

A Values Based Toolkit to select potential mentors

Project background

The Regional Approach to Mentorship Working Group consisted of representatives from the Universities of Bournemouth, the Open University and Southampton and trust colleagues from Hampshire Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust, Solent NHS Trust, Southern Health NHS Foundation Trust and University Hospitals Southampton NHS Foundation Trust.

This working group is accountable to the Health Education England working across Wessex Adult Nurse task and finish group responsible for managing retention of adult nurses within the region.

The quality of mentorship was identified by the task and finish group as a concern as having an impact on shortfalls within the local adult nursing workforce. A working group was created – **A Regional Approach to Mentorship** – responsible for developing strategies to assure and maintain the quality of mentorship and the impact of this on developing the future nursing workforce.

Project aims

The aim of the project was to develop strategies to strength the quality of mentorship and the learner experience in order to maximise retention within the local nursing workforce.

Process

Influenced by the Francis report's recommendation that all staff nurses being recruited into the NHS be tested to show their values and behaviours meet those of the NHS Constitution, a values based approach was chosen to identify potential mentors with the correct values and behaviours to support learners. The group felt strongly that the skills, knowledge, values and behaviours required to deliver high quality care were the same skills set as those required to support learners. The toolkit has a underpinning theme throughout that quality mentorship ensures a future workforce who are fit for purpose and practice who deliver safe and effective patient care.

The working group representing providers from HEIs, Acute and Community services worked together to identify six values with underpinning qualities we want to see demonstrated by potential mentors in their clinical practice - Ambassador, Broker Of Learning, Energiser, Illuminator and Reflector, professional Role Model and Promoter of Standards. These were then developed into a workable toolkit available on the world wide web for potential mentors to read through and identify personal examples from their own practice as to how they demonstrate these. In a 1:1 meeting with their manager, the toolkit is then discussed, with the manager having the overall decision as to whether the potential mentor has been able to provide satisfactory evidence of how they demonstrate the values in practice and are ready at that point in time whilst understanding the value and importance of the role to apply to become a mentor. If they are deemed not ready at that point in time then an action plan is drawn up to focus on the unmet areas. This toolkit is not deemed to be an "opt out" for reluctant mentors but a quality mechanism to identify that at that point in time they have the necessary qualities to undertake the mentor role.

The toolkit is available for practice colleagues to embed within the purchasing process of mentorship modules with a recommendation that successful completion of the toolkit is a pre-requisite to applying for a mentorship module/course.

It has also been suggested that this toolkit will be useful in performance managing practitioners who may not be delivering safe and effective patient care in their clinical role.

Key challenges

The main challenge was deciding what the commonly agreed values were that we all felt were essential for a standard of quality mentorship. Previous research undertaken as to what qualities nurses have identified as important in mentors informed our discussions and final selection. We wanted to select values that were thought provoking and not necessarily assumed as part of the mentor role.

Impact

The response to the toolkit has been very positive and encouraging. Following its launch we would like to look at a longitudinal study to review the impact of the toolkit on the following-

- Non-submissions rate from the Mentor Module
- Placement evaluations from students
- Attrition from pre-registration programmes
- Attrition from the local nursing workforce

Examples of material produced

The toolkit can be found on our website (<http://www.valuesbasedmentorship.co.uk>) and includes a wealth of supporting information about the role, value and importance of the mentor role.

Next steps and sustainability

The next step of the project is to develop a values based developmental tool for mentor feedback. We are looking to use the same values utilised within this recruitment tool and develop a developmental tool for managers, students and the mentor to complete to feedback on the mentor's mentoring, values and behaviours. This information will then feed into appraisals, triennial reviews and potentially evidence for forthcoming revalidation.

Key Tips

- The NHS Constitution and quality and safe effective patient care is central to everything we do. This must not be lost sight of.
- There are very good mentors who deliver superb mentorship to our learners; this toolkit is aimed at developing a quality standard for new mentors.
- Our learning curve for this piece of work was the copyright permissions for the materials we have used. Always check what permissions are required before publicising any materials not developed by you.

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