



WASHINGTON STATE UNIVERSITY

College of Nursing

Peer Mentorship Handbook

Academic Year 24-25

Welcome to the Peer Mentor program at the College of Nursing! We are delighted that you have joined the team and thank you for your interest in supporting your peers.

This handbook has a myriad of information about the program, as well as suggested language, ideas, and communication styles that you can utilize as a mentor. Please rely on these materials as you work with your mentee, and please reach out if you have any questions.

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PART I: Position Overview and Standards

Benefits of Peer Mentoring

- Increases the likelihood of remaining in school
- Provides mentees with a resource for guidance and support.
- Mentors serve as good role models for success strategies, professionalism, and balancing school and life responsibilities.
- Establishes professional connections which facilitates a positive learning environment while in school, which may extend after graduation.
- Provides a safe place for mentees to ask questions about the nursing program, course work, program expectations, policies, and success strategies.
- Mentors receive additional training in coaching and communication skills which have professional applications.
- Creates a welcoming environment for mentees who are new to the area or WSU.

Standards of Behavior

Confidentiality

The mentoring relationship is built on trust and integrity. It is important that both mentor and mentee respect this relationship and refrain from sharing confidential information with others who do not have a right or need to know as defined by law.

Exceptions for sharing confidential information include situations regarding self-harm, harm to others, and medical emergencies. Immediately call 911 and then report to the Peer Mentoring Coordinator if this situation happens.

Safety

The mentoring relationship is intended to be a safe place for mentor and mentee. All interactions should be conducted in a morally, ethically, and legally acceptable manner. Keep interactions professional and supportive.

Integrity and Ethical Standards

Mentors are expected to be role models demonstrating appropriate and exemplary behavior. All conduct between mentors and mentees should be legally, ethically, and morally sound. While mentors may provide academic instruction, support and encouragement, they may not give assistance that violates the WSU Code of Integrity; plagiarism or cheating.

Providing Culturally Safe Mentoring

As peer mentors and future nurses, it is important to recognize the importance of culture in how we interact with one another, learn, and communicate. What is culture? Culture is generally defined as the social behavior and norms found in human societies. You may have already come across terms such as *cultural sensitivity*, *cultural competency*, or *cultural humility* in your nursing coursework in terms of how we interact with patients and deliver care. More recently, the term *cultural safety* has been introduced as a means of allowing the patient more control over how they are cared for.

The Nursing Council of New Zealand defines cultural safety as follows:

“The effective nursing practice of a person or family from another culture and is determined by that person or family. Culture includes, but is not restricted to, age or generation; gender; sexual orientation; occupation and socioeconomic status; ethnic origin or migrant experience; religious or spiritual belief; and disability. The nurse delivering the nursing service will have undertaken a process of reflection on his or her own cultural identity and will recognize the impact that his or her personal culture has on his or her professional practice. Unsafe cultural practice comprises any action which diminishes, demeans or disempowers the cultural identity and well-being of an individual.”

Note the differences between cultural safety and the other terms mentioned above; cultural safety moves *beyond* awareness, recognizing differences, or simply respecting other’s cultural affiliations or preferences. Instead, cultural safety:

- Advises that nurses engage in self-reflection to address unconscious bias and their own beliefs, and to understand their impact on relationships and care delivery
- Suggests that culture cannot simply be learned; although skills, knowledge, and attitudes are important, we can never become an expert in a culture that is not our own
- Requires that we are sensitive to power differentials and engage in continuous education to improve healthcare systems and our own delivery of care, especially because culture is always evolving

As a peer mentor, you may be supporting a peer who identifies with a culture different than your own. This may impact how your mentee interacts with you in terms of:

- Expectations about the mentor-mentee relationship
 - For example: in some culture's it can be considered disrespectful to ask questions of someone who is perceived as being in a "senior" position, such as a mentor.
- Written, verbal, or non-verbal communication styles (outside of language differences)
 - For example: in some cultures, making eye contact may be considered aggressive or threatening.
- Concepts of time and timeliness
 - For example: in some cultures, arriving approximately at a meeting time is considered being "on time" whereas other cultures may expect you to arrive early.
- Culturally defined roles and responsibilities that impact priorities and decision- making
 - For example: in some cultures, women may be expected to care for family members even if they are engaged in full-time nursing school and a peer mentoring program.

