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# EMPOWERING THE NURSING PROFESSION THROUGH MENTORSHIP

Handbook 4: Guidance for Student Nurse



**COURSE MATERIAL 79**

COMMENTS

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# EMPOWERING THE NURSING PROFESSION THROUGH MENTORSHIP

Handbook 4: Guidance for Student Nurse



TURUN AMMATTIKORKEAKOULU  
TURKU UNIVERSITY OF APPLIED SCIENCES

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# PREFACE – INTRODUCTION TO THE MENTORSHIP PROGRAMME

The profession of nursing varies greatly in how it is both viewed by others and how this is delivered and developed across Europe. In part, this is a consequence of the significant differences in the way nurses are educated. One important aspect of this educational experience is the contribution of qualified nurses in the supervision of student nurses during their clinical placements. It is noted that a crucial factor within nurse education systems should therefore be the educational relationship between the qualified nurses and student which would ensure successful learning experience. In many countries this is known as mentorship, and provision is made for the formal education of qualified nurses as mentors to students in the clinical learning environment. However, such approaches are not universal because some mentorship models commonly used by organisations in some countries can be relatively unknown in others; there are countries where qualified nurses do not engage in this process at all. With the modernisation and harmonization of European nursing education the project sought to address such incongruence, and in so doing, promote an empowered and better educated nursing profession across Europe.

The Empowering the Professionalization of Nurses through Mentorship (EmpNURS) project was an international one and it aimed to benefit nurse educators, student and qualified nurses. The overall action model of management and delivery of the project was based on previous work by members of the project team (Saarikoski et al., 2008; Warne et al., 2010). In this project, the initial EmpNURS Mentorship programme was developed and then implemented in four relatively new member states within the European Union. An impact evaluation of the EmpNURS project was undertaken using both quantitative and qualitative methods, as well as an on-going critical evaluation and support in the development of the Mentorship programme. It was agreed that the pedagogical underpinning of the course should be based on Work-Based Learning, which was in keeping with the nature of nursing as a practice based profession and of engaging both students and practitioners in learning in the working environment.

The EmpNURS consortium consisted of 11 full-partner organisations. Seven of these organisations were Educational Institutes and four were teaching hospitals working in collaboration with each other in the local pilots of the project. These organisations were located in the Czech Republic (CZ), Hungary (HU), Finland (FI), Lithuania (LT), Romania (RO), the Netherlands (NL) and the United Kingdom (UK). The Mentorship pilot programmes took place in Brno (CZ), Budapest (HU), Kaunas (LT) and Iasi (RO).

There was a collaborative team of a delegate from an Educational Institute and a hospital, who led each of the four Mentorship pilot programmes. The role of the partners from Finland, the Netherlands and the UK focused on supporting the implementation of the Mentorship pilot programmes. Turku University of Applied Sciences from Finland was the coordinator of the EmpNURS project.

The specific aims of the EmpNURS project were:

- to improve the quality of nurse education by advancing a new supervision culture of student nurses during their clinical practice
- to increase the readiness of registered clinical nurses to act as supervisors and mentors for student nurses during their clinical placements
- to pilot a mentorship model developed by the project partner organisations in the collaborating hospitals and universities of 4 new EU countries
- to evaluate the introduction of a mentorship model in relation to changes in current practice and future developments.

The first key concept of the project, **empowerment**, refers to the positive conception and experience of one's capability to cope with different kind of challenges. The concept has mainly been used at an individual level (challenges in person's life), but it can be also used when describing some collective features of a group (e.g. family, profession). In this project the concept of empowerment refers to the anticipated outcomes for the nursing professionals who will experience mentorship, both as the mentor and mentee.

The second key concept of the project is **supervision**, which acts as an overarching term which refers to the guidance, support and assessment of student nurses by qualified clinical nurses. It can take place with an individual supervisory relationship or in group supervision. In the case of individual supervisory relationship, we use the term **Mentor**, which is used specifically to describe the role of a qualified nurse who acts as named personal supervisor of a student during a clinical placement. **Mentorship** is seen as the relationship between a student and her/his 'own' supervisor.

