



NiGP National Mentoring Pilot General Information Booklet

(Encompassing all three mentoring elements of the National Pilot)



Project Management by:
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Welcome

Welcome to the General Information Booklet for the Nursing in General Practice (NiGP) National Mentoring Pilot, funded by the Australian Government Department of Health and Ageing. The aim of this information booklet is to provide an overview for potential participants of the pilot program to determine their level of involvement. The National Mentoring Pilot will include three mentoring elements as follows:

- Formal 1:1 Mentoring Program
- Mentoring Groups
- Mentoring Circles

This booklet will outline the general information relating to each of the pilot program elements, and also includes information for employers of participants to understand their employee's involvement. You will also find attached to this information resource the following documents:

- Employer letter of information
- Mentor registration form
- Mentee registration form
- Group mentoring registration form
- Mentoring circle registration form

We look forward to your active participation in the National Pilot Program.

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The National Mentoring Pilot is funded by the Australian Government Department of Health and Ageing.

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Introduction to Mentoring

'As the findings of this report indicate, there is a **high level of support** for mentoring of nurses in general practice and recognition that mentoring can provide a vehicle to maximise the capacity of nurses to contribute to practice outcomes.' (*Hanging from a String in the Wind, 2005.*)

In 2005, the Department of Health and Ageing, in conjunction with a research team headed by Dr Marie Heartfield from the University of South Australia published the results of a two-year long study into mentoring for General Practice. This report – **Hanging from a String in the Wind: Development of a National Framework for Mentoring for Nurses in General Practice** – indicated strongly the potential benefits for nurses in general practice through the inclusion of mentoring as a career and professional support strategy.

In this report, mentoring is defined as: 'a voluntary professional relationship between a mentor and mentee. It is carried out around a mutually agreed upon purpose and expectations, and is generally career focussed rather than clinically orientated.' (*Hanging from a String in the Wind, 2005.*) This definition of mentoring will be adopted for the National Pilot.

More recently, a number of 'models' of mentoring have emerged, complimenting the more traditional understanding of a 1:1 mentoring relationship. Two models: group mentoring and mentoring circles will also form part of the National Pilot Program elements.

Aims and Objectives of the National Mentoring Pilot

The **aim of the pilot program** is to provide practice nurses with an opportunity to engage in structured mentoring relationships, across Australia, to enhance their personal and professional development, and thereby strengthen the nursing services they provide in the general practice environment. The **objectives of the pilot program are to:**

- Trial a national approach to the inclusion of structured mentoring as a support function for general practice nurses.
- Build the capacity of general practice nurses to provide and receive mentoring.
- Build the capacity of the Divisions Network to provide a sustainable mentoring program for nurses in general practice.
- Develop a bank of mentoring resources for ongoing use.
- Establish a pool of practice nurses and division program officers across Australia with education and experience in mentoring.
- Determine the impact mentoring can have on the recruitment, retention and ongoing professional development of general practice nurses.

A Reference Group of key stakeholders from peak nursing and general practice organisations will be convened to provide input and expertise to the pilot program.

Additionally, to assist in measuring the progress against these objectives, a baseline data survey will be conducted to gather starting information. This baseline survey will be conducted as an online survey and disseminated through the SBO and Divisional channels.



Elements and Participants in the National Mentoring Pilot

One of the recommendations from the *Hanging from a String in the Wind Report* was for mentoring activities for general practice nurses to provide options and flexibility. With this in mind, the National Mentoring Pilot will include three elements as follows:

- Formal 1:1 Mentoring Program
- Group Mentoring Program
- Mentoring Circle Program

To support each of the above elements, we have in place the following basic criteria for **individuals to apply to be involved**.