Just as with nursing, the following are tips for providing culturally safe peer mentoring that aligns with the WSU College of Nursing's commitment to diversity and inclusiveness:

- Be willing to share what you are comfortable with or proud about your own culture
- Recover from your cultural mistakes when you make them, and ask your mentee how you can provide safer mentoring in the future
- Utilize the **LEARN** model when interacting with your mentee
 - **Listen:** engage in far more listening than talking to learn about your mentee and their cultural needs or preferences
 - **Explain/Educate:** share your own experiences with culture and what you have learned thus far as a successful nursing student
 - **Acknowledge:** recognize that if your mentee is bringing up something related to culture, it is likely important to them and relevant.
 - **Recommend:** suggest resources that might support your mentee in terms of their cultural identity as a nursing student, or how they might improve their own cultural safety skills as a future nurse
 - **Negotiate:** be willing to talk about what each of you needs and expects from the other in terms of academic, social, and cultural support to make sure it's realistic and mutual.

FERPA

What is FERPA?

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974 (FERPA) is a federal law that gives protection to student educational records and provides students with certain rights. The law assigns the student as the owner of their educational record and provides guidelines on how the educational institution is to use and release protected information. This ensures that information such as the student's grades are not public information and that the student controls who has access to this information. This law also requires the educator to grant the students access to their personal records.

What records does FERPA cover?

FERPA regulations give privacy protection to all students' "educational records". Education records are broadly defined as "those records that are directly related to a student and are maintained by an educational agency or institution or by a party acting for the agency or institution." Examples of FERPA records include grades, transcripts, discipline records and class schedules.

What are student's rights?

FERPA defines basic rights for students:

- Subject to FERPA exclusions, the right to see the information that the institution is keeping on the student.
- The right to seek amendment to those records and in certain cases append a statement to the record.
- The right to consent to disclosure of student records.
- The right to file a complaint with the U.S. Department of Education.
- The right to obtain a copy of the Student Records Policy.

What information is public?

The University is allowed to select some information about a student to make accessible to the public. This information is called "[Directory Information](#)."

Public Directory Information is student information that is available to the public.

Non-Public Directory Information is not available to the public, but is available to any University Official or student.

How does this affect your role as a Peer Mentor?

- Confidentiality is key to your interactions with Mentees. Respect all confidential information shared during the relationship except where required to report by law

- DO NOT share academic, financial, or personal information about a student to anyone.
- If you have a situation that you are uncertain or uncomfortable handling, talk to your Peer Mentor Coordinator or academic advisor right away.

Guidelines for Peer Mentoring

- Immediately report any behavior or actions that risk harm to your mentee(s), yourself, or others.
- Respect all confidential information shared during the relationship, except where required to report by law.
- Use the mentor log for turning in weekly or monthly information. Complete monthly reports are due by the 5th of the following month.
- Complete all mentor training and orientation.
- Fill out a survey regarding your experience in the program at the end of the semester.
- Contact your mentee(s) through WSU email, text, phone or in-person at least every other week (minimum of twice/month). Ideally, weekly contact is encouraged.
- Respond to contact or requests from your mentee(s) via WSU email, text, or in person within 24hrs except on weekends.
- Set realistic boundaries at the beginning for the relationship: availability, services, defining your role, and best times, ways and frequency to communicate.
- Share your experiences about the nursing program, courses, clinical rotations, clubs, etc. (i.e., what to expect in the program).
- Share information about nursing advisors, staff, and school wide support system as needed.
- Refer your mentee(s) to the Student Success Coach when additional referrals and resources are needed.
- Assist your mentee(s) with creating community and WSU connections. Feel free to plan outings and attend events together as appropriate.
- Be able to adapt support to meet the unique needs of your mentee(s) depending upon academic, social, and cultural factors. You are free to share samples of templates and resources you used that do not break academic integrity for either of you.
- Let your mentee solve the problem while you offer encouragement, feedback, and resources, and support. Respect the mentee's autonomy and right to decide for themselves.
- Remember you are not the mentee's counselor, therapist, tutor, surrogate parent, match maker, or instructor. It is not your place to loan money. It is not your responsibility to "save" your mentee when they are having challenges. You can refer them to the Success Coach or other appropriate authority for further resources and referrals.