It was anticipated that the project would promote the professional identity of student nurses and qualified nursing staff. Following the collaborative development and agreement of the Mentorship training programme, this was then delivered by four city universities in Brno, Budapest, Iasi and Kaunas. In these cities each participating Educational Institute and its teaching hospital worked together to implement and evaluate the programme in the clinical practice environments. The pilot training programme was initially developed in English and then translated into different languages for implementation by educators and clinical staff, and then shared with the student nurses who would also be educated about the new way of supervising them in clinical practice.

We anticipated that the evaluated and piloted Mentorship programme would then be adopted in the participating Educational Institutes and in their partnership teaching hospitals and would subsequently be transformed as permanent practice in many similar educational environments in these countries as well as others as part of the valorisation process of the EmpNURS project. This collaboration between the universities and hospitals to deliver the pilot Mentorship programme was an essential part of the EmpNURS approach.

The implementation and evaluation of the Mentorship programme was completed within the agreed timescale and with varying degrees of success. However in terms of impact on those mentors and students taking part in the pilot programmes as well as on the programme teachers the outcomes have been extremely positive. Their inputs into the evaluation of the process of implementation of the programme as well as the course materials and additional resources have led to the final production of the material in the Handbooks for the Programme Teacher, the Mentor and the Student Nurse. An explanation of how to use these handbooks can be found in the chapter *How to Use the Programme Material* (Handbook 1).

The material can also be adapted for use in the development of mentorship in other professional groups, where the principles of work-based learning can be applied, as well as that of reflective practice, and developing excellent clinical learning environments and the collaborative supervision of the student between the Educational Institutes and the clinical organisations.

We would like to wish everyone who uses the material every success in implementing this introduction to the Mentorship programme and to the empowerment in work-based learning of both students and practitioners who act as mentors.

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We wish to thank the EU Commission's Lifelong Learning Programme (LLP) for giving us this opportunity to develop a mentorship programme that can be implemented in many EU countries which are new to this approach to student learning and to continuing education of qualified staff.

In addition we wish to acknowledge key partner organisations' lecturers and other staff who have shared their time and their expertise with us, and all the students that gave their time to be involved in new ways of learning, the mentors who attended the course in each country and who evaluated their experience in all four participating countries as being very positive and also the ward managers in every hospital and community site that collaborated with these four main pilot sites to ensure the success of the programme and the learning experience for everyone concerned.

Finally we wish to thank the team of the project Making Practice-Based Learning Work. The excellent materials of this project were used as major resources in developing the EmpNURS Mentorship programme.

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# I INTRODUCTION

As a student nurse you will be undertaking a learning experience in different clinical placements. During your placement you will receive support and guidance from a qualified practitioner who is identified as a **mentor**. This person will undertake teaching and assessing of student learning experiences at different stages of your curriculum and your journey to becoming a qualified nurse. Your mentor will be someone who has undertaken a programme of study and practice to become qualified to undertake this teaching and assessing role. This Mentorship programme of study includes learning about different learning theories and how to support student learning in practice. This will include assessing their skills as teachers and assessors in the clinical practice and theoretical.

This handbook is to help you as a student nurse become familiar with what the mentor has to learn and practice during the Mentorship programme and what your role and responsibilities are as a student nurse as well as an overview of the content of the mentorship programme itself. This basic introduction to becoming a mentor should enable you to gain an understanding of how to build a good relationship with your mentor and develop a successful partnership in learning.

