Policy Mentors and a Policy Process Framework:
Two Strategies for Developing Effective DNP-Prepared Leaders

Contributions of the DNP Prepared Nurse:
Policy Influencing Outcomes

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Objectives

- Identify how the key components of the CDC Policy Process framework (2014) can guide the DNP in developing and implementing policy change that improves health care outcomes.

- Describe ways to collaborate with policy mentors in order to gain the expertise to influence meaningful clinical, systems, and/or organizational change.

- Identify ways to find potential policy mentors and to collaborate on policy interventions to influence policy that ensures safe, quality care of vulnerable populations.

Health Policy and the DNP

Snapshot of DNP Program nurse participants:

- Experienced clinicians, providers, administrators

- Experts in their areas/specialties of practice

- Range of health policy understanding and experience. Concerns: knowledge, familiarity, confidence.

- **Goal**: expand health policy knowledge/skills to be more effective leaders in communities/organizations

The CDC Policy Process

"**Policy**" is defined as a law, regulation, procedure, administrative action, incentive, or voluntary practice of governments and other institutions (CDC, 2015, para. 1).

Using the CDC Policy Process

A standardized model consisting of 5 process domains:

I.   Problem Identification

II. Policy Analysis

III. Strategy and Policy Development

IV. Policy Enactment

V.   Policy Implementation

Domains

I. **Problem Identification:**

Clarify and frame the problem or issue in terms of the effect on population health.

II. **Policy Analysis:**

Identify different policy options to address the problem/issue. Use methodology to evaluate and policy options to determine the most effective, efficient, and feasible option.

Domains

III. Strategy and Policy Development:
Identify the strategy for getting the policy adopted and how the policy will operate.

IV. Policy Enactment:
Follow internal or external procedures for getting policy enacted or passed.

IV. Policy Implementation:
Translate the enacted policy into action, monitor uptake, and ensure full implementation.

Overarching Domains

Considered as appropriate through all domains

- ## Stakeholder Engagement and Education:

Identify and connect with decision-makers, partners, those affected by the policy, and the general public.

- ## Evaluation:

Formally assess the appropriate steps of the policy cycle, including the impact and outcomes of the policy.

Points to Note

- "Policy development is rarely a linear process; often the domains of the policy cycle overlap or occur out of order" (CDC, 2015).

- May initiate the policy process or may join an existing process at any point of the policy cycle.

Points to Note

- Participants report inconsistent knowledge within 5 domains for health issues addressed:
  - Problem is identified, but not sure how to research or identify potential policy options
  - Policy solution is identified, but don't know appropriate strategy for getting policy enacted
  - Policy is enacted, but not sure how to identify indicators and metrics to evaluate implementation

The Policy Mentor

- What next?

- For the health policy novice, the answer is to identify and reach out to a policy mentor who can assist you in gaining knowledge and skills.

- How do you identify an appropriate policy mentor?

- How do you build/facilitate a policy mentor relationship?

What is a Mentor?

- An experienced and trusted person who gives another person advice and help, especially related to work or school, over a period of time (Cambridge Online Dictionary, 2019).

How to Identify a Mentor

- Organization: lobbyists, managers, administrators

- Government or Elected officials or staff (city, county, state or national)

- Professional Associations

- Community or Stakeholder Group Representatives

- Retired from one of the above

How to Approach a Potential Mentor

- Do your homework:
  - Does the mentor have expertise in the issue or domain?
  - Does the mentor have a good reputation?
  - Does the mentor seem to be a good match?

How to Approach a Potential Mentor

- Establishing contact:
  - Prepare your 'elevator speech'
  - Determine your goal(s) & timeframe

Are you ready... ???

Creating a Positive Relationship

- Working with a mentor requires establishing an interpersonal relationship

  – Remember that developing a relationship takes time & effort

  – 4 Phases in a mentor relationship (Kram, 1983)

    - Initiation-relationship starts
    - Cultivation-advice, expertise, network, role-modeling & feedback
    - Separation-the nature of the relationship changes
    - Redefinition-relationship evolves or may end

Creating a Positive Relationship

- Be 'coachable', reliable and enjoyable to work with

- Exhibit proactive initiative rather than being just a passive recipient

- Provide constructive feedback

- Discuss communication & timeline

- Be specific about your goals

What is my goal?

