As of September 2009, the leadership of the Ontario Oncology Nursing Mentorship Program has changed to reflect the new partnership with the de Souza Institute. Dr. Mary Jane Esplen has agreed to share leadership responsibilities with Dr. Denise Bryant Lukosius. Mary Jane brings tremendous expertise in oncology care and in program management, as the current de Souza Institute Director. Denise and Mary Jane will work together with the Project Team, to best meet the goals and objectives of the Mentorship Program, and to integrate the de Souza Institute vision to support excellence in oncology nursing. Grace Bradish, the former Co-Chair of the program has retired from her position in August 2009, but will continue to remain as an active part of the Project Team as co-lead of the Recruitment and Marketing working group. We thank Grace for her past contributions as a co-chair, and look forward to her continued contributions to the Project Team.

With the expansion of the new program to include specialized and generalist nurses in oncology from across Ontario, the look of the program has also changed, and we are proud to present our new integrated brand logo. This new look will reinforce our newly forged partnership and our program’s dedication to cater to all oncology nursing roles. In the following years, the program will expand to offer more workshops and information sessions, and to support more long-distance mentorship pairs. Our revised program goals and objectives follow the recommendations of the completed Provincial Needs Assessment process (see article on page 2).

Over the next few years, we will strive to:

- improve access to career planning and development supports in oncology nursing through an e-based platform
- promote accurate self-assessment, identification of professional and career development goals and use of appropriate strategies to achieve these goals through increased access to career development resources, education and training
- attain oncology nurse participation in the program through the education of oncology nurses, role supervisors and cancer care administrators regarding the benefits of coaching, preceptoring and mentoring for improving the development and implementation of oncology nursing roles
- contribute to the development of new knowledge and to ongoing program enhancements through the implementation of a comprehensive evaluation of program structures, processes and outcomes.
- implement a knowledge translation plan to share program experiences and to disseminate and promote the uptake of program evaluation results.

In Partnership with:
In the spring of 2009, over 600 generalist and specialized nurses from across Ontario participated in an online survey along with over 70 nurses who participated in focus groups to provide their perspectives on the professional and career development needs of oncology nurses. These participants represented all health care settings and from across the cancer care trajectory. The survey was conducted to inform the expansion of the Mentorship Program that has to date focused on supporting Advance Practice Nurses (APNs).

The overwhelming number of participants surpassed the anticipated target of participants for the needs assessment. Key findings indicated there is high professional development needs among novice and expert generalist, specialized and APNs in clinical roles and that these needs cut across all patient populations, practice settings and the cancer continuum. Nurses also have limited exposure to career planning and development support and their perceived needs are not recognized with a career planning and development framework. When exploring different types of professional and career development strategies, there was a lack of understanding among participants about different uses and benefits of coaching, preceptoring and mentoring. This suggested that baseline education and training will be important for promoting accurate self-assessment and identification of professional and career development goals and appropriate strategies to achieve these goals. The findings also indicated that it will be important to consider generational differences in professional development needs among novice, mid and late career nurses.

The comprehensive needs assessment findings were shared with the Mentorship Program team and the Provincial Needs Assessment Advisory Team at a full day planning session. A key addition to the program will be to include a full day Career Professional Development workshop as part of the pre-requisite to participation in the Mentorship Program. Second, a coaching pilot initiative will be established which will focus on targeting nurses working in the community as this was identified as a key high need area. Specific areas for coaching and preceptorship will be defined in partnership with the identified pilot sites to address the unmet needs of patients in the local area.

The next few years promise to be full of intense activity and excitement as the Mentorship Program evolves based on the findings and implications of the provincial needs assessment.

"It has been a joy and honour working with such a dedicated tenacious group who is keen to get the right mentoring product created for our stakeholders: oncology nurses whether they be generalist, specialized or advanced."

Carolyn Dempsey, Nursing Faculty

“The Provincial Steering Committee has been an enriching experience as our collaborative efforts resulted in reaching established goals in a timely manner, as well as providing an opportunity to become more familiar with nursing issues in other domains of oncology practice. I believe that oncology nurses have one of the most challenging but rewarding roles within the healthcare system and the new e-mentorship program has the potential to provide individualized support, learning, and professional growth for generalist and specialist oncology nurses.”

