

**Maria Graf PhD, RN, CTN-A**

## Background

In Wisconsin, individuals from communities of color experience elevated levels of chronic illness, mortality, and insufficient access to high-quality healthcare. The state also grapples with one of the highest rates of black maternal mortality. Currently, there exists a substantial gap in racial and ethnic representation between communities of color and their healthcare providers. One strategy to improve the health outcomes of these communities is to increase the racial diversity among healthcare professionals. It is essential to address the underrepresentation of students of color in healthcare professions to bolster diversity within Wisconsin's healthcare workforce.

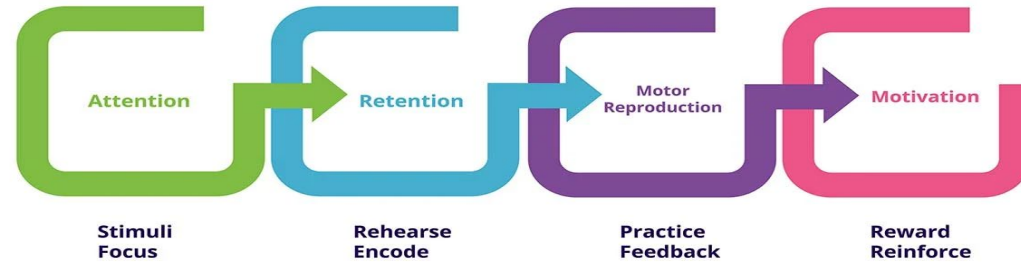
## Purpose

This project aims to create a mentorship program specifically tailored to high school students of color who are interested in pursuing a career in healthcare. The tenets of the Social Learning Theory will serve as the framework for this program.

## Objectives

- Develop a mentorship program sponsored by local school districts and UWO.
- Develop a sustainable mentorship team (including mentor's training)
- Involve local organizations and main stakeholders.

## Social Learning Theory



## Process

- Organize a team within UWO ADIH board.
- Coordinate with local school district the mentorship program.
- Meet with HS advisors to help with participants' recruitment.
- Recruit peer mentors and offer mentorship training.
- Schedule the meeting sessions and develop their content.
- Reach out to local stakeholders for support.
- Expand mentorship program to other locations.

## Next steps

- Reach out to other UWO campus orgs and the College of Nursing and Health Sciences
- Meet with the local school district to identify areas of need.
- Reach out to local stakeholders for support.
- Engage key community members.
- Partner with UWO pre-college and recruitment office
- Identify methods to measure success of the mentorship program.
- Evaluation

## Anticipated Outcomes

### Short term:

- Increase of HS students attending the mentorship program
- Starting new mentorship programs around the area
- Apply for a grant to offer paid mentorship.
- Retention of mentors and mentees
- Support mentees HS graduation and college application.

### Long term:

- Stronger relationship with UWO pre-college and recruitment offices
- Increase support from local stakeholders
- Increase of students of color graduating with healthcare science majors
- Diversification of healthcare

*“people learn through observing, imitating, and modeling others' behavior” (Bandura, 1977)*



## Application of Social Learning Theory to Develop a Mentorship Program

Maria Graf, PhD, RN, CTN-A

### Biography

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**Dr. Maria del Carmen Graf is an assistant professor at UW Oshkosh College of Nursing. She teaches community health nursing, is the CON International Studies Coordinator, and is the lead instructor for the international community health clinical rotations. Dr. Graf earned a bachelor's degree in science of nursing at the Universidad San Luis Gonzaga de Ica-Peru, a master's in nursing education from UW Oshkosh, and a doctoral degree in Philosophy of Nursing at UW Milwaukee and is the only certified advanced transcultural nurse in the state of Wisconsin. Dr. Graf's professional experience includes clinical practice in Latin America (Peru) and the United States. Experiencing these diverse healthcare systems both as a provider and a patient inspired her to study the influence of culture on health and healthcare outcomes. Her research interests include mental health needs access to services among women of color and violence prevention, with an emphasis on Latina migrant farmworkers in the upper Midwest. Dr. Graf's research, which has been published in several academic journals, both nationally and internationally, has significantly contributed to understanding these issues in the nursing field. She is an active UW Oshkosh campus community member. She proudly serves as co-advisor for the Students Organization of Latinos (SOL), the Association for Diversity in Healthcare (ADIH), and faculty senator. Currently, Dr. Graf is working on developing undergraduate certificates in Global Health Nursing, Medical Interpretation, and Cultural Mediation and expanding mental health services to the Latino community in the Fox Valley in partnership with local organizations. Dr. Graf has received several awards, including the UWO 2023 Diversity Excellence Award and the 2024 Outstanding Woman of Color in Education Award. As a Latina immigrant, Dr. Graf's life work is dedicated to integrating cultural humility into the nursing curricula and supporting the diversification of America's healthcare workforce, one nurse at a time!**

### Contact Information

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