

NEW CAREERS IN NURSING SCHOLAR ALUMNI TOOLKIT: DEVELOPMENT OF AN INNOVATIVE RESOURCE FOR TRANSITION TO PRACTICE

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The transition from student to professional nurse is challenging and may be more difficult for underrepresented minority nurses. The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation New Careers in Nursing (NCIN) program supported development of a toolkit that would serve as a transition-to-practice resource to promote retention of NCIN alumni and other new nurses. Thirteen recent NCIN alumni (54% male, 23% Hispanic/Latino, 23% African Americans) from 3 schools gave preliminary content feedback. An e-mail survey was sent to a convenience sample of 29 recent NCIN alumni who evaluated the draft toolkit using a Likert scale (*poor* = 1; *excellent* = 5). Twenty NCIN alumni draft toolkit reviewers (response rate 69%) were primarily female (80%) and Hispanic/Latino (40%). Individual chapters' mean overall rating of 4.67 demonstrated strong validation. Mean scores for overall toolkit content (4.57), usability (4.5), relevance (4.79), and quality (4.71) were also excellent. Qualitative comments were analyzed using thematic content analysis and supported the toolkit's relevance and utility. A multilevel peer review process was also conducted. Peer reviewer feedback resulted in a 6-chapter document that offers resources for successful transition to practice and lays the groundwork for continued professional growth. Future research is needed to determine the ideal time to introduce this resource. (Index words: Diversity; Leadership development; Mentoring; New graduate nurses) *J Prof Nurs* 0:1–4, 2016. © 2016 Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved.

Background

The transition from student to professional nurse is challenging and may be more difficult for underrepresented minority nurses. The latest national data show that men and ethnic minorities are underrepresented in the U.S. nursing workforce (HRSA, 2010); therefore, it is important to support their success.

It is well documented that the transition from student to registered professional nurse is challenging (Barnett, Minnick, & Norman, 2014; Cleary, Horsfall, Jackson, Muthulakshmi, & Hunt, 2013; Missen, McKenna, & Beauchamp, 2014; Philips, Kenny, Esterman, & Smith, 2014). New registered nurses (RNs) must adjust to a high-demand institutional culture, which may place the nurse, the patient, and the agency at risk for adverse events. The number of new graduate nurses entering the workforce following graduation from RN programs has increased from 68,000 in 2001 to more than 150,000 in

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2013 (HRSA, 2014). However, approximately 17.5% of new nurses leave their first job within 1 year, and 33.5% leave within 2 years (Kovner, Brewer, Fatehi, & Jun, 2014).

Studies show that there are a multitude of reasons for new nurse turnover: lack of mentorship, inadequate emotional and moral support, technical challenges, bullying, and difficulties with professional socialization (Loftin, Newman, Dumas, Gilden, & Bond, 2012; Vogelpohl, Rice, Edwards, & Bork, 2013). Because underrepresented minority nursing students have reported these challenges as barriers to their success (Escallier & Fullerton, 2013), their transition to practice may be even more difficult.

As described in a previous article in this issue, the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation (RWJF)/American Association of Colleges of Nursing New Careers in Nursing (NCIN) program has increased the number of men and ethnic minorities in the workforce by providing leadership development and mentoring resources. There is more diversity among NCIN scholars than among nursing students overall in bachelor of science in nursing (male 40.6% vs. 12.5%; White 37.7% vs. 69.9%) and master of science in nursing (male 33.9% vs. 10.8%; White 29.7% vs. 68.1%) programs (NCIN, 2015). An NCIN innovation award funded the development of a transition-to-practice toolkit for new nurses by our team of expert educators from NCIN programs at three large universities in the New York metropolitan area. The purpose of the toolkit is to provide the necessary resources for successful transition to practice and to lay the groundwork for continued professional growth. As a result, the toolkit may be useful in promoting the retention of new nurses, particularly those from underrepresented racial, ethnic, and gender minorities. This article provides an overview of the toolkit and describes the process used to establish its utility, comprehensiveness, and content validity for others who wish to develop similar resource documents.

Objectives of the Toolkit

The toolkit objectives were to (a) offer information and suggestions throughout the job search process, (b) provide guidance for establishing and sustaining successful mentoring relationships, (c) suggest strategies for successful socialization into the nursing profession, (d) provide information for defining career goals and a path for professional growth, (e) guide pursuit of advanced education in nursing, and (f) facilitate growth as a nurse leader.

Toolkit Overview

The NCIN Scholar Alumni Toolkit is designed to provide nursing students and newly licensed nurses with the necessary leadership development and mentoring resources for successful transition from the student to professional role and to lay the groundwork for continued professional growth. Benner's (1984) novice to expert model conceptually informed the toolkit

development. Benner maintains that expert nurses develop skills and understanding of patient care over time through a sound educational base and a multitude of experiences.

Support resources can provide insight into the experiences of newly licensed RNs as they begin their nursing career and help to guide them during this complex transition to practice. The NCIN Scholar Alumni Toolkit is comprised of six chapters containing information on selected topics identified in the literature and by newly licensed NCIN scholar alumni, faculty, and other experts as important for successful transition to professional nursing practice. An overview of each toolkit chapter, its content, and its subtopics is presented in Table 1. A variety of resources and helpful tips is included in each chapter. Examples include résumé templates; recommendations, such as reflective journaling and interviewing tips; evidence-based Web sites; references to articles, texts, and videos; professional organizations; and more. Topics can be reviewed in any sequence based on reader interest and are presented in a question-and-answer format to enhance usability. Hard copies of the final toolkit were distributed to all 130 NCIN grantee schools at the national Grand Finale Summit in September 2015. An open access, electronic version of the transition-to-practice toolkit is currently available and can be downloaded on the NCIN Web site at <http://www.newcareersinnursing.org/node/31674>. Students and new nurses may find these resources to be helpful as they begin their nursing career and as they continue to advance their education and professional growth. Faculty may also wish to utilize this toolkit as a resource during the nursing curriculum and prior to graduation.

Toolkit Development Process

Institutional review board approval was not required as the project focused solely on the evaluation of resource materials and not human subjects.

Our project team worked collaboratively via regularly scheduled conference calls. The initial steps included (a) development of a content outline based on the specific toolkit objectives forming the foundation for each chapter and (b) implementation of a user-friendly toolkit structure. Thirteen recent NCIN scholar alumni from the three partner schools provided feedback on the preliminary content (54% male, 23% Hispanic/Latino, 23% African Americans, 15% Asian). Using this alumni feedback, the content of each chapter was revised and reorganized. Several scholars provided poignant personal observations and advice. Permission from these scholars was obtained to incorporate their direct quotes anonymously within each chapter. To enhance its utility, the toolkit's six chapters were constructed using key questions posed from the first person point of view of a new nurse. The corresponding responses were designed to offer evidence-based guidance, expert advice, and credible on-line resources. Each project team member researched and developed two chapters, which were

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