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Snowden, Michael

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Mentorship – a powerful and neglected instrument!

Dr Michael Snowden FHEA
University of Huddersfield
What is a mentor?

- A dynamic, complex and multi facetted term!
Historically – originates from Greek classical story “The Odyssey.” King Odysseus calls upon his trusted friend called Mentor to act as guide and advisor to his son Telemachus as he left to war.

Levinson et al (1978) describes the mentor as a male who is older, wiser and of a more senior status than the protégé.
A uni-dimensional character perceived as a wiser, older man who is intellectually, spiritually and emotionally superior to his charge (!!)
NMC (2008) a Registrant who has met the outcomes of stage 2 (i.e. those of a qualified mentor) and who facilitates learning, and **supervises** and **assess** students in practice settings.
• a nurturing process in which a more skilled or experienced person, serving as a role model, teaches, sponsors, encourages, counsels and befriends a less skilled or less experienced person for the purpose of promoting the latter’s professional and/or personal development. (Anderson and Shannon, 1995; p178).
It is not:

- Preceptor
- Counsellor
- Clinical Supervisor
- Personal/Link tutor
- Team Leader
- Assessor
- Clinical Educator
- Practice Educator
- Manager
- or....
Why?

- A dynamic interpersonal process dependent upon the socio-cultural processes prevalent within the group. (Colley, 2003).

You are a distinct group!
Mentorship - Benefits?

- Helps interpret practice – promotes reality
- Support the development of complex specialist knowledge and skills
- Support the development of practice
- Are less likely to leave and more likely to succeed
• Helps with clarity and confidence building.
• Provides the opportunity to challenge thinking
• To have someone who might help in difficult situations – guidance and support
• Encouragement
• Role model
• Safe Feedback/Reflect upon good/bad experiences – honest views!
• Learning and developing skills - sharing learning
• Advance more rapidly
• Reduces stress
• Reciprocity

**AND... Earn higher salaries!!
Enhances Practice and Careers!**
What is an effective mentor? – Personality Traits (Darwin 2004)

- Nurture
- Approachable
- Inspirational
- Hard working
- Authentic
- Competent
- Conscientious
- Volatility
Effective Mentor Characteristics
(Darling 1984)

- Role model
- Envisioner
- Supporter
- Teacher-coach
- Eye opener
- Ideas bouncer
- Career counsellor
- Energiser
- Investor
- Standard prodder
- Feedback giver
- Door opener
- Problem solver
- Challenger
Can everyone be a good mentor?

- Helping is an inherent and natural behaviour in humans – but some people clearly are more successful than others.

Influenced by
- Personality
- Socialisation characteristics e.g. “helping professions” the desire to help.
But:

- Training and developmental activities contributes to skill and knowledge.
- The desire to help is the key to success in mentorship.
Delivered by:

- 1:1
- Group mentoring
- Co mentoring
- Long arm/Virtual e-mentoring
Mentorship and the HCA

- Improves Knowledge, performance and skills
- Identity and the notion of “community” of practice
- Cavendish emphasises mentoring

“Through the everyday, mundane process of mentorship, what is good can be determined and that good practice can then become routine and this then leads on to excellence” Fulton, p145; 2013
Mentorship and me – what next?
References:

- Nursing and Midwifery Council (NMC) (2008) *Standards to Learning and Assessment in Practice*. London. NMC.