## 2 MENTORSHIP AND THE STUDENT NURSE

Nursing is a practice-based profession, and therefore the clinical learning environment remains central to the nurse education experience (McBrien, 2006; Warne et al., 2010). Ali and Panther (2008, 35) believe that:



*Clinical experience plays an important role in developing nursing students' learning and they also suggest that in order to enhance this clinical experience it is important to provide students with appropriate support and guidance.*

Spouse (2001) describes that effective support by mentorship increases the ability of students to adjust to practice and to learn. Moreover, in a study by Saarikoski et al. (2007) it was found that students are more satisfied when they have a formal mentorship relationship. Student nurses benefit from being taught by a trained mentor and to receive practice based teaching relevant to their specific needs (Nash & Scammell, 2010). Besides the importance of students learning what the role of the mentor is, as Dadge and Casey (2009) highlight, it is essential in ensuring the safety of patients and the reputation of the nursing profession.

The mentor is the key person in the clinical environment who supports and helps nursing students to develop the necessary skills to become competent and knowledgeable practitioners (Holland & Roxburgh, 2012). The term 'mentor' is therefore the name that has been adopted in the EmpNURS Mentorship programme (as it is in most EU countries) to identify those clinical practitioners who will have specific responsibility for teaching, assessing and guiding student nurses in the clinical environment.

If you are reading this information booklet you will be a student nurse in a country or organisation that has chosen to implement the EmpNURS Mentorship programme. We hope that you enjoy working and learning with your mentors as you continue on your journey to becoming a qualified nurse and we wish you every success in your chosen career.

Becoming a **mentee** (someone who is learning with a named mentor) has certain responsibilities and we hope that the following introductory information as well as links to additional resources and information help you to understand your role and responsibilities as well as that of your mentor.

### 3 ROLE AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE STUDENT NURSE

Student nurses have several responsibilities during clinical practice. The Royal College of Nursing (RCN) in the UK developed an overview of what these are (see Appendix 1: Responsibilities of student nurses in clinical practice).

If the mentor is undertaking the EmpNURS Mentorship programme, you, as the student nurse, can expect to have this explained to you, as well as what your role is in that student-mentor relationship. Given that each country or organization will have different educational programmes and needs it is just noted here that you will have your role and responsibilities explained in more detail according to your own curriculum.

## 4 ROLE AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE MENTOR

At the start of the Mentorship programme, and before the mentors begins their learning experience in the clinical placement, the student nurse will be invited to meet and to be introduced to their nominated mentor and to have an initial discussion about how they are to work together. This will make the start of the mentorship practice situation much easier for both mentor and student nurse.

The mentor will inform the student nurse about her or his role in the Mentorship programme and will provide all documentation needed to participate in the learning exercises of the mentors in practice. The mentor will provide all material to support the process of teaching and assessment of the student nurse in practice. Additionally the mentor will discuss the use of a learning agreement to support the process of developing achievable goals during the placement, helping to ensure the student nurse and mentor are working together towards the same goals (Making Practice Based Learning Work, 2006). The mentor will take care that the student nurse is not placed under undue pressure in her or his role during the mentoring process in practice.

**Note:** It is very important to note that this guidance only applies to practitioners and students involved in the process of this Mentorship programme. There may be other arrangements made in different countries and organizations that will be delivered alongside this one.

## 5 THE MENTORSHIP PROGRAMME

It is important for the student taking part in this Mentorship programme to have a brief introduction to the content of the programme and how they are involved in ensuring that the mentor successfully completes their programme. The student nurse will meet the mentor during their clinical practice learning experience and it is hoped that this relationship will continue for the duration of the student nurse experience in that placement.

### The content of the EmpNURS Mentorship programme (in brief)

At the beginning of the Mentorship programme the mentor will be informed about the professional requirements for being a nurse in the specific country implementing the Mentorship programme, including any Codes of Conduct. In addition they will be introduced to specific curriculum issues concerning the student nurse that they will be supporting in the clinical learning environment. In addition the mentors will learn about:

- Content of the nursing curriculum, tasks and outcomes of practical training
- Concepts of mentoring
- The professional role of the mentor
- Basic principles on learning, coaching and reflection
- Creating an environment for learning
- Methods in teaching and learning; facilitation of learning
- Coaching strategies, methods and reflection
- Assessment principals and evaluation of learning outcomes
- Portfolio development
- Continuous Professional Development, Lifelong Learning.