Increase knowledge

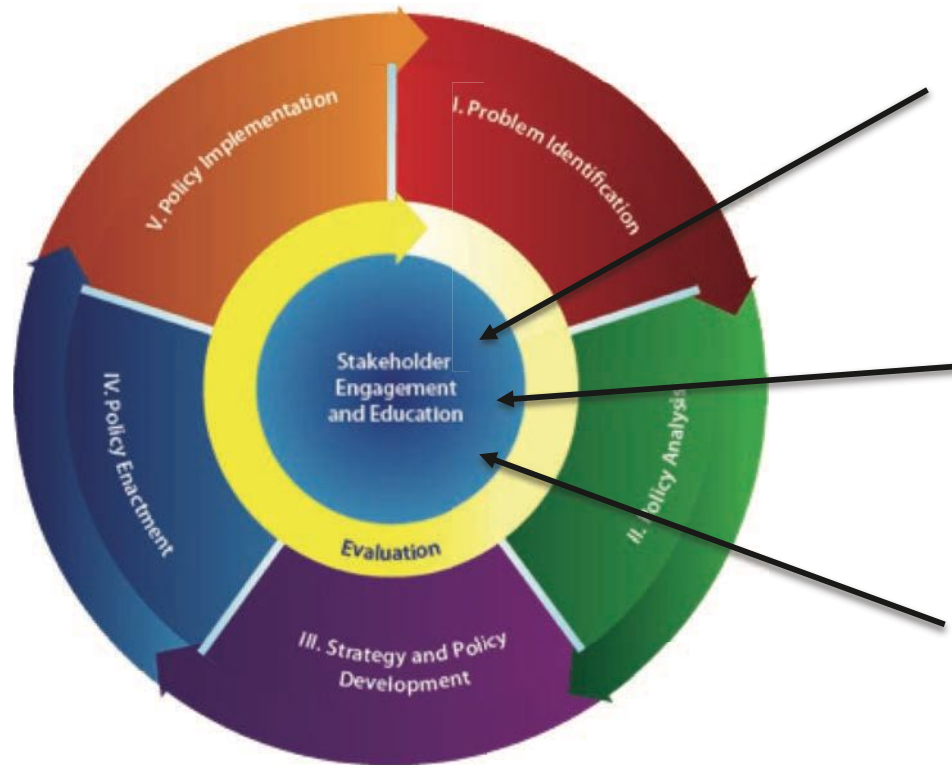**Cultivate relationships**

"Learn the ropes"

Acquire and use power to make change

Improve quality & safety of health care!

Mentorship Process

Set realistic boundaries

Manage expectations

Specify deliverable(s)

Examples

Post-hurricane, Assisted Living Facility

Boundaries—nurse faculty & ALF Director

Expectations—each defined their needs for prevention

Deliverables—facility policy for emergency generator use & signed inspection compliance by county sheriff

Examples

Pharmaceutical Reimbursement, Children's Hospital

Boundaries—CNO, external affairs officer, and lobbyist

Expectations—defined patient, system needs; broadened to regional/state needs

Deliverables—System policy for "white bagging" with policy brief shared with regional and state affiliates

Examples

Raising legal age to purchase tobacco

Boundaries—nurse manager, health department director, and community coalition

Expectations—defined population needs; targeted state and public policy goals to reduce youth smoking

Deliverables—Tobacco 21 coalition presentations & fact sheet for raising smoking age for health board & legislative representatives

Did this person become a nurse to work here?

Lessons Learned

Appreciation for complexity of policy work

Valuable connections and relationships made

Increased comfort interacting with policy makers

Policy makers are real people

Mentor appreciation for health expertise

Expansion of policy makers' views of
  "what nurses do"

Any questions?

THANK YOU!

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