



mental health

jaya

NURSING MENTORSHIP PROJECT

A step closer to leadership

Jaya Mental Health is a Charitable Incorporated Organisation, registered in England and Wales with the UK Charity Commission, Charity registration number: 1159008, since 2014.

Jaya Mental Health's (JMH) mission is to promote the training and equipping of the healthcare workforce practicing in the field of mental health in low and middle income countries and support the creation of skilful workforces that have a central role in the reduction of health inequalities worldwide.

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Without the generosity of our supporters, Jaya Mental Health would not be able to train healthcare professionals or extend specialist care to those affected by mental health challenges across South Asia.

To everyone who believes in our mission—who supports our projects and embraces the challenge of building resilient mental health services in some of the world's most underserved regions - thank you.

A heartfelt and special thank you to the Burdett Trust for Nursing, whose unwavering support has been instrumental in strengthening the long-term sustainability of our work with nursing workforces throughout South Asia. Your partnership is helping to build a future where nursing care is accessible, compassionate, and robust.

Jaya Mental Health, 2025



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Executive Summary

Mentorship is a critical foundation for developing leadership within the nursing workforce. Yet prior to this initiative, Nepal lacked any formal mentorship programme across its major hospitals and health care settings.

Over the past two years, Jaya Mental Health (JMH), in close partnership with Bhaktapur Hospital, has implemented Nepal’s first formal and comprehensive nursing mentorship programme. This pioneering effort has strengthened confidence among nursing mentors, supported junior nurses in their transition into professional roles, and produced a structured framework rooted in Nepal’s existing—but underutilised—Nursing Code of Conduct.

To build on this success, JMH is working with new nursing teams to replicate and adapt the mentorship model, including a major new initiative at Mental Hospital Lagankhel—Nepal’s only state-run mental health facility—supported by the Burdett Trust and other partners.

In parallel, JMH is engaging key stakeholders such as the Nursing Association of Nepal and the Nepal Nursing Council to explore national pathways for wider uptake of the JMH Model of Nursing Mentorship. Central to this effort is the goal of transforming Nepal’s Nursing Code into a practical, living tool—one that enhances care quality, reinforces professional identity, and embeds leadership across the nursing workforce.

I. Background

In recent years, nurses across the globe have faced unprecedented challenges. The far-reaching impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, the escalating climate crisis affecting vulnerable communities, and ongoing armed conflicts claiming thousands of lives have placed extraordinary pressure on healthcare systems—and on nurses at their core. These intersecting crises highlight the urgent need for the nursing profession to evolve in response to both internal and external demands.

To effectively navigate these complex realities, all areas of nursing (education, clinical practice, and public health) must find new ways to organise and deliver care. Leading this transformation will require nurses to develop a new set of leadership skills rooted in adaptability, innovation, and collaboration.

Today's health challenges demand nurse leaders who can creatively solve problems, pilot new approaches to improve patient care, and inspire teams to achieve collective impact (World Economic Forum, 2016; Courtney, Nash, Thornton & Potgieter, 2015). This leadership imperative is global in scope but particularly pressing in low-income countries, where limited resources and workforce shortages mean that nurses are often the most consistent point of care, yet rarely occupy leadership positions.

With the right support, nurses can plan, organise, delegate, and empower others to reach their full potential. However, in many countries, systemic undervaluing of the nursing profession—especially where nurses are perceived as subordinate to other health professionals—continues to obstruct their capacity to lead change. Overcoming these barriers is essential if nurses are to serve not just as caregivers, but as key agents of transformation within health systems.

NURSING MENTORSHIP AND LEADERSHIP IN NEPAL

According to the World Health Organization (WHO)'s State of the World Nursing Report 2025, at the time of writing, there were less than 100,000 nurses in Nepal—equating to just 20 to 29 nurses per 10,000 population. This figure is significantly lower than those seen in higher-income countries such as the UK, and even compared to several neighbouring countries in Asia. Beyond the severe shortage of trained professionals, Nepal's healthcare system remains predominantly managed by male medical staff, with nurses—and particularly female nurses—rarely occupying managerial positions or participating in key decision-making processes.

When Jaya Mental Health (JMH)* launched its mentorship pilot project, there were no formal nursing leadership training programmes in Nepal, nor was there a structured mentorship framework to guide and support newly qualified nurses in their transition into practice. This gap not only limited professional development but also reinforced outdated hierarchies within the healthcare system.

As a nurse-led organisation, JMH is committed to supporting nurses across South Asia by equipping them with the tools, knowledge, and confidence to lead. Our approach challenges conventional leadership models and places nursing at the heart of solutions for Nepal's overburdened and under-resourced healthcare system.

In February 2022, JMH was invited by the Nursing Now Challenge to host a webinar on "Practicing self-compassion and protecting your mental health during the COVID-19 pandemic." We also co-facilitated two Nightingale Challenge Global Solutions Initiative webinars on "Supporting early-career nurses and midwives in the transition from student to registered practitioner to leader."

JMH team members from both the UK and Nepal participated as panellists, moderators, and assessors of challenge solutions submitted by nursing professionals around the world. These engagements not only reaffirmed the scarcity of leadership development opportunities in low-income countries like Nepal but also revealed a strong and growing appetite among nurses for practical, innovative models of mentorship and professional growth.

* Please note that Jaya Mental Health operates in Nepal under the registered name Unity in Health.