- **To be a mentor in the 1:1 program** you need to be either a Division Program Officer OR an experienced practice nurse with at least three years experience working as a practice nurse with a desire to support and work with a mentee for the duration of the pilot program.
- **To be a mentee in the 1:1 program** you need to be a practice nurse (either RN/Div 1 or EN/Div 2) with a desire to work with a mentor for the duration of the pilot program.
- **To be a mentor in the group mentoring program** you need to be a Division Program Officer.
- **To be a mentee in the group mentoring program** you need to be a practice nurse (either RN/Div 1 or EN/Div 2) who has **less than two-years experience** as a practice nurse (irregardless of previous nursing experience).
- **To be part of a mentoring circle** you need to be a practice nurse (either RN/Div 1 or EN/Div 2) with **at least 12-months experience** as a practice nurse and a commitment to the shared 'special interest' of that mentoring circle.

The above elements and options are designed to support Practice Nurses across three stages of the career life-cycle:

- **New experience** to General Practice (1:1 program and mentoring group)
- **Growing experience** as a practice nurse (1:1 program and mentoring circle)
- **Significant experience** as a practice nurse (1:1 program and mentoring circle)

The registration process for each of the elements of the pilot program is detailed later in this information booklet. However, essentially as well as the basic criteria above for your participation, **we are also looking for all participants to be:**

- **Enthusiastic and interested** in participating in a mentoring activity as part of their career and professional development
- **Committed** to the development of practice nurses
- **Interested** in learning how to **provide and receive mentoring**
- **Keen to experience a range of mentoring situations** (eg. 1:1, mentoring group and mentoring circles) to strengthen existing learning and development activities



Key Dates for the National Mentoring Pilot

The National Pilot Program has been funded from 1 May 2007 to 30 April 2008. In keeping with these timelines, the **key dates for participants** in the National Mentoring Pilot are:

Date	Activity	Methodology
8 June 2007	Information and registration packages sent to SBO and Divisions	Email
27 June 2007	Close of registrations (1:1 formal program element)	Fax, email or post
13 July 2007	Close of registrations (mentoring groups and circles program elements)	Fax, email or post
12-14 July 2007	Mentoring education workshop #1 – Sydney (plus ACT) (Mentors: 12 July - lunch on 13 July Mentees: lunch on 13 July – 14 July)	Onsite Workshop
19-21 July 2007	Mentoring education workshop #2 – Brisbane (Mentors: 19 July - lunch on 20 July Mentees: lunch on 20 July – 21 July)	Onsite Workshop
26-28 July 2007	Mentoring education workshop #3 – Melbourne (plus TAS) (Mentors: 26 July - lunch on 27 July Mentees: lunch on 27 July – 28 July)	Onsite Workshop
31 July 2007	Mentoring partnership online registration and matching completed	Online (web)
9-11 August 2007	Mentoring education workshop #4 – Adelaide (plus NT) (Mentors: 9 August - lunch on 10 August Mentees: lunch on 10 August – 11 August)	Onsite Workshop
16-18 August 2007	Mentoring education workshop #5 – Perth (Mentors: 16 August - lunch on 17 August Mentees: lunch on 17 August – 18 August)	Onsite Workshop
TBA July/August 2007	Mentoring Group education activity	Online OR teleconference
TBA July/August 2007	Mentoring Circle education activity	Online OR teleconference
During August 2007	Preliminary contact between mentors and mentees in 1:1 program and preparation/planning in mentoring groups and circles	Email, phone or face-to-face
31 August 2007	Submission of mentoring plans by mentoring groups and circles	Fax, email or post
1 September 2007	Commence of formal mentoring activities (all elements)	Email, phone or face-to-face
September – December 2007	Mentoring support activities (telephone conferences, mailing list updates, online discussion forums, and newsletters)	Online, email, phone and post
TBA November 2007	Mid-program evaluation activity (all elements)	TBA
TBA December 2007 – TBA January 2008	Pilot program 'break' (to accommodate annual leave and public holiday activities during this time)	N/A
January – April 2008	Mentoring support activities (telephone conferences, mailing list updates, online discussion forums, and newsletters)	Online, email, phone and post
TBA April 2007	End-of-program evaluation activity (all elements)	TBA
30 April 2008	End of formal mentoring activities (all elements)	Email, phone or face-to-face



