

Strategies & Tips for Certification Champions

Shared by UVA Certification Champions

Updated Fall 2023

Why does it matter? Speaking to the value of Professional Board Certification

- Increases your confidence and clinical knowledge
- You are recognized as an expert in your field by peers, patients and their families
- Increases and acknowledges your knowledge base
- Counts towards the Virginia Nursing License Renewal requirements
- Supports advancement on the Clinical Career Ladder
- More money through CCL advancements and the annual \$300 bonus
- Better patient outcomes and care for our patients with specialty trained staff
- Intrinsic value of holding a professional board certification
- Provides an opportunity to share expertise with patients
- Wearing the certified nurse badge gives patients the option to ask about it and to share your commitment as a professional. It showcases that you are specialized in your field and are up-to-date on your skills and clinical knowledge
- Highlights your professionalism as a Certified RN
- Certifications often include or can lead to external professional organization involvement
- Provides recognition
- A meaningful professional goal
- Bragging rights!

Ideas for Helping Colleagues Become Certified

- Create a department-specific guide on how to become certified that is meaningful to your team of RNs. Guide includes screenshots and answers who, what, when, where, how, why questions
- Host or help organize study groups; could be via social media or in-person, to encourage accountability

Continued... Ideas for Helping Colleagues Become Certified

- Set up Accountability Partners to share successes, study goals, etc.
- Share study materials within your team
- Sign up to receive daily test questions via email (based on availability by accrediting body/professional organization)
- Help others connect with resources
- Offer to be a Study Buddy
- Use a PowerPoint presentation and post steps to getting certified for your area's specific certification
- Create a display board for celebration and information; flips-cards with Q&A are fun
- Create a binder with FAQs for each certification relevant to your practice setting
- Help determine if individual is driven by self-motivation or needs a group for peer support
- Share certification questions/quizzes at staff meetings or local NPG meetings; try using Jeopardy as a fun way to test your knowledge
- Send message out to all RNs introducing yourself as certification champion and ask if they are certified or interested in getting certified; Individual outreach
- Share your personal "why" and how it enhanced your career and abilities
- Post a "Question of the Week" on Professional Governance bulletin board
- Post signups and testing dates
- "Pass the baton" after getting certified to the next person
- Amplifying that passing or failing the test doesn't define you. It's ok to fail. You just need to do your best.
- Use Prepay programs if applicable, to help with expense
- Walk through the NPGO Certification website with them to review resources; discussion financial support options
- Have one "safe" person to share that you are going to take the test/have taken the test
- Use tracking spreadsheets of certifications
- Create mentorship pairs
- Use your Professional Organization's review course or study materials
- Host 15-minute mini study sessions throughout the day
- Include in department newsletters (test dates, test questions, etc.)
- At team huddle, have one question per day

What are some of the challenges or barriers to becoming certified that Champions can help with or advocate for?

- Committing to creating time to study
- Low self-confidence
- Tools to address test taking anxiety
- Being in school
- No desire to advance on the clinical ladder, so that benefit is not applicable; need to focus on the other benefits and professional/personal value
- Setting a date/time to take the test
- Work/life management – may feel unattainable
- Fear of failure or not knowing enough
- The story we tell ourselves that not passing the exam will define us
- Funding for study materials
- RNs later in their career may not see the need
- Lack of self-motivation and discipline
- Reluctance to purchase professional organization membership

Tips for Maintaining Certification | Tracking Continuing Education Hours

- Know what is specifically required for that specific professional board certification
- Know if there are specific types/buckets of CEs that are required
- Find a way to track CEs: Folder in Outlook, Relias transcript, Workday transcript, Professional Organization transcripts, printed out copies stored in folders
- Consider what other RN activities may count and keep a log: Precepting, Committees, academic credentials, writing policy, professional activities, etc.
- Share where to get CEUs in local or regional NPGO meetings
- Forming a group for certified nurses for extra support and tips in maintaining it
- Reminder! CEUs will count for RN license renewal as well
- Annual certification bonus is a good time to prompt for re-certification
- Encourage joining a professional nursing association to receive free CEUs

Updated: Fall 2023