Joanne Crawford, Public Health Nurse
The Canadian Partnership Against Cancer (CPAC), in its national agenda for cancer control, has highlighted Health Human Resources as one of the eight strategic initiatives for which an Action Group (HHR-AG) has been positioned. Mentoring is one retention strategy for which emerging evidence has supported oncology advanced practice nurses (APN) in clinical nurse specialist and nurse practitioner roles. The evidence emanates predominantly from the innovative Oncology APN e-Mentorship Program in Ontario. A focused strategy of the HHR-AG is the support and development of a national e-mentoring program for oncology APNs, using the Ontario program as a model, and with a future vision to broaden the program to other, interprofessional partners.

A one-day workshop was conducted in Toronto (July, 2009) where 28 invitees from across Canada met to learn more about the Partnership, the national strategy and the Ontario e-Mentorship model; garner opinions and support regarding the career planning and role development needs of APNs; and to provide commentary useful in the strategic planning of the national strategy.

Several excellent strategies emanated from a strategic thinking session where opportunities and challenges were discussed. Among them:

- Building nationally on the success of the Ontario Oncology APN e-Mentorship Program;
- Partnering with other professional groups to broaden the political base (e.g., professional associations or organizational executives);
- Developing a communication/marketing plan that highlights and exposes the oncology APN and the e-Mentorship program and includes the public media;
- Including the concept of mentoring in the undergraduate and graduate curricula;
- Advancing the future agenda to non-APNs and other interprofessional partners;
- Supporting the translation of current, and the creation of new evidence to support both the mentorship model and the APN role effectiveness.

The next steps include disseminating the proceedings of the workshop for information to workshop attendees and using the perspectives for planning of national demonstration models. Given the unanimous support and enthusiasm for a pan-Canadian strategy, planning will begin in the Fall of 2009.

For more information, please visit the CPAC HHR-AG website:

http://www.partnershipagainstcancer.ca./hhrag
On June 24th, 2009, our program was pleased to host the second Mentorship Training Workshop. Mary Wheeler and Michelle Cooper, the facilitators, welcomed 29 program participants (16 mentors and 13 mentees) to a vibrant full-day session. This event welcomed for the first time, 5 specialized oncology nurse mentees to the program. Few participants were matched prior to the workshop. However, through networking, several more matches were made as a result of the workshop.

What did participants like best about the workshop?

“Interactions with so many knowledgeable and motivated people. Learning what other people do in their work life and personal life. Meeting old and new friends.”

“Practical details to assist in mentorship relationship, time to connect with mentee to establish a plan and learn more about each other”

“I enjoyed the workshop very much and am grateful for the opportunity to be a part of this mentorship program. It was a wonderful opportunity to meet and get to know wonderful nurses from across Ontario.” – Rita Mannarino, APN intern mentee

“I am honoured to have had the opportunity to participate in the Mentorship workshop. I was quite nervous to join such an academic group; however, I feel the day went well for me. The Mentorship workshop helped make me stop and think about the roles each of us plays and the unconscious mentoring we do every day, as well as of the importance of an identified mentorship role. I was able to connect with a mentor ad that initial face to face discussion has been instrumental in the effectiveness and commitment to our mentoring partnership. I look forward to future dialogue and continued learning.” – Pauline Brillinger, Clinical Manager Breast Health and Oncology – mentee

“I found the workshop assisted in building the foundations for our mentorship relationship and gave us focused time on working through some of the processes. In addition, the day was energizing, provided an opportunity for networking and reflection on professional practice. I highly recommend taking the time to attend.” – Shari Moura, Clinical Nurse Specialist (APN), Surgical Oncology – mentor

“It had been over 2 years since we facilitated a mentorship workshop. In preparing for the day we were curious about the response from participants, would there still be the energy and enthusiasm we had experienced in the inaugural workshop? We were not disappointed! Participants came into the room clearly ready to engage in the process and wanting to learn. Our second “aha” was that the process still had relevancy, in particular, it confirmed for us the power of connection and conversation. We saw throughout the day individuals pairing up, some that were matched and some that found their match, and totally immersing themselves in the Mentorship Model. Participants confirmed for us the value of the workshop to give them a great start in their mentoring relationship. We are looking forward to the next workshop in October. Hope to see some of you there.” – Mary and Michelle, Consultants, workshop facilitators and 5-phase mentorship model developers

These testimonials demonstrate once again the importance and the power of the Mentorship Training Workshop.
Program Statistics at a Glance!