Employer Involvement in the National Mentoring Pilot

'A number of GPs suggested that mentoring was an important aspect of recruiting and retaining skilled practice nurses and that this should be promoted widely as part of any recruitment strategy. Practice nurses in discussing the need for GP support for their involvement in mentoring highlighted that such support provided recognition from the GP of the importance of the nurse's role and contribution to the practice. They also suggested that having some Divisional involvement in the mentoring scheme would provide further recognition of the nurse's role in general practice and make nurses visible as part of the DGP.'

(Hanging from a String in the Wind, 2005)

In any 'internal' mentoring initiative, gaining support and 'buy in' from the employer is paramount to the success and longevity of the mentoring initiative. Similarly, to ensure support for the National Mentoring Pilot and participants of this pilot, employer support is both encouraged and required. So – what is in it for the employer and why should they support it? Modern mentoring literature, when referring to the benefits of mentoring, most consistently lists three groups of people that benefit from the formal mentoring activities: mentees, mentors and organisations.

Benefits to the Mentee	Benefits to the Mentor	Benefits to the Organisation
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Empowerment • Opportunity to acquire competencies and professional experience • Opportunity to critically reflect in a safe, non-judgmental environment • Increased potential for career development • A supportive environment to reflect on experiences • Networking opportunities • Development of professional abilities and self-confidence • Increased job satisfaction • Mutual respect 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recognition of professional expertise and knowledge • Renewed enthusiasm for their role • Challenging discussions with people with fresh ideas/ perspectives • Satisfaction of contributing to another person's development • Opportunities to reflect upon and articulate the role of a mentor • Improved ability to share experiences and knowledge • Opportunities to learn and test new ideas • Broader picture/strategic overview of the profession 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased productivity of team members through increases in self-confidence, knowledge and professional experience • Improvements to strategies such as recruitment, retention and succession planning • Development of new competencies in the mentee • More committed, involved and responsible personnel at all levels • Sharing and development of knowledge to strengthen the organisation • Increased people focus • Investment in key assets – your people

In the pilot program, we are seeking the support of employers through the following mechanisms:

- Encouraging prospective mentees and mentors to discuss how their participation in the pilot program will benefit their professional development and the business outcomes of their employer
- Including employer input into the registration process for both mentees and mentors in the 1:1 Formal Mentoring Program element
- Including employer feedback at certain stages of the monitoring and evaluation activities
- Including employers in the pilot program information and communication documents

You will find attached to this information booklet, an open letter to your employer from the project team, encouraging them to be part of your involvement in this exciting initiative. We encourage you to share this with your employer.



Overview of the 1:1 Formal Mentoring Program

The 1:1 Formal Mentoring Program will provide mentees and mentors with the opportunity to undertake a **structured mentoring relationship** over the course of the pilot. Participants in this element of the National Pilot will be required to:

- Formally register for the program
- Complete an online mentor or mentee profile using the **online mentoring system**
- Participate in a partnership matching activity using the online mentoring system
- Attend the 1.5 day **mentoring education workshop** in their **nominated state**
- Make contact with **each other at least twice per month**, during the period September 2007 – April 2007
- Participate in **mid-program and end-of-program evaluations**

As a participant in this program, you will also have access to additional education and support activities to enhance and support your involvement as both a mentor and mentee. One of these additional support activities is a series of **online tutorials to support your relationship**. These online self-paced tutorials provide you with further stimulus to maintain your mentoring relationship and are focused on three areas:

- **Mentoring directions** – getting the direction of your relationship right
- **Mentoring momentum** – maintaining the momentum of your relationship
- **Mentoring wind-down** – celebrating and ending the formal aspect of your relationship

Further information on the support activities will be provided in your **mentoring education sessions**.