Part II: Peer Mentor Checklist and Agreements

Daily

1. Check for incoming mentee messages: text, email, phone.
2. Return messages ASAP or within 24 hours (weekend exceptions).
3. Log any mentee contact throughout the month so you can keep track of the contact until you transfer the information monthly into the form.

Weekly

1. Consider texting a positive affirmation 1-2 times a week.
2. Follow up to see how mentee did on tests, assignments, clinical, etc.
3. Log any mentee contact throughout the month so you can keep track of the contact until you transfer the information monthly into the form.

Monthly

1. Consider planning an outing or activity with your mentee once a month.
2. Submit your monthly report in the form, or when asked via email.

Mentor Trainings

Every new peer mentor will be required to attend a virtual training before the new semester starts so they are aware of the procedures and expectations for the role. Information is sent from the peer mentor coordinator.

Mentor: _____

Mentee: _____

Use this worksheet to help you track the topics and time you've had with your mentee. Total everything at the end of the month when you submit your [monthly report](#).

| Academic Success Tips | Encouragement and Support | Guidance about nursing program and working with faculty | Friendship and social engagement | Other |
|-----------------------|---------------------------|---|----------------------------------|---------------|
| | | | | |
| Monthly Total | Monthly Total | Monthly Total | Monthly Total | Monthly Total |
| | | | | |

Mentor and Mentee Agreements

Both the mentor and mentee agreement forms signed online. Below is a copy of the verbiage for your records.

WSU College of Nursing Peer Mentorship Program - Mentor Guidelines/Contract

As a Mentor you **will**:

- Immediately report any behavior or actions that risk harm to your mentee(s), yourself, or others.
- Respect all confidential information shared during the relationship, except where required to report by law.
- Use the mentor log for turning in weekly or monthly information. Complete monthly reports are due by the 5th of the following month.
- Complete all mentor training and orientation.
- Fill out a survey regarding your experience in the program at the end of the semester.
- Contact your mentee(s) through WSU email, text, phone or in-person at least every other week (minimum of twice/month). Ideally, weekly contact is encouraged.
- Respond to contact or requests from your mentee(s) via WSU email, text, or in person within 24hrs except on weekends.
- Set realistic boundaries at the beginning for the relationship: availability, services, defining your role, and best times, ways and frequency to communicate.
- Share your experiences about the nursing program, courses, clinical rotations, clubs, etc. (i.e., what to expect in the program).
- Share information about nursing advisors, staff, and school wide support system as needed.
- Refer your mentee(s) to the Student Success Coach when additional referrals and resources are needed.
- Assist your mentee(s) with creating community and WSU connections. Feel free to plan outings and attend events together as appropriate.
- Be able to adapt support to meet the unique needs of your mentee(s) depending upon academic, social, and cultural factors. You are free to share samples of templates and resources you used that do not break academic integrity for either of you.
- Let your mentee solve the problem while you offer encouragement, feedback, and resources, and support. Respect the mentee's autonomy and right to decide for themselves.
- Remember you are not the mentee's counselor, therapist, tutor, surrogate parent, match maker, or instructor. It is not your place to loan money. It is not your responsibility to "save" your mentee when they are having

challenges. You can refer them to the Success Coach or other appropriate authority for further resources and referrals.

As a Mentor you **will not**:

- Give academic assistance that violates the WSU Student Code of Conduct.
- Encourage or conduct behaviors with your mentee(s) that are unprofessional, illegal, or unethical.
- Contact your mentee(s) about personal matters.
- Share negative information regarding the program, personnel, or College of Nursing.

By signing this contract, I hereby indicate that I understand the guidelines stated above and will maintain the responsibilities outlined.

Mentor Name (print): _____ Date: _____

Mentor Signature: _____

WSU Peer Mentorship Program - Mentee Guidelines/Contract

As a Mentee you **will**:

- Immediately report any behavior or actions that risk harm to your mentor, yourself, or others.
- Respect all confidential information shared during the relationship, except where required to report by law.
- Fill out a survey regarding your experience in the program at the end of the semester.
- Contact your mentor through WSU email, text, phone or in-person at least every other week (minimum of twice/month). Ideally, weekly contact is encouraged.
- Provide your mentor time to respond to contact or requests from you via WSU email, text, or in person within 24hrs except on weekends.
- Respond to your mentor via WSU email, text, or in person within 24hrs except on weekends.
- Set realistic boundaries at the beginning for the relationship: availability, services, defining your role, and best times, ways and frequency to communicate.

