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Professional development plan sample for nurses

Financial security is one of the most common life goals around the world. It's the reason why people save, scrimp and budget their money. But sometimes, they fall behind on their efforts. Whether it's due to a drastic setback or a series of small stumbles, you might find that you're not where you want to be in terms of handling money. While this can be frustrating, it doesn't have to be the end of the world. You can learn to create a financial plan from the bottom up and work toward a more financially sound future. Start by Setting Goals Most people work better when they have something to work toward. Give yourself both short-term and long-term savings goals to serve as motivators. Use a financial plan template to get started if you're unsure where to begin. Do you want to retire on time? Take a big trip in two years? Pay off your student debts before you get married? Your individual initiatives will be personal to you, but make sure they follow the S.M.A.R.T guidelines. This means they should be specific, measurable, actionable, realistic and timely. Create a Budget Next, you need to understand exactly where your money is going every month. You don't need to use elaborate software to get organized, but try to use a simple financial-planning worksheet to track your income and expenses. Most financial experts recommend following a 50/30/20 budgeting rule. Put simply, this means that 50 percent of your income should go directly toward recurring, time-sensitive needs, including your mortgage, car payment, transportation and similar bills that you pay on a regular basis. From there, you should allocate 30 percent as "fun money" to be used for dining out, subscriptions, entertainment and the like. The remaining 20 percent you'll apply toward saving for the future and paying down debts. Participate in Your 401(k) Does your employer offer a matching 401(k) program? If so, make sure you're taking advantage of it. A main objective of financial planning is to create patterns that allow you to enjoy life away from a full-time career when the time comes. Yes, such a program will affect how much money you have to take home at the end of every month. Yet, the principle of "If you don't see it, you won't miss it" usually applies. It's wise to plan ahead for your retirement and set aside some money now, even if you're decades away from your golden years. Create an Emergency Fund Even if you're barely scraping by, it's important to set aside a little money each month in an emergency fund. Aim to eventually save one month's worth of living expenses so that in the event that an emergency occurs and you no longer have a steady stream of income, you won't go bankrupt. Over time, increase your fund to six month's worth of living expenses if possible. If you need to use your emergency fund, work on building it back up once you have an income stream again. At the same time, work to build up your good credit or reverse any bad credit you have. This can help you receive better interest rates on loans, skip certain security deposits and provide financial freedom. Pay Down Your Riskiest Debt The reality is that some debts are riskier and more harmful than others. The most toxic types are those with the highest interest rates, including credit cards, payday loans and similar debts. Seek to pay these down as quickly as possible so they don't keep working against you. Over time, as you pay down your debts and work toward a more lucrative and comfortable future, you'll find that saving becomes second nature. Seek out free financial planning advice from your local library or community center if you need more guidance. When you make it a practice to keep a close eye on your income and find way to cut wherever possible, you might be surprised at how quickly even the most dire financial circumstance can be reversed. MORE FROM ASKMONEY.COM A rapidly expanding and complex healthcare environment requires nurses with advanced knowledge, skills, and competencies to meet the growing demand for a highly skilled workforce. Nurses also need to bolster their existing practice to ensure progress and readiness for future challenges and maximum growth. Through professional development activities, nurses are able to reach their professional goals for growth and development, and at the same time meet the needs of a demanding healthcare environment. Creating a professional development plan (PDP) is an integral part of professional nursing practice, and planning should begin as early as possible in one's career. Professional development includes activities such as specialty certification, additional degrees, attending conferences, publishing scholarly work, committee membership, and more. Planning one's professional development requires planning and goal setting. Contemplating a realistic timeline, financial resources, time management, and other considerations is a very important part of the plan. Professional growth and development are an expectation set forth in the American Nurses Association (ANA, 2021) Nursing Scope and Standards of Practice, Standard 13, Education, states "The registered nurse seeks knowledge and competence that reflects current nursing practice and promotes futuristic thinking" (p. 99). The Standard lists the competencies required by the registered nurse. The list below shares a few of the competencies for professional growth and development: Commits to lifelong learning through critical thinking, self-reflection, and inquiry for personal growth and learning. Identifies learning needs based on the various roles assumed and associated requisite nursing knowledge. Facilitates a work environment supportive of ongoing education of healthcare professionals and interprofessional colleagues (ANA, 2021, pp. 989-99) Professional development is an essential task for every nurse, whether the goal is to seek a new nursing role or to remain at a current position. Regardless of the long-term goal, PDPs are focused on enhancing one's career, planning for the future, paving the way towards a new job and career that meets your personal and professional goals. Creating PDPs gives nurses the momentum and excitement to reach new, stimulating opportunities, leading to a successful and satisfying career (Oznacar & Muntazoglu, 2017). Evaluating a PDP on a regular basis gives nurses control over their practice, and ultimately, their future. Nurses have the power to free themselves from a job where their knowledge and skills may feel stagnant or there is no opportunity for advancement. A PDP offers nurses opportunities that build on strengths and passions, leading to a more gratifying and rewarding career. Professional Nursing Roles The nursing profession offers a wide array of job opportunities. Nurses can choose to work in a variety of practice settings that fits one's goals. In order to keep current with the changing healthcare environment and achieve a satisfying nursing career, creating a PDP is key. See Table 1 for a brief list of professional nursing roles with education requirements and associated certifications. Table 1 shares professional nursing roles with degree requirements and certifications Table 1: Professional Nursing Roles Nursing Roles Minimum Education Certifications Diabetic Nurse Educator BSN preferred Certified Diabetes Educator (CDE) Nurse Midwife Masters Certified Nurse-Midwife (CNM) Pediatric Nurse BSN preferred Pediatric Nursing (RN-BC) Forensic Nurse BSN preferred Satial Assault Nurse Examiner (SANE) Medical/Surgical Nurse BSN preferred Medical/Surgical Nurse (RN-BC) Nurse Anesthetist Masters or DNP Certified Registered Nurse Anesthetist (CRNA) Wound Ostomy Continence Nurse BSN preferred Certified Wound Ostomy Continence Nurse (CWOCN) (different levels of WOCNC cert.) Case manager BSN preferred Nursing Case Management (RN-BC) Clinical Nurse Specialist (choose setting) Masters or DNP Clinical Nurse Specialist (CNS-BS) Hospice/Palliative Care Nurse BSN preferred Certified Hospice/Palliative Nurse (CHPN) Nurse Educator (academic or clinical) Masters, DNP or PhD Certified Nurse Educator (CNE) Director of Nursing DNP or PhD Nurse Executive Certification (NEA-BC) Nurse Manager BSN or Masters Nurse Executive Certification (NE-BC) School Nurse BSN preferred National Certified School Nurse (NCSN) Psychiatric Mental Health Nurse Practitioner Masters, DNP or PhD Certified Psychiatric Mental Health Nurse Practitioner (PMHNP-BC) BC = Board Certified Creating a Professional Development Plan Creating a PDP takes time to reflect on one's life and experiences. The first step is to refer to one's personal nursing philosophy where values, inspirations, beliefs, reasons for entering the profession, and other ideas can be used to create goals. Reflecting on aspects of a workday that are pleasing or enjoyable also assist with creating goals for a PDP. In addition, comprehensive research will need to be completed if interested in a specific nursing role. Researching a potential role will include learning about required education/certification, years of experience, cost of education, availability of scholarships and other funding opportunities, and more. Consider the following questions while pondering career goals: What part of nursing practice inspires you? Why did you enter the nursing profession? Is there a particular work setting or specialty that you are drawn to? Are there activities in your current role that excite you? What are your strengths? Do you enjoy working with technology? Do you enjoy understanding how science and research impacts care? Do you enjoy teaching patients or coworkers? Are you interested in policy, improving practice for the profession as a whole? What elements of nursing practice are you are passionate about? Chang (2000) writes about following one's passion, stating passion elicits feelings about the world being filled with possibilities. Passion is defined as "activities, ideas, and topics that elicit the emotions." (Chang, 2000, p. 19). Chang (2000) further defines passion as an intensity, a force that fuels our strongest emotions. Think about activities of nursing practice that illicit passion, follow your heart when making decisions. Following one's passion helps find meaning in practice. Think back to the enthusiasm and feelings of excitement and fulfilled purpose that led to entering nursing school. When nurses create their PDP by following their passions, the task becomes promising and positive, rather than overwhelming and frustrating. Creating a PDP requires time and thought, a process that cannot be rushed. Staying focused on the end goal of creating a future that melds with lifelong goals can overshadow any difficulties you may incur throughout the reflection, research, and planning phases. Consider including some of the following activities in a PDP: Participate on a hospital committee Participate in shared governance in your unit Present updated evidence-based practice topic to unit staff monthly or quarterly Organize a unit committee based on a specific need Offer to be a mentor or preceptor for novice nurses on your unit Membership in professional organizations Similar to a nursing philosophy, a PDP is dynamic and changes over time. Goals will be met at varying stages throughout one's career, and long-term career goals are bound to change as experience impacts knowledge and thinking. The desire to work on a medical/surgical unit now may be very different 10 years from now. Over time nurses learn more about themselves and their strengths and passions will inevitably change. The opportunities in nursing practice are endless, it's one of the countless benefits of working in this remarkable profession. Bulletin board with sticky notes saying "make things happen" Benefits of Professional Development Job Opportunities Since the nursing profession offers multiple paths to licensure, nurses with varying types of degrees often compete with each other for certain nursing positions (acute care is one example). Depending on location, many employers require a baccalaureate degree (or working towards one) to be considered for hire. In addition, now that the BSN in 10 law has passed, current students entering nursing schools in NY will be required to earn a baccalaureate degree, adding more baccalaureate prepared nurses, and competition, into practice. Creating a PDP with the job market and competition for nursing positions in mind, nurses can form a strategy for positions that may not have been available unless planning had been in place. Furthermore, nurses who include additional professional growth opportunities, such as certification or mentoring, in their PDP will be recognized for their added accomplishments. sign: we are hiring Echevarria (2018) states membership in professional organizations helps nurses market themselves for future job opportunities. Sharing professional development activities on one's resume or curricula vitae (CV) demonstrates to potential employers the nurse's commitment to lifelong learning and advocacy for the professional. Participation in professional development opportunities meets competencies within Standard 8, Education, from the ANA (2021) Nursing Scope and Standards of Practice, stating, "Maintains professional portfolio that provides evidence of individual competence and lifelong learning" (p. 99). Recruiters seek out nurses who are actively seeking out professional development and often advertise job openings on professional organization sites. Depending on the organization, members may gain additional benefits with career development tools, such as writing a resume, mock interviews, and posting resumes to a job board (Echevarria, 2018). Fulfilling Lifelong Learning Goals Lifelong learning is an expectation of all nurses. Through professional development planning nurses can tailor learning activities to meet a variety of goals. Learning opportunities may be planned for license renewal or to meet a PDP goal. Planning a timeline to meet goals will ensure goals are met. Nurses need to be open to learning about an assortment of new knowledge, and accept constructive criticism (Mustafa, 2017). Continuing education on a variety of topics increases one's control over practice, ultimately leading to a satisfying job and career. thinking about learning Mentoring Mentoring unites colleagues together, helping each other grow professionally. Whether it's a novice nurse just entering the profession or an experienced nurse learning about a new specialty role, mentoring is an important way nurses can help each other with role transitions. Through mentoring, nurses are empowered by sharing their knowledge, which in turn strengthens the profession by securing competent practitioners and nurse leaders (Vance & Olsen, 1998). In addition, mentoring has been found to improve job satisfaction, and reduce the stress of working in a challenging environment (Jones, 2017). Mentoring helps nurses gain clinical knowledge and advice at a time when confidence and decision-making abilities are in the beginning stages. Nurses helping nurses is the foundation of professional practice. Some of the qualities and duties of mentors includes the following: Role model professional behaviors Offer career development advice Inspire others Encourage and support novice nurses Provide wisdom and share stories from their experience Trustworthy, confidants Mutual respect Open attitude mentor name badge Mentoring activities meets the competencies within Standard 12, Leadership, from the ANA (2021) Nursing Scope and Standards of Practice, stating, "Mentors colleagues and others to enhance their knowledge, skills, and abilities" (p. 97). Mentoring may occur as a formal role, where a mentor and mentee have an official relationship or connection. Though nurses can mentor each other informally, by assisting others in need of advice and encouragement. The mentoring relationship is beneficial to both the mentor and the mentee, where both nurses benefitted from the process, stating they found their jobs more meaningful and satisfying (Malloy et al., 2015). Healthcare organizations offer preceptors, mentoring, and residency programs for graduate nurses. Residency programs differ from other forms of mentoring or coaching where such programs offer organized educational sessions with assigned preceptors. Hospitals may create their own residency programs, though some private companies have created evidence-based residency programs used in healthcare organizations. For example, Vizient, a private organization, has teamed up with the American Association of Colleges of Nursing (AACN, 2019) and created a Nurse Residency program. Vizient's residency program, supported by The Joint Commission, the Institute of Medicine (IOM), and others, found participants had higher retention rates (93%) compared to the national average (83%) (AACN, 2019). Additionally, participants in the program led to achieving Magnet status in their workplace. For more information about the Nurse Residency program, visit the AACN website. Nurse residency programs are essential for new nurses entering the healthcare field. The growth of residency programs is encouraging for nurses, employers, and ultimately, patient care. Establishing residency programs fulfills the third recommendation set forth by the IOM (2010) where healthcare organizations were tasked with supporting nurses to complete a transition-to-practice programs. Professional organizations offer tools to help organizations create mentoring programs, such as the Academy of Medical-Surgical Nurses (AMSN). The AMSN offers guides tailored for mentors and mentees, and guidelines on how to create an environment where learning and sharing can occur. The mentorship program teaches nurse leaders how to match up mentors and mentees, tips for mentoring novice nurses, characteristics of successful mentoring, problems that may arise, how to evaluate the mentoring program, and more (Academy of Medical-Surgical Nurses, 2018). For more information about the AMSN mentoring program, visit the AMSN website. The American Nurses Association (ANA, 2018) offers a mentoring program as a benefit of being a member of the organization. The program is designed to help new nurses acclimate to their new role and the nursing profession. The program is virtual, with mentors and mentees meeting each other online or via phone. The mentoring process begins with joining the mentoring program, then further details are shared with matching up a mentor to a mentee. For more information about the AMSN mentoring program, visit the ANA website. Networking Creating professional networks or connections with groups of healthcare professionals within and outside one's workplace helps nurses be cognizant of new career opportunities, advance quality patient care, and more (Sherman, 2018). Networking also offers nurses advice on how to overcome challenges and meet other nurses who have had similar experiences. Professional networking assists nurses with developing relationships that offer professional growth and clinical knowledge to inform personal practice. Nurses who do not put forth the effort to network with peers and other healthcare professionals risk working in a silo, where care practices can become stagnant, risking the feeling of being in a "rut." Sherman (2018) explains the benefits of networking for career opportunities, stating recruiters may not always advertise job openings, instead relying on referrals from professionals they work with, whose judgment they trust. Creating and sustaining a professional network is key to advancing your career and finding new opportunities. Nurses can find a plethora of networking opportunities through national and specialty professional nursing organizations. Professional organizations offer many opportunities for professional growth, such as developing leadership skills, continuing education/certifications, resources for career development, and more (Echevarria, 2018). Networking meets the following competencies in Standard 13, Education, from the ANA (2021) Nursing Scope and Standards of Practice: Seeks experiences that reflect current practice to maintain and advance knowledge, skills, abilities, and judgment in clinical practice or role performance. Participates in continuing professional development activities related to nursing and interprofessional knowledge bases and professional topics. Shares educational findings, experiences, and ideas with peersand interprofessional colleagues (ANA, 2021, pp. 98-99). networking, everyone is connected Planning short- and long-term goals helps nurses locate the most relevant, robust network of colleagues who can assist with seeking out new job opportunities. Many opportunities exist for networking within one's institution, such as presenting a new evidence-based practice at a unit meeting or volunteering for an institutional-wide committee. Social media is another way to network with other healthcare professionals, such as Facebook, LinkedIn, and Twitter. Most professional organizations have their own Facebook and Twitter pages/feeds, making it easier for nurses to connect with other healthcare professionals that have similar interests and goals. Creating a LinkedIn account offers nurses opportunities to find mentors and colleagues who have similar interests as well. While at a conference or other gatherings with healthcare professionals, Sherman (2018) encourages nurses to begin a conversation by asking any of the following questions: How did you get started in your role? What are your challenges? What significant changes are you seeing in your environment? What's the most innovative thing that's happening in your organization? What do you think will happen with healthcare reform? What trends do you see happening in nursing today? What advice would you give to an emerging nurse leader? How can I help you? Who else at this meeting would be helpful for me to speak with? Sherman (2018) offers some additional advice about networking: Networking is about planning, developing the relationship over time. Do not inquire about a job too quickly. Build a community of colleagues, think about what you can do for others first. Volunteer to offer your assistance with setting up for a conference or sharing an article on a clinical procedure. Having an up-to-date LinkedIn page is essential, including a professional email address, outgoing phone message, and business cards. Always carry your business cards with you. Prepare for networking opportunities. Think about (and write down) topics to discuss or introductory questions. Be excited, and positive, to those you network with. Refrain from complaining about anything. Stay focused on building relationships. Relationship building begins with listening. Ask other people about themselves and their careers. Offer your ideas and ask questions, though be sure your personal dialog does not take up the entire conversation. Follow up with new relationships, whether it's sending a thank-you note or responding promptly to a request. Cultivate new relationships. Networking is an ongoing investment in professional development.

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