The **matching process** will be conducted using the online mentoring system. Once you have been accepted into the pilot as either a mentor or mentee, you will be provided with information on how to access the system and complete your online profile. **As a mentor**, once your profile is completed you become part of the database of registered mentors able to be selected from. **As a mentee**, once you have completed your mentee profile, you can proceed to the selection of a mentor. You can do this through one of two ways (both from within the system):

- **You can self-select a mentor** from the list of registered mentors through previewing their profiles OR
- **You can request that that Project Team assist you** with the selection of a mentor.

The online mentoring system facilitates your profile and the matching activities; however, **it does not mean** that you will not have the opportunity to meet your mentoring partner in a face-to-face environment; this is dependent on where you are both located.

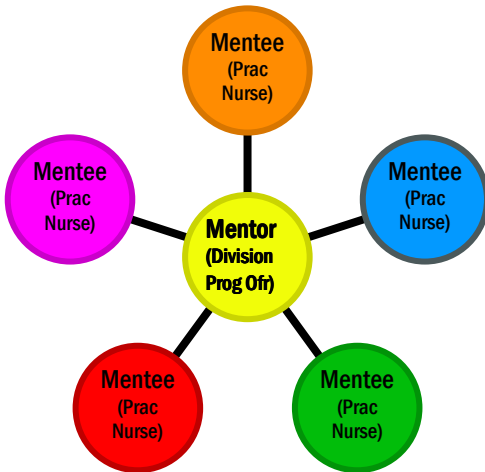
To register as a mentor or mentee in the **1:1 Formal Mentoring Program** – do the following:

1. Review the Mentor or Mentee Registration Form
2. Discuss your involvement with your employing organisation/employer
3. Review the mentoring education dates to ensure you are available to attend the workshop
4. Complete and submit the Registration Form by the due date of **27 June 2007**

Each state will be allocated a number of pilot program positions to ensure that we have coverage nationally within the pilot program. On receipt of your registration, a member of the Project Team will contact you to confirm receipt of your registration and then successful participants will be notified shortly thereafter.



Overview of the Group Mentoring Activities



A **mentoring group** is a combination of **one mentor with multiple mentees** who meet as a group (eg. at the same time).

Dr Linda Phillips-Jones of The Mentoring Group (USA) says of the mentoring group: 'a true mentoring group has as its main purpose helping each individual member develop personal competencies (skills and knowledge) and/or character attributes.' One of the other aspects of a mentoring group is that mentees derive benefits not only from the mentor but from their peers in the mentoring group, thus supporting a professional networking approach amongst new Practice Nurses.

The **aim of including a mentoring group element** to the National Pilot is to provide a more formal framework around the assistance a Division Program Officer can

provide to a group of **new** practice nurse eg. a practice nurse with less than two-years experience in general practice to assist them in developing their career and professional development as a practice nurse. Our ratio in the pilot program will be **1:mentor** to **5-6:mentees**. Each mentoring group will be required to formally register their participation in the pilot program, and will be required to complete and submit a mentoring plan for their group's involvement in the period September 2007 – April 2008. We are aiming to have at least 25 mentoring groups operating around Australia during the pilot. **During the pilot program, we will encourage mentoring groups to meet at least monthly.**

There **is no formal education workshop for the mentoring group**; however, the following materials and activities will be provided to support your involvement in the group:

- An information package on how to start and run a mentoring group
- A sample mentoring plan and blank copy of a mentoring plan
- An online tutorial for the mentor of the group to access
- A teleconference for all mentors involved in the groups to dial-into prior to commencing your group
- Tips, assistance and support throughout the pilot program

