PEER MENTORING IN CLINICAL PRACTICE: EXPERIENCES OF MENTORS

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Background
Mentoring has become an increasingly popular supportive method for empowering nurses and assisting them to progress their careers. Clinical Nurse/Midwifery Educators (CNE/CME) provide support to nurses in the hospital setting to facilitate the integration of theory and formal teaching into clinical practice. Hence mentorship is vital to the CNE/CME educator’s experiences and contributes to their preparation for their role as confident and competent educators.

Aims
This paper explores the experiences of senior nurses who mentored CNE/CMEs participating in a self-directed learning, education and mentoring (SEM) program at a tertiary teaching health care facility.

Methods
Six mentors agreed to participate in a focus group. Data was collected using dual moderated focus group methods from experienced nurses who mentored the CNE/CMEs as part of the CNE/CMEs development program. The focus group was digitally recorded and transcribed verbatim. Interviews were analysed using thematic analysis.

Findings
Mentors who participated in the focus groups described varying levels of clinical and mentoring experience. Five themes were identified: (1) readiness for mentoring; (2) venturing into the unknown; (3) having the right fit; (4) mentee abandonment; and (5) reciprocal professional relationship. Time was identified as a barrier to performing mentorship.

Conclusion
The findings highlight the importance of providing mentors with adequate preparation and support in order to efficiently transfer valuable competencies and skills to their mentees.