

# Nursing Mentorship Program Template

This helpful template is intended to help pre-assembled mentorship task forces structure their mentoring programs for new nurses. Customize this template to meet the needs of your facility and team.

## Step 1. Introduce and Individualize the Program Goals

New nurses should be introduced to the program's predetermined goals and be allowed to develop their own. These will help guide the development and fulfillment of all the resulting steps of the template.

Unit Goals	Nurse Goals
<p><i>Become proficient with clinical skills and adept at incorporating best practice into everyday care for patients.</i></p> <p><b>For example:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>New nurse will get signed off on safe medication delivery. Discuss this experience with the mentor, including any barriers or challenges.</li> </ul>	<p>What is a clinical skill that you still struggle with or have yet to master? What steps can you take to become more proficient?</p> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>
<p><i>Learn unit safety goals and exhibit competency with maintaining safety standards.</i></p> <p><b>For example:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>New nurse will demonstrate sterile technique with urinary catheter insertion. After documenting clinical skill check-off, discuss the experience with the mentor.</li> </ul>	<p>Learn and incorporate a safety tool (like SBAR, STAR, or ARCC) into practice.</p> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>
<p><i>Develop time management skills to keep up with the challenging pace of the job.</i></p> <p><b>For example:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>New nurse will select a time</li> </ul>	<p>Is there a part of your shift where you struggle to keep on top of time-dependent tasks? What resources are you using to overcome this problem?</p>

<p>management resource like a brain (or shift to-do list) to help organize and keep track of tasks. They will review the helpfulness of the tool, and challenges to managing workflow with the mentor.</p>	<hr/> <hr/> <hr/>
<p><i>Experience inclusive community and feeling of belonging within the unit culture.</i></p> <p><b>For example:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• New nurse will identify multiple staff members they can ask for help when needed and utilize their nursing network (including the mentor) when they feel overwhelmed.</li> </ul>	<p>Do you feel comfortable asking for help when you need it? What is something you can do to feel more included in your work community?</p> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>

When the mentee is ready, a broader goal sheet may be more user-friendly and effective. Goals should be specific, actionable, and assessment items for tracking purposes should be included.

<p><b>Short term goals</b> to achieve within the year:</p> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>
<p><b>Long term goals</b> to achieve within the year</p> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>

## **Step 2. Recruit Nurse Mentors**

The program is dependent on nurse mentors who are motivated about their role and experienced enough to lend credible support. Here are some considerations for recruitment and retention of quality mentor participants.

### **Advertise the need for mentors**

- Ask for participants during staff meetings and huddles within 90 days of program initiation.
- Send email to staff outlining the expectations and registration method.
- Encourage experienced nurses who were new graduates within the last 10 years and exhibit leadership qualities regularly to consider mentorship.

### **Incentivize mentors**

- Count mentoring as professional development.
- Offer pay differentials where possible.
- Make mentoring hours paid time, counting toward the mentor's full time quota.

### **Counsel mentors**

- Before program kickoff, allow mentors the opportunity to voice their concerns and questions.
- Examine curriculum and program intentions with mentors.
- Schedule check-ins throughout program duration to make sure mentors feel supported by nurse leadership and have what they need to achieve success.

## **Step 3. Establish the How and When**

This is the how and when of mentor-to-mentee meetings. Allow for flexibility but do follow a standard expectation for meeting types, times, and duration.

### **Determine Meeting Mode**

- In-person, where partners meet face-to-face
- Digital, where partners meet via a messaging platform (online or via text) or through video meetings
- A mixture of the two as schedules allow or necessitate

### **Decide on Times or Offer Certain Time Slots**

- Implement a systematic approach, like the 2nd Tuesday of each month, to take the guesswork and difficulty out of scheduling.
- Offer set times in either morning or afternoon to further streamline the process.
- Cap the meeting times, especially if it's considered paid work, to keep meetings efficient.

## Step 4. Match Mentors With Mentees

Standardize the matching process using a question-and-answer tool. Assessing a mentee's needs and selecting a mentor who feels confident they can meet those particular needs will enhance trust and engagement from the relationship's start.

Matching Tool Questions	Prospective Mentee Answers
Please list 3 goals that you have for yourself going into this program. How do you see a mentor helping you achieve these goals?	
What clinical skills are you hoping to develop or improve through the program?	
Do you have a day or time preference for meetings? Are there any days or times that you would not be able to meet?	
What is your preferred communication method (in-person versus text, for example)? Do you have a learning style (such as visual or hands-on) that works best?	
Do you have any social or cultural considerations that a mentor should be aware of?	