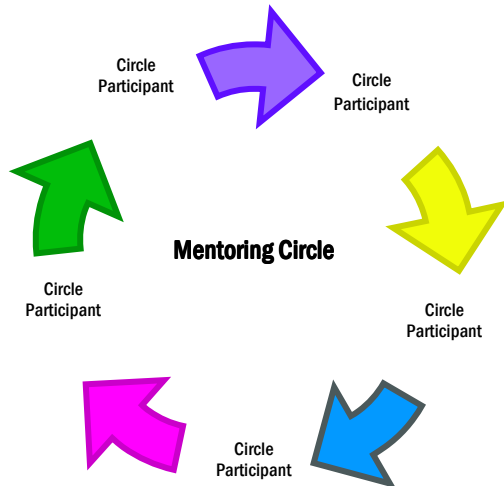
Additionally, mentoring groups **will be required to participate in mid-program and end-of-program evaluation activities**. If you are a Program Division Officer and would like to compliment the support you can provide to new practice nurses, why not consider registering a Mentoring Group in the pilot program? **To register your interest in establishing a Mentoring Group under the boundaries of this program, please do the following:**

1. Review the Mentoring Group Registration Form.
2. Invite or consider the practice nurses in your area who are new to general practice. Invite them to a telephone conference/meeting to discuss a possible mentoring group (email or post them a copy of the registration form and information booklet prior).
3. Discuss your involvement with your employing organisation/employer.
4. Complete and submit the Registration Form by the due date of **13 July 2007**.

We hope to see your Mentoring Group as one of the 25 groups in the pilot program.



Overview of the Mentoring Circle Activities



A **mentoring circle is slightly different to a mentoring group**, although they may sound similar. While a mentoring group has a clearly identified mentor, a mentoring circle consists of a group of individuals who come together for the purposes of sharing experiences and professional development. According to Ida Abbot of Ida Abbot Consulting in the Summer 2006 edition of her newsletter *Management Solutions*, unlike mentoring groups, mentoring circles can **'either be facilitated by mentors or entirely self-directed**, with all members of the group rotating leadership responsibility. Both group mentoring and mentoring circles are excellent ways to provide development learning and networking opportunities.'

In order for a mentoring circle to be successful it is vital that all participants share equal responsibility for the maintenance of the mentoring circle and that each person is committed to the mentoring process. **During the pilot program, we will encourage mentoring circles to meet at least monthly.**

The aim of including a mentoring circle element to the National Pilot is to provide a more formal framework for experienced (at least 12 months experience) practice nurses to come together with a 'special interest' and to engage in a self-sustaining mentoring activity to undertake developmental learning, networking and professional support in this area. For the purposes of the pilot, each mentoring circle will be required to nominate a point of contact; however, the point of contact is not the 'mentor' for the group – just the point of contact. We are aiming to have at least 10 mentoring circles operating around Australia during the pilot. There is **no formal education workshop for the mentoring circle**; however, the following materials and activities will be provided to support your involvement in the circle:

- An information package on how to start and run a mentoring circle
- A sample mentoring circle plan and blank copy of a mentoring circle plan
- An online tutorial for the circle participants to access
- A teleconference for all nominated points of contact
- Tips, assistance and support throughout the pilot program

Additionally, mentoring circles **will be required to participate in mid-program and end-of-program** evaluation activities. **Are you a practice nurse with a 'special interest'?** Would you like to explore this interest with other practice nurses? Why not consider putting a Mentoring Circle together – perhaps leading off from other activities that you may be involved with. **To register your interest in establishing a Mentoring Circle under the boundaries of this program, please do the following:**

1. Review the Mentoring Circle Registration Form.
2. Make contact with other practice nurses in your region and invite them to the mentoring circle. Perhaps schedule a telephone conference/meeting to discuss a possible mentoring circle (email or post them a copy of the registration form and information booklet prior).
3. Discuss your involvement with your employing organisation/employer.
4. Complete and submit the Registration Form by the due date of **13 July 2007**.

We hope to see your Mentoring Circle as one of the 10 circles in the pilot program.



