Emerging Nurse Leaders: Mentors Who Set the Stage

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Sitting in my fourth-grade classroom, I smiled as I realized I had friends. Having friends was a big deal in fourth grade, as I felt loved, I belonged to a group, and, most importantly, I had a friend's house where I could play. I had three best friends. One best friend I shared years of playing, imagining, and creating real-life scenarios in which we pretended to be grown-ups with costumes and props. My second friend was a piano player and wrote music, and my third friend was quiet but always was there to support whatever the rest of us wanted to do. One day, we were at the musical friend's home, and she was playing a piece she had written. She intensely hit the keys to her piano and emitted an inspirational sound! The notes carried me to a land with a king and queen, and justice prevailed. I jumped and said, "Let us write a play and integrate this music." We pitched the idea to our teacher, and she loved it. She stood up for us as other students complained about us getting out of class to practice. Looking back, I believe she saw something in us (leadership) that she knew she wanted to support. She was our mentor who nudged us to success. She got to know us, provided us with opportunities, and gave us encouragement. We accomplished the production of our play with our teacher (our mentor), who saw something in us and "set the stage."

Years later, I finished my PhD at the Frances Payne Bolton School of Nursing at Case Western Reserve University. I had just spent hours, days, and years learning to be a scientist with my PhD chair, Dr. Shirely Moore. You may have similar experiences with this type of intense "learning" and feeling like you are at the bottom of the barrel and know nothing. Having someone guide you on the path to enlightenment (or at least getting the dissertation done) is critical.

Dr. Shirley Moore witnessed my drive and dedication to leading quality and safety in nursing. She was my mentor who provided me with opportunities to take leadership positions even when I felt unprepared. These positions included being the site lead of the Veterans Affairs Quality Scholars program, integrating Quality, Safety, and Education for Nurses (QSEN) competencies into our school of nursing, and taking the national helm of the sustainability of the QSEN movement. Her mentoring led to my leadership success. She provided opportunities, advised me when I was confused, and supported my actions. As a mentor, she took the time to get to know me and was committed to my personal growth.

I had other mentors along the way. These mentors appeared at sporadic times but provided essential guidance and advice. Dr. Barb Daly was one of my sporadic mentors. During ethical dilemmas, I would reach out to Dr. Daly, and she was always there to discuss and guide me. The mentorship provided by Dr. Daly gave me strength during difficult times to persevere and stay in the game. Another mentor was Dr. Patricia Estok from Kent State University, with whom I had the privilege to work as a new faculty member. Dr. Estok's interest in my work and the relationship that we maintained over the years fueled my career.

Organization-Sponsored Mentorship Program

It is not only individuals who provide mentorship. Organizations and nursing schools have programs to mentor nurses and "set the stage," like my fourth-grade teacher did for my friends and me. Dr. Mary Beth Modic has mentored over 747 front-line nurses in the LEAD program (Modic et al., 2017) that is now called the MAGNUS which is the Latin word for great and important (Modic, 2023). The program is a clinical leadership education program that empowers nurses. It is conducted in six "gatherings" that provide opportunities for frontline nurses to validate their work, collaboratively expand their thinking, and celebrate their strengths.

The University of Iowa recently implemented a nursing mentoring program entitled the "Young Nurse Leadership Program" (Lose & Joseph, 2023). The program integrates the American Association of Colleges of Nursing (AACN) Essentials (Giddens & Mullaney, 2023) and the American Organization for Nurse Leaders (AONL) competencies (Hughes, Mead-

ows, Begley, 2022). This program aims to improve prelicensure student awareness of and interest in leadership-focused career paths, hone leadership knowledge and skills to promote the seamless transition to practice, and meaningfully engage current nurse leaders in a shared opportunity to help prepare future nurse leaders.

Finally, the National Student Nurses Association (NSNA) Leadership "U" program provides opportunities for nursing students to enhance their leadership potential and be recognized for leadership. Nursing students learn how to work in cooperative relationships with peers, faculty, students in other disciplines, community service organizations, and the public in a service learning environment (National Student Nurses Association, 2024)

Mentoring our Next Generation

So many nursing students and new nurses show us their potential to lead forward. Are we paying attention? Are we reaching out to "set the stage"? One example is a student nurse leader at the Frances Payne Bolton School of Nursing, Ethan Slocum. Ethan has been involved in our school's Undergraduate Nursing Student Association all four years of his nursing education. He is now president in the National Student Nurses' Association in his senior year. I talked with Ethan, and he shared that his mentor is Dr. Janna Kinney. Dr. Kinney inspires Ethan as she practices nursing and is a leader who models excellence. Ethan stands out as a student interested in leadership and is dedicated to the nursing profession. He is a leader now and a leader for nursing's future. Thank you to Dr. Kinney for seeing Ethan's potential and going above and beyond to set the stage for Ethan to lead!

Call to Action to ANA-Ohio Members

As leaders in the ANA-Ohio, take advantage of your opportunity to see the leadership potential in the nurses around you and the students you teach. Let us reach out and mentor our nursing students and new graduates who demonstrate leadership qualities. Let us embrace our power to "set the stage" for the next generation and mentor them into the future. Our healthcare systems need our emerging nurse leaders! ■

References online:
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Telephone Triage: A Necessity to Manage Pediatric Patient Flow

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Telephone advice nurses first came into practice in the 1970s. At that time, nurses would talk with patients over the phone to discuss home care for illnesses, manage medication refills, and discuss lab results (Mataxen & Webb, 2019). Telephone advice nurses are vital members of the pediatric health care team. By the time a child turns 18 years old, they will have had a minimum of 28 well visits to their pediatrician; this does not include any sick care visits (American Academy of Pediatrics, 2023). The American Academy of Pediatrics (2023) emphasizes the need for preventative care. Parents seek guidance and advice from the pediatric team while caring for their growing children.

Not every concern or illness requires a visit to the office; triage nurses can assist parents with decision-making and provide advice on managing care. They can also guide a parent to the most appropriate level of care when an evaluation is warranted (American Academy of Ambulatory Care, 2018). Telephone triage requires that the nurse collect the necessary information to guide a family regarding the child's care. Since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020 and a brutal Respiratory Syncytial Virus (RSV) and influenza season in late 2022, remote triage has become increasingly necessary and integral to the patient care experience (Farzandipour et al., 2023).

With the onset of the Covid-19 pandemic, waivers were put in place allowing for increased remote interactions between the patient and healthcare