Mentorship - Support for Diabetes Educators in Their Own Workplace

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**Aim**

The mentorship program was developed to build the knowledge, skill and judgment of new CDE staff to manage more complex diabetes patients.

**Objectives**

- To enhance the skill level of entry level diabetes educators to care for more complex patients within the community program
- To support community programs in initiating and titrating insulin on people with diabetes within the community program
- To create sustainable qualified diabetes educators for complex care

**Process**

- Diabetes Education Program (DEP) managers identified staff seeking or needing support and mentoring.
- Mentor was scheduled to participate with the educator during a teaching session.
- Individual educator needs were identified on the initial mentoring session.
- Confidentiality agreements were signed between the mentor and organization prior to participating with patients.

**Approach**

- An open agenda approach was used reflecting adult learning principles, assessment of readiness to learn, principles of motivational interviewing, and empowerment, which mirrors the concepts of diabetes education.
- The educator interacted with the client in the teaching session, with the backup of the mentor.
- At the end of the session, reflection was done by both the educator and mentor.
- The mentor evaluated the counselling event focusing on developing motivational counselling skills, increasing the educators knowledge of diabetes related topics, offering ideas for alternate teaching strategies and most of all identifying the positive knowledge and skills the educator is already using in the session, thus promoting confidence in the “art” of counseling.

**Results**

Over the 9 months of the program a total of 18 staff from 8 different programs participated.

14 evaluations were distributed following the mentorship, with 64% response rate.

- 86% of respondents evaluated the mentoring program as “excellent”.
- 86% of respondents rated the presentation structure, learning format and clarity of content as very good and excellent.
- Improvement in knowledge/ability and confidence was observed across all learning objectives.

**Conclusion**

This program has made a positive impact on the quality of diabetes care being provided to patients. It creates a sustainable system, by building on the knowledge of educators already in the system. Having an open agenda is essential for the success of this program. The skill set of the mentor is also essential for delivering this program, including extensive knowledge of diabetes, adult learning principles, motivational interviewing skills and the “art” of providing constructive criticism.

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