Technology Support to the National Mentoring Pilot

An important aspect to the National Mentoring Pilot will be support provided through a technology approach. Using technology will enable the pilot program to quickly keep in contact with all participants. To this end, it will be important for all participants to be able to use and access a computer with an internet connection, and to have an email address which they can access on a daily-weekly basis. The specific technology support will include:

- **A participant intranet which is a secure intranet for the period of the pilot program.** All registered users will be provided with a username and password to access this site. The website address for the participant intranet will be notified with your confirmation letter. The intranet will facilitate access to the following activities:
 - Online mentoring system and education tutorials
 - Online discussion forums and networking opportunities with other pilot program participants
 - Monthly newsletter
 - Information packages to support mentoring groups and mentoring circles
 - Updates and links to general mentoring resources
 - Online surveys used as part of the pilot program
- **An online mentoring support system, accessible from within the participant intranet.** The online mentoring system will enable mentees and mentors in the formal 1:1 mentoring program to complete an online profile, their mentoring partnership agreement, and to manage their relationship for the period of the pilot program. All participants in the 1:1 formal mentoring program will be provided with information on how to access and use the online mentoring support system. The system is being provided through Triple Creek Associates in Colorado, USA, and is known as the 'Open Mentoring' or OM system.
- **A mailing list.** The email address of all participants (across all three elements) will be entered into a specific mailing list for the duration of the pilot program. Fortnightly OR monthly email updates will be provided through the mailing list to enhance the experience of all participants across the pilot program.

If you are interested in participating in the Pilot Program and you do not have access to technology, please contact the **Project Office on 1800 100 848** to determine how we might facilitate your involvement.

Key Personnel in the National Mentoring Pilot

The National Mentoring Pilot is being managed by the Australian General Practice Network with support from the Australian Mentor Centre. Key personnel in these organisations for the National Mentoring Pilot will be:

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Frequently Asked Questions

- 1. Can I participate in more than one element of the National Pilot Program.** Yes. We would encourage you to review the elements on offer, and consider those which will provide you with the opportunity for career and professional development. For example, you might register as a Mentor in the 1:1 program, and also be a participant in a Mentoring Circle in your region.
- 2. How often do I need to access the participant intranet?** This is entirely up to you. We will be notifying you of major changes on the site via the mailing list – so log in whenever you have time – or make it something you check on a weekly basis during the pilot program.
- 3. How much will it cost me and/or my employer?** Your participation in the Pilot Program is voluntary and there is no financial reimbursement for your participation.
- 4. When will I meet with my mentor/mentee/mentoring group/mentoring circle?** This is for you to decide. However, we anticipate that some activities may happen during work hours and some may happen during your own personal time.
- 5. Who will pay for telephone calls/email and internet access?** You will need to meet this cost or negotiate this with your employer.
- 6. What happens if my 1:1 mentoring partnership does not work?** The 1:1 Formal Mentoring Program has a 'no fault' exit clause. So, if your mentoring partnership is becoming stressful or it is just 'not working', either partner (mentor or mentee), can opt out with 'no fault'. If you are a mentee, we can assist you to find a replacement mentor.
- 7. What if I don't want to continue in the mentoring group or circle?** That's fine. Again, discuss this with your mentoring group mentor or your mentoring circle, and where possible, exit on 'good terms'.
- 8. How long will the evaluation activities take me?** At this point, we cannot define a set time. However, we anticipate that it will be no longer than one hour in the mid-program and one hour in the end of the program.
- 9. What happens if I go on leave during the pilot program?** The program will have a 'leave break' during mid December to mid January 2007. If you are considering extended leave (eg. three months long service leave) we would encourage you to consider the impact that this will have on your mentoring activities, given the timeframes for the trial.
- 10. Do I get paid if I am a mentor?** No. There is no financial reimbursement for mentors or their employing organisations.
- 11. What if I don't know anyone to start a mentoring circle?** Contact the Project Team and register your interest, we'll determine whether we can connect you with a mentoring circle in your area.

