Mentoring in Academic Nursing from the Perspectives of Faculty Mentors

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Objectives

1. **Synthesize current research regarding mentoring in academic nursing.**
2. **Describe the theoretical framework, *Growing Together: Mentors' Perspectives on Mentoring* and the associated phases and strands.**
3. **Correlate findings of the theoretical framework, *Growing Together: Mentors' Perspectives on Mentoring* to inform best practices for academic mentoring.**
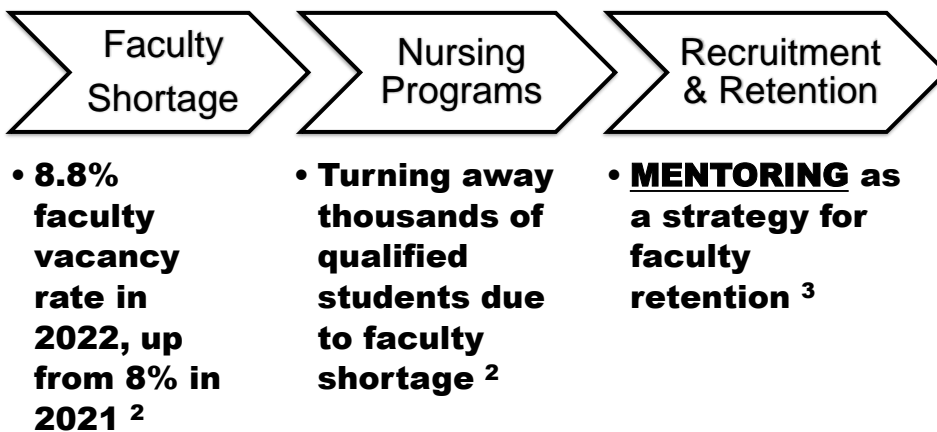
Background

What is mentoring?
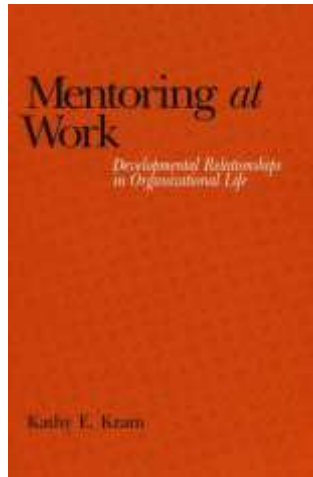
- **Relationship between a more experienced mentor and a less experienced protégé for the purpose of helping and developing a protégé's career [1]**
- **Long term, career and psychosocial development [1]**

Why mentoring?

Faculty Shortage	Nursing Programs	Recruitment & Retention
• 8.8% faculty vacancy rate in 2022, up from 8% in 2021 [2]	• Turning away thousands of qualified students due to faculty shortage [2]	• **MENTORING** as a strategy for faculty retention [3]

Importance of Faculty Mentors

- **Mentors serve as role models and help to promote career development in novice faculty protégés [1,4]**
- **Research primarily focuses on protégé experiences and outcomes with mentoring**
- **Impact of workplace stressors among experienced faculty who serve as mentors [5,7]**

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A need to better understand how nurse faculty mentors experience mentoring in the context of their faculty roles

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Method

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Purpose

- **To create a theoretical framework that describes how mentoring relationships in academic nursing unfold from the perspectives of nurse faculty mentors.**

Method

- **Constructivist grounded theory methodology [8]**
  - **Explores a shared psychosocial problem and process among a group.**
- **Investigator developed, 11 question semi-structured interview guide**