As a Mentee you will **not**:

- Ask your mentor for academic assistance that violates the WSU Student Code of Conduct.
- Provide inappropriate personal information or behaviors with your mentor that are unprofessional, illegal and unethical.
- Violate any College of Nursing or University-wide policies.
- Share negative information regarding the program, personnel, or College of Nursing.

By signing this contract, I hereby indicate that I understand the guidelines stated above and will maintain the responsibilities outlined.

Mentee Name (print): _____ Date: _____

Mentee Signature: _____

PART III: Support and Resources

First Meeting Introductions

Begin with introducing yourself: name, semester, where you are from, and that you are looking forward to working with them this semester. Explain your role as peer mentor and how you will be available to them for the semester. Decide on the best forms of communication. Invite your mentee to introduce themselves. Here is a list of conversation starters you may find helpful in that first meeting:

- Tell me a little about yourself. Where are you from?
- What made you decide to come to the WSU nursing program?
- What are your professional goals?
- Any particular area of nursing you think you are interested in after graduation?
- What interests do you have outside of class such as hobbies or sports?
- Are you involved with any campus groups or organizations?
- Have you been to the student nurse's organization meetings yet?
- What kind of food do you like to eat?
- How familiar are you with Washington?
- Do you have any pets?
- How would you rate your college experience to date?
- What areas of support do you feel you would benefit from the most?

Examples of Positive Exchanges and Messages

- Remember, just one day at a time. You got this!
- Good luck on your test today. Just breathe!
- You can...you will...succeed!
- Never, ever, ever give up!
- You are stronger than you think you are.
- Smile, you are making your dreams come true.
- You are in charge of your happiness.
- You have unlimited potential.
- Smile. Breathe. Relax.
- Trust the process. It will come together as you go through your classes.

Scenarios

1. Your mentee is over stressed.

Mentee: I feel like I have a million things to do. I have a pharmacology test and a pathophysiology test on Friday and a 356 test and paper on Monday. I've been studying for hours but still feel like I'm getting nothing done. I'm exhausted and have barely been sleeping and when I do, I'm still so tired when I wake up. I feel like I can't do this and that maybe nursing school isn't for me.

Mentor: It's really easy to get stressed during nursing school. Try and focus on one thing at time. I know it can feel like a lot and it can be hard to take some time off, but I think it could really benefit you to take an hour or two to yourself and unwind. I still feel overwhelmed in nursing school and sometimes I still think about whether nursing school is for me. Something that works really well for me is thinking in the long run. In 10 years when you're a nurse working in a specialty you love it won't matter that you didn't get an A on all of your exams, and it will be so worth it! Take some time to yourself and try and get some sleep, it's really hard to be effective at studying when you're so stressed. You've got this!!

Mentee: Okay, I'm just worried that if I take time to myself, I'm going to lose studying time.

Mentor: And that's perfectly fine! We all need times for ourselves. Do you want to meet up and get some frozen yogurt?

2. Your mentee just got a disappointing grade back.

Mentor: Hey! I heard you had a pathophysiology test today, how do you feel about it?

Mentee: Awful! I got a 68 even though I studied for hours. I thought it was so hard and I'm worried I'm going to fail the class. Now I have to meet with my professor, and I feel so embarrassed.

Mentor: That's a really hard class so don't beat yourself up too much! Sometimes tests just get the best of us but it doesn't mean anything about your intelligence or what kind of nurse you're going to be. There's no reason to be embarrassed, the teachers are here to support you and might have some really good tips. Make sure to tell your professor how you studied so you can get some different techniques for the next one. You can easily come back

from that score. I would just recommend adjusting your study techniques for the next one.

Mentee: Thanks, I guess you're right. Do you have any tips for studying for this class?

Mentor: Something that helped me in that class was starting early. I found that cramming the weekend before wasn't working for me because there's so much material. I would also recommend reading the book when you're studying for things that really aren't making sense. You also have access to the Success Coaches on campus to help with retaining information and test-taking. Here, I can show you where you can book an appointment.