## 6 LEARNING ACTIVITIES OF THE MENTOR

Mentors have to learn how to undertake and manage different activities in developing the competences of a mentor. Learning activities will focus on the main tasks of a qualified mentor namely organizing and co-ordination of students' learning activities in practice. This will help student nurses to set and monitor achievement of realistic learning objectives. In addition the mentor will, learn to supervise the student nurse during their clinical placement experience and how to provide constructive feedback on achievements. The mentor will also learn how to assess the student nurses' total performance – including skills, attitudes and behaviours. It is anticipated that when the mentor is learning their own skills to become a mentor that they also receive feedback from the student nurse about their performance as a mentor.

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In addition to this list, *Handbook 2: Guidance for Programme Teacher* includes useful 'Specific Topic References' which make it easier to find sources for planning the sections of the course.

# APPENDIX I: RESPONSIBILITIES OF STUDENT NURSES IN CLINICAL PRACTICE

Students have a responsibility to:

- read the student charter of the educational institute and student handbooks
- familiarise themselves with handbooks related to their specific programme of study (these are correlated to practice placements and will include assessment of practice documentation)
- recognise the purpose of the placement experience and ensure that they are clear about the expectations of the placement provider
- ensure that they have some theoretical knowledge relating to the placement
- contact the placement and mentor prior to starting
- highlight any support needs to the mentor
- act professionally with regard to punctuality, attitude and image, and dress according to uniform policy
- maintain confidentiality according the national law
- maintain effective communication with patients, mentors, and link personnel from both the placement and educational institute
- adhere to the programme of study: curriculum document for practice placements and the information, documentation for student nurses from the clinical placement.

It is important to understand that students have a central role in maximising their learning experience during placement, taking responsibility in directing their own education through interaction with relevant staff and the creation of learning experiences.

Students and mentors outside of the United Kingdom will find the following information of value in their learning and working together in the clinical practice environment:

- The UK Nursing and Midwifery Council (NMC) provides the following guidance for students working in practice:
  - understand your responsibility and accountability; always work under the supervision of a registered nurse or midwife
  - respect the wishes of patients at all times
  - identify yourself as a student to the patient at the first opportunity
  - uphold patient confidentiality in accordance with the NMC's Code of Professional Conduct (2004)
  - do not participate in procedures for which you have not been fully prepared or in which you are not adequately supervised.
- The full NMC Guidance on professional conduct for nursing and midwifery students (2006) in the UK is available from the NMC website at [www.nmc-uk.org](http://www.nmc-uk.org):  
<http://www.nmc-uk.org/Documents/NMC-Publications/NMC-Guidance-on-professional-conduct.pdf> (NMC 2011)

# APPENDIX 2:WEB-BASED REFERENCES AND FURTHER READING MATERIAL

## Web-based references

Resources to support the student nurse in learning what is expected from a student nurse in the clinical practice environment and their working and learning with mentors undertaking this Mentorship programme.

Royal College of Nursing: Guidance for mentors of nursing students and midwives. An RCN toolkit (Publication code: 002 797) Available:

[http://www.rcn.org.uk/development/students/student\\_resources/publications](http://www.rcn.org.uk/development/students/student_resources/publications) (Accessed June 3th 2013)

NMC (2006) Guidance on professional conduct for nursing and midwifery students is available from the NMC website at [www.nmc-uk.org](http://www.nmc-uk.org):

<http://www.nmc-uk.org/Documents/Guidance/Guidance-on-professional-conduct-for-nursing-and-midwifery-students.pdf> (Accessed June 8th 2013)

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<http://www.routledge.com/cw/mulholland-9780415537902/p/learning> (Accessed August 18th 2013)

## Further reading material (text books and book chapters)

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**Placement Learning Series – Edinburgh: Bailliere Tindall Elsevier (Editor: Karen Holland)**

Harris J. & Nimmo S., 2012. Placement learning in Community Nursing: a guide for students in practice.

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