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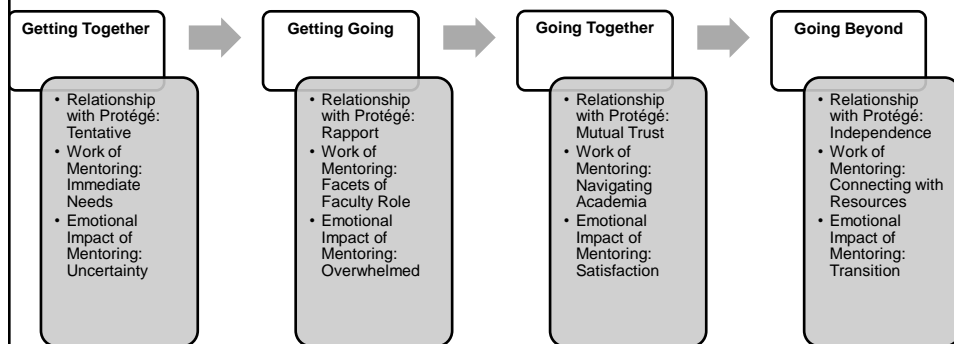Boulder | Colorado Springs | Denver | Anschutz Medical Campus

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Sample & Demographics

- **24 full-time nurse faculty mentors**
  - Five years or more in the faculty role
  - Served as a mentor to novice nurse faculty in the past five years
  - 22 women, 2 men with average age of 55
  - All regions of the U.S. in a variety of academic institutions
  - Recruited through AACN, Sigma, and NLN member communications, social media circles

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Results

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Growing Together: Mentor's Perspectives on Mentoring Theoretical Framework

Getting Together → **Getting Going** → **Going Together** → **Going Beyond**

Getting Together	Getting Going	Going Together	Going Beyond
• Relationship with Protégé: Tentative • Work of Mentoring: Immediate Needs • Emotional Impact of Mentoring: Uncertainty	• Relationship with Protégé: Rapport • Work of Mentoring: Facets of Faculty Role • Emotional Impact of Mentoring: Overwhelmed	• Relationship with Protégé: Mutual Trust • Work of Mentoring: Navigating Academia • Emotional Impact of Mentoring: Satisfaction	• Relationship with Protégé: Independence • Work of Mentoring: Connecting with Resources • Emotional Impact of Mentoring: Transition

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Phase 1: Getting Together

Relationship with Protégé
- Formal assignment by administrator
- Informal relationships via co-teaching, previous relationship, or similar interests

Work of Mentoring
- Meeting protégé immediate needs
- Asking protégé to articulate needs and goals
- Primarily teaching focused

Emotional Impact
- Uncertainty
- Lack of guidance and resources for mentoring
- Leaning on intuition and experience

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Phase 2: Getting Going

Relationship with Protégé
- Development of deeper connection
- Investment in protégé success
- Recognition of protégé potential

Work of Mentoring
- Focus on tripartite mission
- Reviewing guidelines for promotion and/or tenure

Emotional Impact
- Feelings of appreciation
- Overwhelmed due to workloads, lack of support, and shortages
- Emotional toll related to protégé struggles

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Phase 3: Going Together

Relationship with Protégé	• Mutual trust and commitment • Shift from hierarchical to collaborative
Work of Mentoring	• Navigating academic culture and relationships
Emotional Impact	• Satisfaction and joy from mentoring • "Paying it forward" • Confidence in mentoring abilities

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Phase 4: Going Beyond

Relationship with Protégé	• Leaving the mentoring nest • Celebrating independence and growth • Intimate personal relationships
Work of Mentoring	• Connecting with resources consistent with evolving professional growth • Professional championing
Emotional Impact	• Gratification • Sense of loss

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Discussion & Implications

Discussion

- **Mentors face a lot of challenges**
  - Heavy workloads
  - Limited time for mentoring activities
  - Unclear matching process ➡ lack of connection
  - Lack of resources
  - Little guidance for relationship
    - *Relying on own intuition and experience resulting in a wide variation of mentoring quality*

Discussion

- **Mentors receive benefits from mentoring**
  - Finding joy and meaning in the faculty role
  - Collegiality and friendship
  - Effective connections based on shared goals and compatibility
  - Mentoring changes over time
    - *Relationship*
    - *Work*
    - *Emotions*

Implications

- **Purposeful matching of dyads**
  - Shared goals, interests, compatible personalities [9]
- **Provide resources for mentoring**
  - Mentor training, mentoring agreements, dedicated coordinator for mentoring activities [9]
- **Mitigate workplace stressors**
  - Interferes with quality, effective mentoring
  - Poor work-life can impact job satisfaction and intent to stay [10]

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