3. Your mentee is having time management issues.

Mentee: Ever since this semester started, I feel like I never have any time to have fun anymore. Now I'm struggling with balancing it. It's hard to watch all of my friends go out and have a good time together when I have to stay home to do homework. So sometimes I find myself not balancing it right and going out when I should study and studying when my friends are doing something really cool that I miss out on.

Mentor: The adjustment to nursing school is definitely tough. I would try and make plans with your friends in advance, so you know exactly when you're hanging out with them later in the week. This way you can plan to study around those times and won't feel left out because you'll know about the plans far enough in advance to make time for you to go. Sometimes you will miss out on things but that's true for any college student. It will be worth it when you make the grades you want and get your dream job!

Challenges for Mentors and Mentees

Mentor Challenges

- Keeping mentee engaged
- Appropriately assessing mentees needs and motivations
- Planning adequate meeting time
- Being patient and understanding of mentees inexperience
- Remaining positive and removing all negative feedback
- Being honest and genuine
- Unrealistic expectations
- Ineffective mentor-mentee match
- Acceptance that mentee may not take mentor suggestions
- “Being yourself “and becoming comfortable around the mentee, breaking the ice
- Removing bias and predetermined assumptions
- Suggesting fun, interactive activities
- Language/cultural barriers

Mentee Challenges

- Ineffective matching
- Managing a new school schedule and meeting with mentor (time management)
- Living away from home, living with a room mate
- Having to make their own personal decisions and tend to self-care needs
- Unrealistic expectations of the program
- Removing bias and predetermined assumptions
- Addressing fears and expectations of the nursing program
- Values and opinions not aligning with those of the mentor
- Providing honest feedback and being open with mentor
- Making commitment for communication with mentor
- Unsure how to ask meaningful questions
- Being mentally and physically present during meetings

Activities for Mentors and Mentees

- Meet at a coffee shop
- Plan to study together in the library
- Attend a WSU game...Go Cougs!
- Explore WSU exhibits, and events
- Go out for a meal
- Listen to a TED talk together
- Meet at the gym for exercise
- Take a walk while you talk
- Go for a bike ride but wear helmets (that is the nursing part coming through!)
- Watch a DVD or movie on television
- Enjoy a sport together: tennis, bowling, bocce ball, golf, hiking, swimming
- Attend a student nursing organization meeting
- Visit local attractions

Communication Styles

Communication strategies include:

- Active listening – listening to understand, not to respond.
- Clarification with questions, such as “what did you mean by that?” or “how did you feel about that?”
- Summarizing, such as “what I heard is that you ____”
- Acknowledging, such as “Wow, that is really tough!” or “that’s great news!”
- Reframing, such as “When I was going through that, here is how I saw that situation”
- Use an open-ended statement like "Tell me about..."

Listening well is a respectful act that builds trust. It tells another that their statement is important and should be heard. The following techniques tend to block dialogue and keep people from getting things out:

- Ordering, demanding
- Warning, patronizing, dominating
- Diagnosing; psychoanalyzing
- Judging
- Showing shock or bias
- Name calling
- Cross examining
- Avoid using exclusive conversation topics and inside jokes/stories

Conversation Starters

Your role is largely about talking to mentees & there are lots of ways to approach it.

General Questions/Breaking the Ice

- What is your most difficult academic class?
- Who is your favorite professor, why?
- What has been your most rewarding academic experience?
- What activities do you want to get involved with?
- Where did you grow up?
- Do you have any pets?
- Do you have any siblings?
- What did you do this past weekend?
- What are your plans for this weekend?
- What do you like to do in your spare time?
- What is your favorite holiday?
- What is your favorite day of the week?
- If you could meet anyone in history, who would it be?
- What do you like to do to relax?
- Do you play any instruments?
- What did you do last weekend?

Academic/CON Questions

- What tests or projects are coming up this week?
- How are you getting along with your professors?
- What are you striving for academically this semester, week, or month?
- What have you done for fun this week?
- Are you going to any upcoming WSU or CON events?
- How is work going for you (if they have a job)?
- How is it balancing all your responsibilities?
- Is there anything coming up you that you are focusing on or worried about?
- Are you getting enough sleep/taking enough time for yourself?
- What type of college experiences do you want?
- Is there anything you are having a hard time with?
- How are things going with friends/significant others?
- What can I help you with?
- How are classes going?

