Impact of Peer Mentorship Programs
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Literature Review & Background
Implemented in September 2019, the VIU Nursing Peer Mentorship Program was an initiative seeking to facilitate interconnectedness and a sense of community within the nursing programs at Vancouver Island University.

Across the country, educational and emotional support are currently lacking in nursing programs, and peer mentorship is proven to have positive psychological and health benefits for nursing students (Wells, 2003; Jacobs et. al, 2015; Rawana et. al, 2015; Rohatinsky et. al, 2017; Vandal et. al, 2018). Benefits for mentees include decreased stress anxiety, and improved confidence, self-esteem, and academic focus and understanding of course materials (Jacobs et. al, 2015; Rawana et. al, 2015; Rohatinsky et. al, 2017; Vandal et. al, 2018). For mentors, interpersonal skills were shown to be enhanced, along with increased sense of responsibility, independence, and leadership (Kramer et. al, 2018; Vandal et. al, 2018; Rohatinsky et. al, 2017). However, there is a lack of sustainability among current Peer Mentorship Programs (PMP); examples to improve this are incorporating faculty partnership and promotion of inter-year collaboration (Nowell et. al, 2017; Rohatinsky et. al, 2017).

Research Problem
The purpose of this program was to facilitate interconnectedness and a sense of community within the nursing programs at Vancouver Island University. Implemented in September 2019, the VIU Nursing Peer Mentorship Program partners mentees and mentors within each program to guide their educational experience.

This research investigates student perspectives on whether PMPs are effective at (1) providing academic support and stress relief for student mentees, (2) developing leadership and teaching skills for student mentors, (3) preparing students for success in clinical practice for both mentees and mentors, and will also determine (4) what are the strengths and weaknesses of the current PMP structure.

Methods
Participants were invited to complete an online survey via google forms. The survey included a multiple-choice question to classify participants by program and year. Likert-scale questions were included to assess the extent to which the PMP influenced the success of students’ clinical practice, patient interactions, communication, collaboration, and clinical skills. A total of n=31 responses were gathered.

Findings/Conclusions
Overall, the VIU Nursing PMP facilitated educational and emotional support for VIU BSN students and new graduate nurses, which created a collaborative atmosphere. PMP participants explored professionalism, collaboration, and leadership, which are fundamental skills that better prepare nursing students to navigate their future practice.