CHOC – Children's Health Orange County
Best Evidence and Recommendations (BEaR)

Standardized Training Program for Preceptors of New Graduate Nurses

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Abstract

It is well-documented that preceptors' knowledge, skills, and attitudes affect new graduate nurses' outcomes (Condrey, 2015; Piccinini et al., 2018). The influential role of the preceptor emphasizes the imperative to ensure preceptors are trained for their role and provided ongoing support as they work with their preceptors (McKinney & Aguilar, 2020; Rosa & Santos, 2016; Windey et al., 2015). This project aimed to critically analyze and synthesize the evidence to determine best practices for implementing a standardized preceptor training program. Outcome measures include retention of new graduate nurses, assessment of graduate nurse transition into practice at the six-month and one-year mark, preceptor satisfaction, and program evaluations.

Keywords

Preceptor, training, competencies, program, development, new graduate nurses, preceptor support

PICO(T)

What are the best practices for a standardized training program for preceptors of new graduate nurses?

Background and Significance

In today's complex, high-acuity healthcare systems, high nurse turnover requires the ongoing hiring of new employees. Nurse preceptors are essential to integrate the new nurse into the organization and assuming the demands of their new position. The preceptor has an enormous responsibility to teach about policies and procedures, communication mechanisms within the team, how to employ critical thinking skills, and integrating the new staff into the unit culture. Preceptors can often feel overwhelmed by this task, especially when they perceive they do not have the tools or resources to do their job effectively. Clinical orientation and training are usually assigned to staff nurse preceptors, assuming that staff nurses are prepared and capable of serving as preceptors. The literature shows that the turnover rate of new graduate nurses lies between 35-61% nationwide. The costs associated with replacing each of these nurses are estimated at $44,000 (Windey et al., 2015). However, consistent training for new graduate nurses may result in a higher satisfaction rate with their job and, in turn, result

in lower turnover rates (Clipper & Cherry, 2015; Goss, 2015; Hong & Yoon, 2021; Piccinini, Hudlun, Branam, & Moore, 2018). In addition, with a standardized preceptor training program, there will be more support and recognition for the preceptors, which may result in improved satisfaction of preceptors and overall satisfaction of staff in the organization (Goss, 2015; Liu, Fillipucci, & Mahajan, 2019; Senyk, & Staffileno, 2017). Decreased satisfaction and retention ultimately increase educational and turnover costs for the organization.

The CHOC Department of Clinical Education and Professional Development recognized an opportunity to create a preceptor program. New preceptors are required to complete a three-hour class to prepare for the preceptor role. Every three years, the preceptor is required to retake the course. Beyond this class, there are currently no other formalized preceptor programs or preceptor training requirements.

In 2018 CHOC began electronically tracking the retention of new graduate nurses through the Human Resources reporting system. The data indicate that the retention of new graduate nurses at CHOC remains high at the one-year mark with a range of 93.3-100% but each year following continues to decline. Retention at the two-year mark ranges from 86.7-92.6%, and at the three-year mark, it is at 70%. Preceptor satisfaction is monitored by the RN Residency Program Evaluations utilizing Cornerstone. In these evaluations, preceptors have shared that the Residency Program works well for them and the new graduate nurses. Still, there are improvements that they need (i.e., communication, resources, and support).

Implementing a standardized Preceptor Training Program will help improve the consistency of the training provided to our new graduate nurses and improve the overall quality of care that new graduate nurses give the patients and their families. Ensuring these changes and increasing resources directed toward the new graduate nurse preceptors will optimally increase the retention rate. During this time, when the longevity of nursing careers is shorter, and residency stay contracts are no longer in place, it is vital to ensure the preceptor program continues to improve satisfaction, leading to nursing retention.

Framework

The framework utilized in this EBP project was the "Translating Evidence into Practice: CHOC Children's Approach to EBP" model, adapted from the EBPI Model © 2007 Brown & Ecoff (Ecoff, Stichler & Davidson, 2020).

Search for the Evidence

Databases searched for this review included CINAHL, PubMed, and Medline. Key search words: preceptor training programs, preceptor satisfaction, preceptors of new graduate nurses, nurse preceptor training programs, preceptor training, preceptor program, preceptor development, new graduate nurses, and preceptor support. Twenty-

five (25) were included in the final analysis.

In addition, information was solicited from the best practices at four children's hospitals: Children's Hospital Los Angeles, Rady Children's Hospital-San Diego, Vanderbilt University Medical Center, and Lucile Packard Children's Hospital - Stanford.

Critical Appraisal and Synthesis of the Evidence

- The essential components of a preceptor program should include ongoing education, preceptor selection guidelines, and supportive resources (Liu, Fillipucci, & Mahajan, 2019; Senyk & Staffileno, 2017).
- Standardized preceptor training based on best evidence is preferred because it improves preceptor retention, satisfaction, and recognition; reduces orientation costs; and improves the safety and competency of new graduate nurses (Bartlett et al., 2020; Clipper & Cherry, 2015; Harper et al., 2021).
- Preceptor training requires multiple modalities to improve competencies and self-efficacies, consistent messaging and delivery, and ongoing education and preceptor professional development (Condrey, 2015; Goss, 2015).
- There is a direct correlation between perceived preceptor support and their commitment to precepting (McKinney & Aguilar, 2020; Rosa & Santos, 2016; Windey et al., 2015).
- Support, recognition, debriefing & mentoring of preceptors is needed (Goss, 2015; Ang, 2020).
- Nursing Professional Development specialists should be involved in developing preceptors (Sharpnack et al., 2014).

Practice Recommendations

- The processes listed below were implemented throughout all units via the clinical educators and managers before the EBP Scholars Program was completed.
  - Mandatory initial preceptor training before precepting
  - Mandatory renewal of training every two years
  - Implementation of preceptor incentives
  - Standardized selection and evaluation of preceptors
  - Standardized feedback process for preceptors
- At the end of the August 2021 residency cohort, a program evaluation tool will collect feedback on the new implementations. The evaluation tool will help to develop this program further and ensure satisfaction and growth.

Future Recommendations

- Develop competencies for preceptors
- Increase preceptor support via mentors and debriefing

- Increase preceptor recognition via awards
- Develop and implement preceptor program evaluations
- Develop annual classes on advanced precepting concepts for continued advancement and growth of preceptors

Acknowledgements

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