Mentoring in Academic Nursing from the Perspectives of Faculty Mentors

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Objectives

1. Synthesize current research regarding mentoring in academic nursing.
2. Describe the theoretical framework, *Growing Together: Mentors’ Perspectives on Mentoring* and the associated phases and strands.
3. Correlate findings of the theoretical framework, *Growing Together: Mentors’ Perspectives on Mentoring* to inform best practices for academic mentoring.

Background
What is mentoring?

- Relationship between a more experienced mentor and a less experienced protégé for the purpose of helping and developing a protégé's career
- Long term, career and psychosocial development

Why mentoring?

- 8.8% faculty vacancy rate in 2022, up from 8% in 2021
- Turning away thousands of qualified students due to faculty shortage
- MENTORING as a strategy for faculty retention
Importance of Faculty Mentors

- Mentors serve as role models and help to promote career development in novice faculty protégés \(^1,4\).
- Research primarily focuses on protégé experiences and outcomes with mentoring.
- Impact of workplace stressors among experienced faculty who serve as mentors \(^5,7\).

A need to better understand how nurse faculty mentors experience mentoring in the context of their faculty roles.

Method
Purpose

- To create a theoretical framework that describes how mentoring relationships in academic nursing unfold from the perspectives of nurse faculty mentors.

Method

- Constructivist grounded theory methodology
- Explores a shared psychosocial problem and process among a group.
- Investigator developed, 11 question semi-structured interview guide

Sample & Demographics

- 24 full-time nurse faculty mentors
  - Five years or more in the faculty role
  - Served as a mentor to novice nurse faculty in the past five years
  - 22 women, 2 men with average age of 55
  - All regions of the U.S. in a variety of academic institutions
  - Recruited through AACN, Sigma, and NLN member communications, social media circles
Results

Growing Together: Mentor’s Perspectives on Mentoring Theoretical Framework

- **Getting Together**
  - Relationship with Protégé: Tentative
  - Work of Mentoring: Immediate Needs
  - Emotional Impact of Mentoring: Uncertainty

- **Getting Going**
  - Relationship with Protégé: Rapport
  - Work of Mentoring: Facets of Faculty Role
  - Emotional Impact of Mentoring: Overwhelmed

- **Going Together**
  - Relationship with Protégé: Mutual Trust
  - Work of Mentoring: Navigating Academia
  - Emotional Impact of Mentoring: Satisfaction

- **Going Beyond**
  - Relationship with Protégé: Independence
  - Work of Mentoring: Connecting with Resources
  - Emotional Impact of Mentoring: Transition
### Phase 1: Getting Together

#### Relationship with Protégé
- Formal assignment by administrator
- Informal relationships via co-teaching, previous relationship, or similar interests

#### Work of Mentoring
- Meeting protégé immediate needs
- Asking protégé to articulate needs and goals
- Primarily teaching focused

#### Emotional Impact
- Uncertainty
- Lack of guidance and resources for mentoring
- Leaning on intuition and experience

### Phase 2: Getting Going

#### Relationship with Protégé
- Development of deeper connection
- Investment in protégé success
- Recognition of protégé potential

#### Work of Mentoring
- Focus on tripartite mission
- Reviewing guidelines for promotion and/or tenure

#### Emotional Impact
- Feelings of appreciation
- Overwhelmed due to workloads, lack of support, and shortages
- Emotional toll related to protégé struggles
Phase 3: Going Together

**Relationship with Protégé**
- Mutual trust and commitment
- Shift from hierarchical to collaborative

**Work of Mentoring**
- Navigating academic culture and relationships

**Emotional Impact**
- Satisfaction and joy from mentoring
- “Paying it forward”
- Confidence in mentoring abilities

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Phase 4: Going Beyond

**Relationship with Protégé**
- Leaving the mentoring nest
- Celebrating independence and growth
- Intimate personal relationships

**Work of Mentoring**
- Connecting with resources consistent with evolving professional growth
- Professional championing

**Emotional Impact**
- Gratification
- Sense of loss
Discussion & Implications

Discussion

• **Mentors face a lot of challenges**
  – Heavy workloads
  – Limited time for mentoring activities
  – Unclear matching process\(\Rightarrow\) lack of connection
  – Lack of resources
  – Little guidance for relationship
    • **Relying on own intuition and experience resulting in a wide variation of mentoring quality**
Discussion

• **Mentors receive benefits from mentoring**
  – Finding joy and meaning in the faculty role
  – Collegiality and friendship
  – Effective connections based on shared goals and compatibility
  – Mentoring changes over time
    • *Relationship*
    • *Work*
    • *Emotions*

Implications

• **Purposeful matching of dyads**
  – Shared goals, interests, compatible personalities
• **Provide resources for mentoring**
  – Mentor training, mentoring agreements, dedicated coordinator for mentoring activities
• **Mitigate workplace stressors**
  – Interferes with quality, effective mentoring
  – Poor work-life can impact job satisfaction and intent to stay
References
