

Poster Session II

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The Experience of Participating in a Formal Mentoring Program in a Cardiovascular Intensive Care Unit

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Background: In 2001, the American Association of Critical-Care Nurses (AACN) put forth a framework for Establishing and Sustaining a Healthy Work Environment. In all six areas of focus, mentorship is critical to supporting the development of new staff to appropriately participate in sustaining a healthy work environment.

Purpose: The purpose of this exploratory study will be to describe the experiences of nurses participating in a formal mentoring program based in the cardiac intensive care unit, from the perspective of both the mentee and mentor within the framework of a healthy work environment.

Methods: Focus groups, interviews and surveys were used to support data collection at baseline, 3, 6, 9, and 12 months for both mentees and mentors. Content analysis was used to organize and categorize data using the domains of healthy work environment.

Results: Eight mentees and 3 mentors participated for a one year period. In the first six months, the mentoring exchange focused on the domains of Effective Decision Making and Skilled Communication. Most of these exchanges were directly related to supporting patient care activities. In the following six months, further domains of True Collaboration, Meaningful Recognition, and Authentic Leadership came to light. The expansion of mentoring moved into professional and personal development.

Conclusions and Implications: Overall mentees and mentors verbalized a positive and supported experience of the mentoring program. Initially Skilled Communication and Effective Decision making were of a focus in the mentoring exchange. Overtime, further domains emerged. These included: True Collaboration, Meaningful Recognition, and Authentic Leadership.