## Step 5. Develop the Program Timeline

This step should set a limit on the duration of the program (one year is the routine expectation) while dividing the program into defined phases. By sticking to phases, progress is easier to track and expectations are clarified.

Phase	Action Items
<p><b>Pre-intervention (phase I)</b> This introductory, orientation portion of the timeline should establish the relationship that will allow for later productivity.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• May last as little as 6 weeks, but should not take longer than 3 months</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Clearly define roles and expectations.</li> <li>• Develop trust and rapport between mentor and mentee.</li> <li>• Adapt (or compromise) to find mutually acceptable communication methods and schedules.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Midpoint (phase II)</b> This working portion of the timeline is when goals are actioned and met.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• May last anywhere from 6-10 months.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Do routine check-ins to discuss progress toward goals and steps for achieving them and setting new ones.</li> <li>• Examine challenges and obstacles, then discuss how mentor feedback helped address those issues.</li> <li>• Identify and celebrate when goals are met.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Post-mentorship (III)</b> This closing phase of the program occurs when the mentee is ready to practice independently and confidently.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Should occur by the end of the program's set duration time (at the 1-year mark, for example).</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Original program goals should be realized.</li> <li>• Going forward, the mentor and mentee may maintain their relationship as peers.</li> <li>• The mentee may be ready to act as a mentor to others at this point.</li> </ul>

### Step 6: Ensure Mentors and Mentees Sign a Working Agreement

Creating an agreement that both parties must sign protects the working partnership with firm expectations. Interpersonal relationships can lead to conflict, particularly in vulnerable settings such as new nurse orientation. An agreement will underscore the important requirement of professionalism.

<p><b>Nursing Mentorship Agreement</b></p> <p>As a mentor and mentee in <u>    <i>(your program name)</i>    </u> we agree to maintain these standards:</p>
---

1. Meet at agreed-upon date and time, providing sufficient notice and reasonable cause if the schedule must be shifted or altered.
2. Maintain the confidentiality of all mentoring conversations.
3. Treat one another with respect and dignity at all times.
4. Keep conversation tone and content professional.
5. Provide feedback that is fair, honest, and actionable.

Pre-Intervention Phase Goals include:

---

---

Additional Notes:

---

---

\_\_\_\_\_  
Mentor Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Mentee Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date/Time

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date/Time

## Step 7: Track Progress and Revise Program as Needed

Reviewing progress is crucial for justifying continued investment in the program and for optimizing revisions to improve future successes. Here are a few considerations to guide your review and revision process.

### Revisit Goals at Predetermined Intervals

- Goals should be reviewed and assessed for completion at each mentoring meeting.
- Consider phase II and III conferences with nursing leadership where the number and type of goals reached are shared alongside select allegories of successes and difficulties.
- Implement methods of recognizing participant successes.

### Utilize a Standardized Process for Tracking Data

- Pool data among candidates (maintaining anonymity) to check for patterns.
- Assess the appropriateness of goals and action items that are either achieved too quickly or are near-uniformly uncompleted by participants.

- Check in with mentors to validate the data's implications about the program.

## Make Revisions Based on Analytical and Reported Feedback

- Incorporate surveys into phase I and II leadership conferences to gauge participants' perceptions of the program's value and to identify opportunities for improvement.
- Assess goals that are being met too readily for usefulness and examine goals that continue to go unmet by participants. Determine whether it's a goal issue, or an issue with the steps to completing.
- Guide future programs using the assembled data and feedback, altering meeting times or modes, and evolving the goals based on evidence.

## Other Considerations and Resources

Help mentees develop SMART goals by sharing this tool-driven resource.

### Goal Evaluation Checklist for Mentees

Use this checklist to establish whether goals meet SMART criteria:

- Is the goal **S**pecific?
- Is the goal **M**easurable, with identifiable methods of measuring progress?
- Is the goal **A**ttainable, and realistic within the timeframe of this program?
- Is the goal **R**elevant and in keeping with the unit objectives?
- Is the goal **T**imely?

What are the action items that the mentee is using to pursue this goal?

---

---

What is the best use of the mentor for helping the mentee realize their goal here?

---

---

Other Considerations

---

---

--

To help a mentor stay on track within meetings, consider using this tool to help make the most of mentoring sessions.

<b>Mentoring Agenda Tool</b>	
Participants:	Date and time:
Topics for discussion (work-life balance or time management, for example):	Follow-up actions and considerations:
Goals check-in:	Follow-up actions and considerations:
Desired topics for next meeting:	Date and time for next meeting: