

'Role Modeling' Team Building

When wearing the “role model” hat as a preceptor, it is important to demonstrate ways of being a good team player. Make time to talk with your preceptee about how to be a team player, too. Nursing is a team sport, and none of us will survive in this profession without helping each other.

1. **Develop trust. Show you are trustworthy.** Do not repeat stories that do not belong to you. This assists greatly in doing away with gossip. Have open, honest conversations with all. “Do what you say, say what you do!” Give compliments and praise to others for jobs well done. Communication is key — be consistent, be clear, be courteous. Developing trust among team members is the foundation of the team.
2. **Assist others to be “right,” not “wrong.”** Look at processes and policies for improvement versus pointing fingers at individuals. Do not make negative assumptions about each other. We are all here with the same goal — to provide safe patient care. It takes all of us to work together for the good of the whole.
3. **Speak positively about each other and your organization at every opportunity.** Dirty laundry should not be aired in public. Be an active part of solutions, not scandals. Take ownership. It is your unit, your hospital, your team.
4. **Maintain a positive attitude no matter the circumstances.** Remember, you contribute to your environment ... make your contribution a positive one. Create a team that others want to join. Enthusiasm and a positive attitude are contagious! Start the flame.
5. **Whatever you want, give it away!** This is a big one that purely and simply relates back to role modeling the behavior you want to see in others. If you want assistance with a busy patient without asking your co-workers, then you must do the same when you see them having a bad day. Again, it is about role modeling what you want reflected back. Teammates must be able to count on each other when it counts.
6. **Have fun!** Life is short. The best teams get the job done together, no matter how difficult. And, they still manage to enjoy themselves along the way.

It has been said that there is not so much a nursing shortage as there is a shortage of environments in which nurses choose to work. We assist in creating these environments. As preceptors, it is critical that we model the teamwork environments that both new and veteran nurses want to join. The survival of nursing as a profession depends on teamwork.

As Stephen Covey once said, “Interdependent people combine their own efforts with the efforts of others to achieve their greatest success.”

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