



# Mentorship! Making a Difference Using **GPS**: Graduate Nurse *P*rofessional Growth *S*atisfaction

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## Background and Approach

Healthcare leaders are challenged with helping the graduate nurse (GN) navigate through their first year in the profession. Evidence from the literature shows that 18 to 50% of GNs leave the bedside within the first year and it takes approximately 12 months for a GN to feel comfortable and confident in the role as a direct care nurse. Our synthesis of issues that influence success for GNs suggested that a mentoring program offered the opportunity to support new nurses in our medical/surgical units.

The medical/surgical unit is a 44-bed adult acute care medicine unit at Penn State Hershey, a 551-bed academic medical center in central Pennsylvania. The annual unit turnover rate for nurses historically has been about 25%. GNs on interview would question if a mentoring program existed. These inquiries, our high turnover rate, and our subsequent review of the literature, prompted development of a mentorship program specific to the adult acute care medicine unit.



## Objectives

- Define how a mentorship program supports the graduate nurse.
- Describe nurse satisfaction with a mentor program.
- Identify how Benner's philosophy supports the concept of professional growth within a mentorship program.

## Intervention and Evaluation

A group of direct care nurses volunteered to help develop the program. Education sessions were held, allowing nurses to have a clear understanding of program goals and objectives. The working group selected Benner's framework because it supported concepts of professional growth and development. In addition, the theory guides and directs the mission of a mentor as one of support and encouragement to mentees.

## Results

Between January 2012 and July 2013, 15 GNs participated in the mentorship program. Participants were requested to complete surveys at 3 months and 1 year into the program. As shown in the table, results were positive throughout the program. In addition, our overall unit nursing satisfaction scores related to the practice environment (i.e., nurse participation in hospital affairs, quality of care, leadership support of nurses, resource adequacy, and RN-MD relationships) outperformed benchmarks for Academic Medical Centers.

## Graduate Nurse's Ratings of Mentorship Program

Survey Item	3-month		12-month	
	Yes % (n)	No % (n)	Yes % (n)	No % (n)
Did mentor introduce self and explain program?	93% (14)	7% (1)	100% (8)	0% (0)
Was mentor easy to approach and talk with?	93% (14)	7% (1)	100% (8)	0% (0)
Did you talk/converse on a regular basis?	73% (11)	4% (27)	63% (5)	37% (3)
Did mentor offer support and encouragement?	93% (14)	7% (1)	88% (7)	12% (1)
Did you feel comfortable approaching/talking to mentor?	93% (14)	7% (1)	88% (7)	12% (1)
Did mentor observe teaching situation and provide constructive feedback?	87% (13)	13% (2)	63% (5)	37% (3)
Did you discuss goals with your mentor?	45% (7)	55% (8)	12% (1)	88% (7)
Was it a stress reducer to have a mentor?	80% (12)	20% (3)	50% (4)	50% (4)
Would you recommend mentor as a future mentor?	93% (14)	7% (1)	88% (7)	12% (1)

Further research is needed on the long-term (3-5 years) retention of the nurses and their professional growth. Goal setting was identified from the surveys as an area for further growth and development within the program. The mentorship program was instituted with every GN.

### References

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