An Academic Based Nurse Practitioner Fellowship Program: A Pilot Project Designed to Ease Nurse Practitioner Transition to Practice

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Introduction

• Many new NP graduates feel unprepared to practice in their first NP role

• Relative lack of NP residency or transition programs offered
  – Few NP residencies offered by employers with limited capacity
  – No evidence of NP fellowships offered by academic settings
  – 87% of experienced NPs (N=562) indicated interest in residency had one been available (Hart & Macnee, 2007)
Significance of the Problem

• Nurse educators have an obligation to promote a successful transition for NP graduates
  – Difficult transition with little support available (Hart & Macnee, 2007)
  – Feelings of “disequilibrium...anxiety, insecurity, inadequacy, and uncertainty” may persist years after transition with the 1st year being most difficult (Kelly & Mathews, 2001, p. 161)
Literature Review

• Implications for Nurse Educators
  – Facilitate the transition for NP graduates
    • Introduce professional organizations and other support networks
    • Staying connected through Ces
    • Seminars on adjustment from expert to novice
    • Time management
    • Emphasis on gains in personal satisfaction

(Kelly & Mathews, 2001)
Literature Review

• Implications for Nurse Educators
  – Facilitate the transition for NP graduates
    • Promote learner-centered environment to foster role transition
    • Encourage coping mechanisms (personal support system and optimistic self-talk)
    • Include faculty support and guidance

(Steiner et al., 2008)
Literature Review

• Implications for Nurse Educators
  – Facilitate the transition for NP graduates
    • Adequate socialization to the NP role occurs during the educational program but not a complete transition
    • Phase II transition occurs 6 months - 2 years post-graduation
    • Obstacles create turbulence for the new graduate
    • Turbulence can be mediated by positive forces such as positive support/encouragement from within the work setting and networking with colleagues outside of the work setting

(Heitz, L., Steiner, S., & Burman, M., 2004)
Theoretical Framework

• “From Limbo to Legitimacy” (Brown and Olshansky, 1997)
  – Laying the foundation
  – Launching
  – Meeting the challenge
  – Broadening the perspective

• 1st year post-graduation challenges
  – In “limbo” leaving behind the NP student persona and accepting new identity as “legitimate” NP
Theoretical Framework

• 6 months post-graduation is a period of “liminality” or limbo as they redefine self
  – Imposter phenomenon vs. transient identity confusion
  – “When people say nurse practitioner, I know that they are talking to me. Before, it was like they were talking about somebody else.” (Brown & Olshansky, 1997, p.48)
Theoretical Framework

• **Laying the Foundation**
  – Recuperating from school
  – Negotiating the bureaucracy
  – Looking for a job
  – Worrying

• **Launching**
  – Feeling like an imposter
  – Confronting anxiety
  – Getting through the day
  – Battling time

• **Meeting the Challenge**
  – Increasing competence
  – Gaining confidence
  – Acknowledging system problems

• **Broadening the Perspective**
  – Developing system savvy
  – Affirming oneself
  – Upping the ante
NP Fellowship

• Idea developed by 2 NP faculty
• Feedback from graduates about difficult transition to NP role
• Many disillusioned in first NP role
• Many leave first jobs early or leave profession altogether
• Recognized lack of fellowship/residency opportunities in NE FL locations
Fellowship Development

• Conducted needs survey to graduating class in January (graduation date April)
• Overwhelmingly positive support
• Applied for grants to assist with cost
• Developed program based on literature
• Identified and obtained instrument to use for research study
• Submitted proposal to university IRB for approval
Fellowship

- 4 sessions (1 per month) from June – September
- On campus location, after work, 6-8pm
- Provided information, resources, articles, booklets, CEUs
- Dinner provided at no cost to graduate NPs
- Asynchronous discussions on Facebook
  - Fellowship group established
- Encouraged NP alumni participation
Topics

• First Job
  – Prioritizing, interviewing, negotiation, time commitment, scheduling

• Getting Started
  – Privileging, protocols, scope of practice, role identification

• Showing Your Value
  – Managing outcomes, billing, patient challenges

• Giving Back
  – Networking, mentoring, precepting, career advancement, teaching, research, collaboration
Research Study

• What is the effect of an academic based nurse practitioner fellowship program on newly graduated novice nurse practitioners ease of transition to NP practice?
Instrument

• Nurse Practitioner Role Transition Scale
• 18 item questionnaire
• 5-point Likert scale (1=strongly disagree to 5=strongly agree)
• Higher total score= perception of an easier role transition experience
• 3 domains:
  – Role Confidence, Comfort and Competence
  – Collegial Relationships
  – Understanding of Role by Clients
Research Design

- Pretest-posttest quasi experimental design
- Survey given to all April 2015 NP graduates prior to start of Fellowship program
- Given again at conclusion of Fellowship program
Data Analysis

• Examine the difference between pretest and posttest
• Examine difference between comparison and experimental posttest
• Independent groups t-test and Paired t-test used
Fellowship Results

• Very helpful, comforting
• Not feeling “alone in challenge”
• Not feeling isolated
• Emotional support
• “Built my confidence and empowered me”
• Want more sessions!
• Start earlier (pre certification exam prep)
• Timing of topics
• Fellowship rated Excellent on all evaluations
Study Results

• Cohort=25 NP graduates
• 11 completed survey pre fellowship
• 21 completed survey post fellowship
  – 6 did not attend any sessions
  – 6 attended all 4 sessions
  – 9 attended 1-3 sessions
• As small numbers subjects divided into those attending 0 sessions (6) vs those attending varying number of sessions (14)
Demographics

- N=25
- 70% 31-40 years
- 60% with 6-10 years nursing experience
- Most of rest in 41-50 year age range and 11-20 years experience
Study Results

• Examine the difference between pretest and posttest
  – Mean score 57.2 (pretest) vs 70.6 (posttest)

• Examine difference between comparison and experimental posttest
  – Mean score 65.8 (did not attend) vs 75.5 (attended)
Statistical Analysis

• Independent t-test $p = .681$

• Unable to run paired t test due to researcher error

• Findings between groups not significant
Limitations

- Small sample size
- Grouped all who attended any session of fellowship into one category
- Short time interval after fellowship to retake survey
- Subjects familiarity with researchers
- Did not include clinical case studies
- Subjects at different levels of NP transition
  - At conclusion of fellowship, some still looking for first NP job, others just starting NP positions and still others already working for 2-3 months as NP
- Researchers lack of familiarity with Facebook
- Only 1 NP alumni attended (DNP student)
Conclusions

• Fellowship needed and wanted by NP graduates
• Future fellowships to include more clinical components
• Develop Facebook to communicate between sessions and after fellowship completed
• Encourage NP alumni to participate
References


Thank you!