Since our partnership with de Souza Institute began in September 2008, our program was successful in matching 24 new pairs, recruiting 64 mentors and 33 mentees. We are still working on finding appropriate matches for 7 mentees. Most of our current participants were recruited from larger centers in Ontario, with Hamilton, London, Ottawa and Toronto having more than 20 participants in the program. However, recruitment has reached smaller centers with Kitchener, Thunder Bay, Windsor and Sudbury having 5-10 participants in the program. These remarkable numbers have been achieved with minimal efforts from the program, as we were focused on restructuring to accommodate generalist and specialized oncology nursing roles. Word of mouth and the success of our matched pairs have been great ambassadors for the program throughout the province!

Our online resources on the current WebEx platform are updated on a regular basis, with new evidence based articles and mentorship pair testimonials added regularly. A new mentor in the program emphasized the usefulness of the online Toolkit: “It is wonderful and while I was familiar with many of the resources, I found new ones. I was going over all the items last evening and then let my mentee know about it. We will want to reflect on our current work and revise.”

In regards to long distance relationships, we are proud to support 13 long distance pairs (mentor and mentee both reside in Ontario, more than 200km apart) and 2 relationships between mentors and mentees who reside in different provinces, approximately 3400km apart! The online platform is a key tool in maintaining a consistent communication log for long distance relationships. The program offers financial support for long distance pairs to meet face-to-face or attend events of common interest (workshops, conferences). For more details, please contact the Program Manager, Diana Morarescu, at apnment@mcmaster.ca

Recruiting New Mentors and Mentees

Are you a new oncology/palliative care nurse and require some guidance about developing and implementing your role?
Are you a nurse caring for oncology patients?

If so, consider applying as a mentee in the Oncology Nursing e-Mentorship Program!
The program offers training for mentoring relationships, an electronic toolkit filled with many resources, an online discussion forum, networking with other oncology nurses across the country as well as many other personal and professional benefits.

Use the Survey Monkey link below to fill out the online MENTEE application form and become part of the Oncology Nursing e-Mentorship Program!  https://www.surveymonkey.com/s.aspx?sm=bnSBEG_2bHns8GHOhLTA_2fSUq_3d_3d

Please consider sharing your experience and expertise as a seasoned nurse or nursing administrator by applying to become a mentor in this program. The role of mentor is extremely rewarding and you are destined to receive much more than you give from this experience, both personally and professionally. Applying to become a mentor is easy! Use the Survey Monkey link below to fill out the online MENTOR application form and become part of the APN e-Mentorship Program.
https://www.surveymonkey.com/s.aspx?sm=ngVFgNcRniV6evzeglceEw_3d_3d

Please contact apnment@mcmaster.ca if you have any questions or would like more information!
The co-chairs and project team of the Ontario Oncology Nursing e-Mentorship Program are excited to announce that we will be holding a 1 day Mentorship Training Workshop. All nurses who care for oncology patients, at any step of the journey, from prevention to palliative care can apply!

**Date & Location:**
Wednesday October 7th, 2009
McMaster University - Hamilton, Ontario

**About the Workshop:**

The workshop includes:

- Orientation to the Oncology Nursing e-Mentorship Program
- Opportunity to learn about how to develop effective mentoring relationships
- Hands-on training on how to use the Mentorship Program’s e-based resources and supports
- Face-to-face meeting with potential mentors and mentees

The workshop will be facilitated by leading experts in career development and mentorship in nursing:

Michelle Cooper and Mary Wheeler from
Integral Visions Consulting Inc. and
donnerwheeler Consultants

**To Register for the Workshop:**

- To confirm your registration for the workshop contact our Program Manager at: apnment@mcmaster.ca
- Please indicate whether you will require accommodation to attend the workshop.
- Workshop participation is limited to 40 applicants so confirm your registration TODAY!
- The Oncology Nursing e-Mentorship Program will be covering the transportation costs for attending mentees and mentors
- Please also note that there is no registration fee for the workshop!
- Workplaces of registered mentors are eligible to receive a $500 stipend for workshop attendance; however please note that there is a limit of 15 mentor stipends so register now!

