

## Guide for Nurse Mentors

Do you remember what you felt like when you were a new nurse, just starting out after graduating? Did you ever long for a more experienced nurse to talk with about your new experiences and feelings? Maybe you were fortunate to have another nurse take you “under their wing” and you know the value of that relationship. Have you ever considered being a mentor to a new nurse?

Mentoring is an important role. It is coming alongside someone and helping them in their growth both professionally and personally. This guide is designed to help you – as a nurse – mentor a less experienced nurse or student.

Even though nurse mentoring relationships are being shown to be very effective, many shy away when they hear the word “mentor”. They may not feel qualified to fill the role. It is important to remember, a mentor is NOT someone with all the answers.

Being a mentor can include:

- An understanding of what it is like to be a less experienced nurse (someone who has been there themselves), and has some experience
- The desire to provide support for and have a relationship with a less experienced nurse as they grow and develop in their role
- Someone willing to actively listen – being a “sounding board”
- Gifts and roles may include encouragement, prayer, troubleshooting, problem solving, discernment and shepherding
- Someone who affirms and challenges you to grow

An acronym, (created by NCF staff and used with nursing students), that may help you in a mentoring role is “CST”.

C = Come along side

S = See what God is doing

T = Take the next step

“Coming along side” involves getting to know each other, both personally and professionally.

Find a comfortable place to meet and talk. Some starter questions can include:

- Tell me a little about yourself and your family.
- What drew you to nursing?
- What do you enjoy most about your current nursing position?
- What is the most challenging thing you face in your current position?
- What are your long and short term goals?

“Seeing what God is doing” involves learning where the mentee is spiritually. Ask them to share about their faith journey. Discover how God is working through their life circumstances. Discuss what areas they are facing challenges in.

“Taking the next step” can involve praying together, encouragement, reflecting on how to approach a problem, brainstorming solutions, making a plan and evaluating together.

There are many common issues that new nurses face. Here are a few that may come up or that you may want to explore together:

#### Personal

- Stress Management
- Setting Boundaries; finding balance between work and downtime

#### Professional

- Culture Shock. Often a new nurse starts with an idealistic/”honeymoon” period. This can be followed by being overwhelmed by increased workload, less patient time than desired, unit/office politics, fear of making mistakes, etc.
- Time management
- Dealing with difficult “firsts” – like the first death of a patient

#### Spiritual

- If they have relocated for a job, have they found a church or place to get spiritual input
- Dealing with working on Sundays
- Ethical issues at work

Above all, a mentor prays for their mentee, for wisdom and for the relationship to grow. Let God be your ultimate guide.