

New Nursing Home High Value Business Model Pilot
C.N.A. Mentoring Program Tip Sheet

A mentoring program is a formal way to have experienced CNAs orient new CNAs. Equally important, it is an investment in experienced CNAs' development. The return on this investment is their improved engagement and performance. This has a ripple effect. It can generate higher performance and engagement among the whole team.

1. **Formal Process:** Post the position and have an application process with references from supervisor/co-workers. Some may need your encouragement to apply. Have a peer mentor job description. Interview candidates. Select the right people for the job. For others who show an interest but aren't ready, consider having a leadership development track for them to undertake so that they can become a mentor over time.
2. **Training:** Being good at your job doesn't make you automatically good at training others. Teach mentors how to recognize and teach to other people's strengths. Talk through how to give feedback in a developmental way. Discuss how to handle conflict. Consider on-going (monthly or quarterly) training on topics that mentors identify a need for.
3. **Clear lines of responsibility:** What should the mentor do when a new staff person isn't doing the job right? How much do they step in and correct, and when do they bring it to the staff developer, or the charge nurse? Who among the chain of command is responsible for what and how does the mentor fit in? Make this very clear for the mentor and the whole team responsible for helping a new person succeed.
4. **Team Rewards:** Give all co-workers a stake in helping new employees succeed. Rewarding everyone on the team for a new co-worker's success ensures that staff don't leave it all to the mentor to help a new person along.
5. **Workload:** Have the mentor and mentee share 1 assignment. Start with the mentor doing it and the mentee watching. Transition to the mentee taking the full assignment.
6. **Pay:** Provide higher pay. Recognize that they are always in a leadership role and mentoring and make this their on-going pay rate.
7. **Meet with mentors regularly:** They need your continued support. When you meet with them you can trouble-shoot, provide just in time teaching, and help them learn from each other. You can also ask for their insights about areas you are focusing on such as staff retention or quality.
8. **Younger staff:** Talk through with mentors that they may be a young person's first real employer. Younger staff need structure and guidance. Ask mentors to take younger staff they are mentoring under their wing and develop them.