



UVA Health

University Medical Center

Experienced RN Internal Transfer Buddy Program

Toolkit

Nursing Professional Governance Organization

Created: October 2023



Experienced RN Internal Transfer Buddy Program

Overview

Target Audience:

Experienced RNs transferring internally to a new practice area, acuity and/or patient population

Purpose:

Promote enculturation, team building and retention by supporting experienced RNs transferring internally to a new practice area/patient population in their first 6 months with the team

Provide a guided-program to enhance and compliment the orientation process and preceptorship beyond the clinical skills, focused on supporting the mental and emotional processing that occurs when transitioning within practice (Benner's Novice to Expert Theory), as well as building strong relationships within the team

Resources:

Toolkit provided centrally; Developed using the learnings from the RN Mentorship Programs and pilot programs in the PICU and PACU

Ownership/Department Coordinator:

Logistics provided in partnership with department manager, NEC/OC, and/or CNL, along with oversight by local governance committee

Framework for Launching the Buddy Program

Target Audience:

- Experienced RNs transferring internally into our department, which is a new practice area, acuity and/or patient population for them

Timeframe/Program Length:

- Recommend offering at the beginning of orientation, but available at any point
- 6-months in length

Participation:

- Participation is optional, but encouraged
- Once paired with a buddy, commitment to participate is expected

Selecting Experienced Buddies from Within the Department:

Consider the following when encouraging team members to take on this role:

- RNs who also started in the department as an experienced RN, without prior department-specific experience (i.e. acuity level and/or patient population)
- 12-18 months minimum in the department preferred

Creating Pairs:

Ideas and things to consider when creating pairs:

- Attempt to pair those with similar clinical backgrounds prior to this transfer or other work experiences
- Create mini biographies of buddies to gather information for either the coordinator or the newly transferred RN to select from; Include information such as:
 - Clinical background, reason for transferring into current department, years as a RN, etc.
 - Example and template of a mini-bio provided
- RN can select their buddy from the mini-bios or the coordinator may make pairs based on knowledge

Running the 6-month Buddy Program

- **Create pairs and provide introductions**
 - Can offer a meet-and-greet session if feasible within your area and participants
- **Provide program content to the participants**
 - Send each month's guided content with a reminder to connect
- **Buddies connect monthly**
 - Use the provided topic and discussion questions as a starting point for the meeting
 - May focus on pertinent topic or timely issue to the newly transferred RN
 - *This should always be the priority as the most meaningful way to provide support*
 - Monthly connections can occur in a variety of ways – be creative and have fun! Coffee breaks, hikes, walking breaks, dinner downtown, carpooling, phone calls, etc.
- **Program Wrap-up**
 - May provide a wrap-up note or celebration meeting if feasible within your area and participants
 - Remind newly transferred RN to complete the Program Evaluation included in Month 6
 - Consider giving a certificate to recognize participants completion
 - Template provided

Communication from the Coordinator

- This will be essential to support the pairs throughout the program!
- Important points to consider communicating with the pairs
 - Introducing buddy pairs to each other
 - Each month, including a reminder to connect, the monthly topic, and any other opportunities coming up for them to consider participating in together
- The coordinator's engagement and personal touch-points makes a meaningful difference
 - Communicate early on to encourage relationship building
 - Mid-to-end of program communications encourage ongoing participation, especially when orientation may be complete

Program Evaluation

A brief evaluation survey is provided in month 6

- Newly transferred RNs should complete this survey at the end of the program
- Department results will be sent to the manager to share with the team.
 - Please email NPGO@uvahealth.org if you do not receive results that you are expecting.
- Feedback will help guide the department's buddy program coordinator, local NPGO committee and NPGO Professional Development Committee to evolve the program.
- Please send any additional learnings and feedback for the central toolkit to NPGO@uvahealth.org

For questions or to request a meeting to prepare launching this buddy program, please email NPGO@uvahealth.org.

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