Learning Styles Tips and Strategies

Visual

- Doodle diagrams of your written information in the margins
- Create a flowchart for the progression of your notes and ideas
- Make flashcards that include pictures or diagrams as visual clues
- Highlight key information in your texts or notes
- Create a chart or a series of boxes to remind you how to complete math equations
- Use a computer to convert data and notes into charts, tables, graphics, pictures, etc.
- Vocabulary mnemonics
- Hangman game
- Timelines

Aural/Auditory

- Use a computer to record your notes read aloud. Convert this information to download to your phone or audio devices.
- Read your notes aloud when studying (mind your surroundings!)
- Work with a regular study partner to review out loud
- Work in a group where you can discuss the information
- Tape lectures. If available, set the counter to zero when it begins and note the number at difficult times during lecture. Review these recorded times later for extra review.
- When learning new material, especially equations, talk your way through the material.
- Singing/ creating a song
- Use of metaphors/similes to compare and remember (as long as they are voiced)
- Use Internet resources like YouTube.com
- Invent acronyms
- Mnemonic devices

Reading/Writing

- Re-write your notes after class.
- Use colored pens and highlighters to focus in on key ideas
- Write notes to yourself in the margins
- Write out key concepts and ideas
- Compose short explanations for diagrams, charts, graphs
- Write out instructions for each step of a procedure or math problem
- Print out your notes for later review
- Post note cards/post-its in visible places (when doing dishes, on the

bottom of the remote, etc.)

- Vocab mnemonics
- Organize your notes/key concepts into a PowerPoint slideshow
- Compare your notes with someone else's
- Repetitive writing
- Hangman game

Kinesthetic

- Type your notes after class
- Write your notes onto flashcards
- Review flashcards while walking, at gym, etc.
- Dog-ear pages in the reading where you can find critical information
- Sit near the front of the room
- Walk back and forth, move in some way, when studying notes
- Read your notes out loud
- As much as possible, create models for the information at hand
- Use the internet to research your subject material
- When possible, visit locations for your material (library, museum, historical sites, etc.)
- To learn a sequence or equation, use one note card for each step.
- Highlight material when reviewing/studying
- Use a dry-erase or chalk board to study or review
- Taboo-type game/ charades
- Correlate physical movements with ideas/terms

Self-Care Ideas

- Exercise
- Sing
- Make a new playlist
- Look at photos from around the world, or photos with you, friends, and family
- Spiritual meditation
- Visit a museum/art gallery
- Practice yoga
- Watch my favorite TV show
- Reflect on my successes: "I CAN "
- Reflect on: "What I value most in life ... "
- Naps
- Read (easy fun reads though, not school, self-help, or professional books!)
- Have a "spa" day at home (bubble baths, facials, mani/pedicure), or out socially
- Order in (or have someone else make it)
- Say no
- Buy yourself flowers
- Feel the sun (or rain) on your face
- Turn off the computer, cell phone and TV for 24 hours
- Sit and people watch
- Do something creative (draw, knit, paint, cook, write, color, make a collage, etc.)
- Daydream
- Have a movie marathon
- Allow yourself to cry and experience your emotions, or have a laugh-fest
- Browse your favorite bookstore (or music store)
- Have a game night with a friend(s)
- Write thank you notes to those who have touched your life and inspired you
- Spend the day exploring your town - go places you don't normally go
- Color (try going outside the lines - it's fun!)
- Keep a gratitude journal
- Talk a walk with your camera- take pictures of all you see that delights you
- Do something badly. Keep doing it.
- Admire beautiful artwork
- Do absolutely nothing; lay down and rest with a meditation
- Treat yourself to something fun such as a movie or expensive meal
- Wear something that makes you feel great and confident
- Let go of belongings you no longer love or use (even family heirlooms)
- Take a long walk

- Dance around your house or take a exercise dance class.
- Eat healthy, whole foods
- Treat yourself to a dessert or savory meal AND enjoy it without self-criticism or guilt
- Watch cartoons
- Call friends you've been meaning to call