the orientee, increasing job satisfaction and new orientee retention rates.

Implications for perianesthesia nurses and future research: Creating a culture of inclusion from the beginning of orientation will prevent high nurse turnover rates, increase retention for the institution and improve nurse satisfaction with their new jobs.