From Novice to Expert: Your Professional Journey as an Oncology Nurse

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Novice to Expert

- Novice
  - Little experience
  - Taught general rules to perform tasks; applied universally and not case specific
  - Ruled governed behavior is limited
  - "Tell me what I need to do and I will do it"

- Advanced Beginner
  - Focuses on present
  - Gaining experience
  - Relies on protocols

Benner, 1984; Benner, 2011

Competent

- Two to three years experience
- Conscious deliberate planning
- Achieving efficiency and organization
- Experience-based ability to view situation as whole
- Holistic understanding improves decision making
- Learns from experience
- Modifies plan to new situation

Benner, 1984; Benner, 2011

Principles of Novice to Expert

- Expert nurses develop skills and understanding of patient care over time.
- Accepted time line for completion of 5 levels is approximately 5 years.
- A true expert provides the best nursing care.
- Not all novices will become experts.

Benner, 1984; Benner, 2011
Role Transition

- Disequilibrium
- Disorganization
- Uncertainty
- Insecurity
- Loss of control
- Isolation
- Role ambiguity

Latham & Fahey, 2006

Role Transition

- Laying the Foundation
  - School completion; licensure; studying oncology
  - Novice: standards/protocols; excitement/fear
- Launching
  - Overwhelming hurdles; feeling like an imposter; time management
  - Adv. Beginner: tasks; frustration

Latham & Fahey, 2006

Role Transition

- Meeting the Challenge
  - Role affirmation; increasing competence and confidence; identifying system problems
  - Competent: risk-taker; ups and downs
- Broadening the Perspective
  - Enhanced self-esteem and affirmation; seeking challenges
  - Proficient: flexible/responsible; comfortable
  - Expert: skilled/big picture; satisfaction

Latham & Fahey, 2006

What Are Characteristics of an Expert Oncology Nurse?

- Clinical Performance
- Education
- Research
- Leadership

Kaminski, 2010

What Are Characteristics of an Expert Oncology Nurse?

- Clinical Performance
  - Learning to read your patient and situation is as important as any lesson taught in the classroom
  - Look at patient and aware of smallest change
  - Know if something is wrong through intuition, a feeling
  - Observe subtleties
  - Predict major changes

How Do You Become an Expert Oncology Nurse?

- Clinical Performance
  - Be a sponge/listener
  - Ask questions
  - Follow-up what you don’t know or understand
  - Find a mentor
  - Take time with patient and caregiver
  - Reflective thought
What Are Characteristics of an Expert Oncology Nurse?

- Education
  - Inquisitive; questioning
  - Knowledge seeker
  - Active learner
  - Learn: Everyday occurrence
  - Educational activities

Kaminski, 2010

How Do You Become an Oncology Expert Nurse?

- Education
  - Question care/treatment
  - Study one topic each week
  - Continuing education programs
  - Read nursing journals
  - Online journal clubs
  - Advanced education
  - Certification

Education

- A source of power: INFORMATION
- Autonomy
- Higher education
  - Masters, Clinical Doctorate, PhD
- Oncology certifications
  - OCN, AOCNP, AOCNS
  - Clinical genetic certification

Roberts & Vasquez, 2004;

Continuing Education

- ONS CNE Central: http://www.ons.org/ceCentral/
- IMER (Institute for Medical Education and Research): http://www.imeronline.com/index.html
- CancerNetwork.com: http://www.cancernetwork.com/cme

What Are Characteristics of an Expert Oncology Nurse?

- Research
  - Participation in clinical trials
  - Nursing journals; research articles
  - Evidence-based practice

Kaminski, 2010

How Do You Become an Expert Oncology Nurse?

- Research
  - Review clinical trials
  - Be a patient advocate
  - Ask a clinical question and review the literature/research
  - Review evidence-based practice
  - Review/create practice protocols
Research/Evidence Based Practice

• Evidence based practice
  – Integration of best research evidence, clinician expertise, and patient values
• Approach to patient care
  – Based on scientific knowledge versus “what we always have done”

Rutledge, 2005

Evidence Based Practice Process

• Problem identification
• Finding the evidence
• Critique
• Summarize the evidence
• Application to practice
• Evaluation

Rutledge, 2005

Research/EBP Activities

• Problem identification
• Search for evidence
  – ONS evidence based practice resource area
  – Systematic reviews
  – Clinical practice guidelines
  – ONS PEP cards
    • Anorexia, anxiety, caregiver strain/burden, cognitive impairment, constipation, depression, diarrhea, dyspnea, fatigue, hot flashes, lymphedema, mucositis, nausea/vomiting, pain, peripheral neuropathy, prevention of infection, prevention of bleeding, radiodermatitis, skin reactions, sleep/wake disturbances

Research/EBP Activities

• Critique and summarize evidence
  – Journal club
• Implement practice changes
• Evaluation/outcomes measures
• Publish findings

What Are Characteristics of an Expert Oncology Nurse?

• Leadership
  – Mentor
  – Risk Taker
  – External rewards
  – Professional activities

Kaminski, 2010

How Do You Become an Expert Oncology Nurse?

• Leadership
  – Mentor/mentee program
  – Identify areas for potential constructive change
  – Volunteer!
  – Be an active participant in nursing organization
  – Network
Who do I network with?

• Professional organizations
  – Join local chapters
  – Attend national meetings
  – Read professional journals
  – Volunteer for committees, speaking at conferences, writing for newsletters
  – Run for offices
• Alumni associations
• Charitable organizations
• Everyone! Informal networking

Support and Resources: Professional Development

• Identify needs
• Seek local/national resources
• Ask for organizational support

Role Transition Survival Tips

• Be ready to be uncomfortable
• Remember your goal
• Find a mentor
  – Workplace
  – Community
  – Previous employment/school
  – ONS

Role Transition Survival Tips

• Listen
• Be friendly
• Open to being a team player
• Learn the system first
• Pursue changes later

Key Points: The Journey

• Maintain your passion
• Expand your horizons
• Share your expertise
• Novice Survivors
• Mentor
• Have Fun!!!!