Please note: There will be a $50.00 cancellation fee for any Mentorship Training Workshop cancellation received after October 1, 2009.
Our relationship was established initially around the clinical domain. Carole wished to move from the role of a clinical nursing educator to a more specialist clinical practitioner. Gini in her role as a clinical nurse specialist working in palliative care/oncology had undergone a similar transition. This was the initial impetus for our working relationship. However, in the early days of our mentor-mentee relationship Carole undertook the temporary role of Surgical Oncology Co-coordinator where she was required to set up a new surgical oncology program. Therefore, the focus for both mentor and mentee needed to change to program development. Also, Gini supported Carole in the completion of her Master of Nursing with a focus on oncology practice.

We found the 5 phase mentoring relationship model a useful tool to guide our goals and objectives. We both had the goal of promoting excellence in oncology nursing and promoting enhanced and optimal care for patients with a diagnosis of cancer. In the engagement stage Carole and Gini needed to develop a respectful relationship. This entailed getting to know each other, both professionally and personally. We accomplished this through our weekly teleconferences. The emergence stage from Gini’s perspective was one of support and connecting Carole with those who could assist her in the endeavors required for setting up a new program. Carole had a ‘sounding board’ as much of the work was quite frustrating when trying to get even small steps completed. We are not convinced that the relationship will ever be truly completed, as we will continue to have a collegial and friendly relationship.

We both share a similar philosophy of Oncology nursing of excellence in cancer care, and inter-professional collaborative practice through the APN role. Each of us was able to be flexible in the topic of discussion as priorities changed unexpectedly and needs changed rapidly.

**VJ:** The mentorship program has enabled both of us to understand the differing roles and definitions of the Advanced Practice Nurse role. We feel that we have benefited enormously through the APN Mentorship program as the underpinnings of Advanced Nursing Practice solidify our commitment to each of our specialized areas of Oncology through consultation, leadership, education, research and clinical practice.

**CB:** This has been a very positive experience transitioning into the new role of program development. Setting priorities and understanding the process, although challenging, was a learning experience that has strengthened my career aspirations.
The path ahead seems dim and tangled:
My arms are aching, heart beating heavily.
Lead coats my feet, creeping like ivy up my legs,
Threatening to encase my lungs, stopping breath.
My eyes seem clouded, ears closed over.
My lips are sealed; my nostrils, pinched.
Senses dulled I move on; don’t give up,
Don’t give up, don’t give up.

Your words echo opening the path ahead;
Your shining intellect clears my eyes;
Your inspiring words whisper in my opening ears;
Your smiling nod unseals my lips;
Your sincerity opens my closed nostrils;
Your integrity melts my lead-sealed heart;
Senses stimulated I leap forward; don’t give up,
Don’t give up, don’t give up.

Your words echo through my body;
The path ahead seems wide and open;
My arms are strong, heart beating steadily
Fleet of foot I spring forward, breathing freely;
Senses alive I run on with you before me.
Onward and upward; onward and upward;
Onward and upward; inspiring words,
Positive and life-affirming – your wonderful gift.

What qualities does an academic mentor and leader need? This is the question I posed to myself. What separates one person from the rest so that you recognize instantly that special quality of leadership: the ability to be clear and honest, to be an example of excellence. An inspiring leader is not one who dictates, but one who guides. In today’s complex academic world, these are the persons nursing and all academic disciplines need as leaders and mentors.

Mitzi G. Mitchell teaches in the School of Nursing at York University and is a mentee in our program.

Poem originally published in Academic Matters, the Journal of Higher Education: http://www.academicmatters.ca/current_issue.article.gk?catalog_item_id=2741&category=/web_exclusive/fiction_poetry
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