From Triage to Teaching: Preparing Preceptors for What's Next

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Background

Preceptor programs often emphasize clinical competency for preceptees while underpreparing preceptors in communication, coaching, and leadership skills[1]. This gap contributes to inconsistent onboarding, reduced learner confidence, and variability in preceptor effectiveness across clinical settings.

Objective

Describe evidence-based communication, coaching, and feedback strategies that support effective preceptor development and improve onboarding outcomes across healthcare practice settings.

Methods

A phased preceptor development program was implemented to address gaps in communication, coaching, and leadership. Interventions included foundational preceptor education, quarterly reinforcement through virtual learning and newsletters, and advanced development through Dominance (D), Influence (I), Steadiness (S), and Conscientiousness (C) personality workshops and Preceptor Training 201. The program emphasized skill progression, reflective practice, and onboarding consistency.[3–4]

Discussion

- Structured preceptor development strengthens communication, coaching, and leadership skills.
- Ongoing education and reflective practice support onboarding consistency and learner confidence.
- The model is adaptable across healthcare settings.

Results:

- 17 preceptors completed foundational education.
- 3 quarterly newsletters were distributed.
- 22 preceptors attended DISC workshops.
- Program expanded from infusion nursing to include 5 additional roles.

Key Preceptor Development Strategies

Evidence-Based
SBI and R2C2 feedback
Coaching questions
Explaining the "why"
Guided practice and debriefing
Regular check-ins[1,3]

TCS Implementation
DISC workshops
Preceptor Training 101 and 201
Quarterly newsletters
Ongoing reinforcement

Scan the QR code to access our Preceptor Program site, which contains key resources and reference materials.

CE CODE: 59KYAZ

Conclusion

- Strong preceptor preparation which supports safe, high-quality oncology care.
- Enhanced communication, coaching, and leadership skills that improve onboarding consistency and learner confidence.
- A structured preceptor development model which promotes workforce readiness and patient-centered care.[1,3]
- Ongoing education and reinforcement support for long-term preceptor growth and program sustainability.[3,4]

Reference(s)

1. Ulrich B. Precepting: A Guide to Mentoring, Teaching, and Leadership. 2nd ed. Sigma Theta Tau International; 2018.
2. Harper MG, Maloney P, eds. Nursing Professional Development: Scope and Standards of Practice. 4th ed. American Nurses Association; 2022.
3. Harper MG, Ulrich B, et al. ANPD Preceptor Competency Consensus Study. Association for Nursing Professional Development; 2023.
4. Tennessee Cancer Specialists. Preceptor Newsletter. May 4, 2026.

Disclosure

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