Defining a Healthy Work Environment: Career Development Relationships

As nurses, we develop varied and unique relationships with colleagues throughout our nursing career. Have you ever given thought to the types of relationships you have developed and benefitted from in your work as a nurse?

Five types of career development relationships have been identified as important to fostering personal and professional growth within nursing, and more information about each relationship can be found at www.amsn.org/HWE.

A nurse enters into a precepting relationship after graduation from nursing school or upon hire in a new position. The preceptor provides a structured and more formalized relationship as the new nurse is prepared to accept the responsibilities of a position.

A nurse experiences a coaching relationship when someone in a position of authority takes an interest in assisting the nurse to grow and reach for new skills or knowledge.

Peer strategizing occurs when a colleague takes the time to encourage a peer to accept new responsibilities or education with the intent of furthering the nurse’s career. This can be a reciprocal relationship where each peer benefits from the other’s prior knowledge or education.

Sponsors can open doors for a nurse and provide exposure to other opportunities within or outside the current organization. This is usually a time-limited relationship that serves an identified need in a particular time period.

Lastly, mentors incorporate elements of the other four types of career development relationships. The mentor-mentee relationship can last for years and provide opportunities for tremendous growth. AMSN has designed a mentoring program that can be utilized by new graduates and experienced nurses alike. Guides with tips and exercises can be accessed on the AMSN Web site (www.amsn.org/HWE).

It is important to be aware of the types of career development relationships that exist, so that you can both benefit from, and eventually, promote these relationships with others. To find out more details, as well as examples of the above listed types of relationships, please review the AMSN Healthy Work Environment Advocacy Guide online.

A reference list of pertinent articles is also available online by clicking on Recommended Resources. There are webinars, articles, and even self-learning modules available on Career Development Relationships that can be utilized by AMSN members. AMSN has provided what every nurse and organization needs to be successful in facilitating healthy and sustaining nursing relationships. Please take a look at the resources and share with your colleagues to begin making changes within your own organization!

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