The Valuable Oncology Nurse Preceptor

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The development of an educational strategy to expand the role of oncology nurse preceptors at Lehigh Valley Health Network (LVHN) into adept educators and nurturing mentors.

Significance & Background
- Today’s oncology patients are treated with newly emerging chemotherapy, biotherapy, and targeted therapies that require current knowledge
- Nurses new to oncology need hands-on instruction and training from interactive, involved preceptors to foster the development of the highly specialized skill set essential to oncology nurses
- A positive orientee and preceptor relationship promotes nursing satisfaction and retention of new nurses
- If the connection between orientee and preceptor remains strong, the preceptor may develop into a mentor over time.

Interventions
- Steering committee of leadership, management and front line staff was recruited for the purpose of:
  - Evaluating current preceptor roles and responsibilities
  - Discussing challenges encountered by both orientee and preceptor
- Two oncology nurse educators incorporated committee feedback into a restructured preceptor model that included the following key concepts:
  - Recognition and support of preceptors
  - Mentorship
  - Principles of adult education and effective teaching
  - Communication strategies
  - Compassion fatigue awareness
- The course content challenges oncology nurses to evaluate the characteristics of an effective preceptor and a competent learner

Evaluation
- The program has been successfully implemented at LVHN
- To date, multiple offerings have been held and feedback has been overwhelmingly positive
- Current approval is for nursing CE only, however numerous requests to broaden the course to include allied oncology health professionals have been received

Discussion and Innovation
- There is an imperative need for skilled oncology nurses
- Innovative strategies for supporting nurse preceptors and retaining new oncology nurses are essential to the continued quality care provision for the expanding oncology patient population

Results and Findings
- To evaluate translation of learned concepts into nursing preceptor practice, an online survey was emailed at 10 weeks after the educational offering to program participants.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course</th>
<th>My skills as a preceptor have improved since taking this course</th>
<th>I learned at least one strategy to effectively communicate with a new orientee</th>
<th>I would recommend this course to others</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Class 1</td>
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<td>Class 3</td>
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Participant Feedback
- At the completion of each course, participants were asked: Have you made any changes to your practice since completing the program?
  - “Yes, I try to see things in the view of the new hire or trainee”
  - “Incorporating some of the effective communication strategies. Using open-ended questions, asking for feedback”
  - “I encourage the employee to ask me questions so that I know if he or she is understanding what we are reviewing”

Purpose
- The Valuable Oncology Nurse Preceptor
- Donna Colabroy RN, MSN, AOCNS and Maura Price RN, BSN, OCN
- Lehigh Valley Health Network, Allentown, Pennsylvania

Interventions
- My skills as a preceptor have improved since taking this course
- I learned at least one strategy to effectively communicate with a new orientee
- I would recommend this course to others

Evaluation
- Class 1: 100% 100% 100%
- Class 2: 100% 100% 100%
- Class 3: 100% 100% 100%