Preceptorship is a fundamental part of nursing practice at all levels. Whether the nurse is a new graduate or a senior nurse with decades of service in the profession, he or she will still need to make the transition to an unfamiliar work environment. A highly qualified preceptor is a valuable asset to any successful nursing orientation program.

Upon review of the literature on preceptor development a common premise was the importance of providing specific training to prepare the preceptor for the role of mentor and teacher. The unique health care setting of a network of outpatient clinics requires preceptors to serve as a clinical resource to nursing staff. The structured preceptor training program provides the tools needed to assume this role.

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The feedback cycle in staff development and professional development is based on the dynamic relationship between the Orientee, Preceptor, Clinical Nurse Educator (CNE) team created an evaluation tool to obtain qualitative feedback from the nursing staff. Ongoing feedback is a critical component of an effective orientation program and the CNE’s utilized this information to make improvements. Item number six of the evaluation tool was weighed heavily since it asked the nursing staff to “List what you liked most about your orientation program”. Positive feedback regarding preceptor support was prevalent among the evaluation tools received from newly hired nurses. Initially, nurses in the primary care setting approached preceptorship with trepidation.

- Compounding factors included:
  - Expanding role of the RN Clin Manager
  - The daily demands of patient care
  - Staffing constraints
  - Unfamiliarity with the orientation materials

After the implementation of the preceptor program, overall reactions revealed improved satisfaction related to the systematic support provided by the CNE team.

**Figure 1.0** Number of new hires, transfers, and losses

**Challenge**
Design a preceptor program that would:
- Allow for distance based training
- Provide support and enhance communication
- Facilitate a seamless transition of nurses to an unfamiliar work environment.

**Objectives**
- Define the preceptorship program in the ambulatory care setting across a vast geographic region.
- Identify and discuss the challenges in establishing an effective preceptor program.
- Describe innovative methods to encourage collaboration and promote support among preceptors through facilitation of a work group.

**Figure 1.1** Results of the orientation evaluation tool

**Figure 1.2** The feedback cycle in staff development