II. Nursing Mentorship Pilot Project – A Step Closer to Leadership

In response to the urgent need to strengthen nursing leadership in Nepal, and with the generous support of the Burdett Trust for Nursing, Jaya Mental Health (JMH), in partnership with Bhaktapur Hospital—one of Nepal’s oldest state-run hospitals—launched one of the country’s first formal nursing mentorship projects in 2022.

BHAKTAPUR HOSPITAL: NURSING WORKFORCE OVERVIEW AND EMERGING CHALLENGES

Bhaktapur Hospital is a 144-bed tertiary-level general government hospital strategically located in Dudhpati, Bhaktapur, near Kathmandu. Serving a high patient load with limited resources, the hospital plays a critical role in the national healthcare system. It currently employs close to 100 nurses across 20 diverse clinical departments, including a dedicated psychiatric outpatient service.

Patient Volume (Average):

- Inpatient Admissions (Monthly): 318
- Inpatient Admissions (Yearly): 3,816
- Outpatient Department (OPD) Visits in 2023: 153,782

Impact of COVID-19

During the height of the pandemic, the hospital’s nursing staff were frontline responders, with nearly 50% contracting COVID-19 while providing care—an illustration of their dedication under extraordinary strain.

Workforce Attrition Trends:

Like many healthcare facilities across Nepal, Bhaktapur Hospital is experiencing a significant outflow of trained nurses to high-income countries. This ‘brain drain’ is exerting pressure on service delivery and workforce stability.

Nursing Turnover Rates:

- 2022: 20%
- 2023: 25%
- 2024: 33%

This rising trend of attrition underscores the urgent need for sustainable strategies to retain skilled nurses and to support their professional development and wellbeing.

Looking Ahead:

In response, there is an opportunity to design targeted retention initiatives—such as incentives for continued service, professional development pathways, international exchange with return commitments, and improved working conditions. Bolstering the nursing workforce at Bhaktapur is not only crucial for maintaining service quality but also for strengthening the resilience of Nepal’s broader public health system.

Mentorship plays a vital role in the professional journey of nurses. It supports both novice and experienced practitioners by facilitating professional growth, workplace engagement, job satisfaction, peer networking, and long-term succession planning (Rohatinsky et al., 2018). A nurse-led support system, mentorship bridges the gap between knowledge and practice, builds confidence, and helps practitioners internalise and apply professional standards in their daily work (NMC, 2021). It also supports the transition of newly registered staff into practice, while developing leadership capacity among mentors themselves.

Developing the confidence of **nurse mentors** is a critical first step in advancing nursing leadership in Nepal. Through this project, senior nurses working at Bhaktapur hospital were trained to:

- Provide meaningful learning opportunities,
- Foster the professional development of mentees,
- Offer psychological support and constructive feedback, and
- Model professional behaviours and attitudes aligned with nursing excellence.

Before the launch of this project, Bhaktapur Hospital had no formal mentorship system to support newly registered or experienced nurses across any of its departments. The concept of mentorship was largely unfamiliar among staff, and its potential for enhancing leadership skills and professional development was not widely recognised.

JMH's ***Nursing Mentorship Pilot Project – A Step Closer to Leadership*** represents the first phase of a broader, long-term strategy to build and embed nursing leadership capacity within Nepal's healthcare system.

AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

The main aims and objectives of the project included:

- To support Bhaktapur Hospital in delivering a high-quality, evidence-based mentorship programme for both newly registered and experienced nurses working across all clinical departments.
- To build the capacity of the hospital's senior nurses by strengthening their mentoring, communication, and leadership skills within the clinical workplace.
- To develop a replicable mentorship framework that could be adopted by other healthcare institutions and nursing employers across Nepal, and recognised by the Nursing and Social Security Division of the Ministry of Health and Population.

INTENDED OUTCOMES

Some of the most relevant outcomes of the project included:

- To improve the work experience and professional confidence of newly registered nurses and those transitioning into new roles, through a structured and supportive system of mentorship.
- To foster a supportive senior nursing workforce—welcoming to students and new staff, open to sharing expertise, and committed to the continued professional development of their colleagues.
- To promote nationwide adoption of the mentorship framework developed under this initiative, thereby expanding leadership development opportunities and raising the profile of the nursing profession in Nepal.
- To enhance the professional self-belief and confidence of nurses, supporting their ability to lead, collaborate, and initiate improvements in patient care.



III. Project Phases

The **Nursing Mentorship** Pilot Project was designed as a two-year initiative, delivered in three **key phases**, each building on the outcomes of the previous stage. The approach was both participatory and evidence-informed, ensuring interventions were rooted in the lived experiences and aspirations of Nepal's nursing workforce.

Despite some delays due to the COVID-19 pandemic, implementation remained broadly in line with the timeline proposed in JMH's original concept note (September 2021).

PHASE I: GIVING NURSES A VOICE – MENTORING AND SCOPING OF INTERVENTIONS

The first phase focused on **listening, learning, and laying the groundwork** for sustainable change.

Listening to nurses' experiences is vital because they offer frontline insights into patient care, healthcare system challenges, and practical solutions that often go unheard in high-level decision-making. Their perspectives reflect the realities of daily clinical work, from resource gaps to emotional burdens, and highlight areas in urgent need of reform or support. By actively listening to nurses, we not only validate their professional expertise and lived experience but also strengthen policies and practices with a grounded, human-centred understanding. In doing so, we move towards a more responsive, resilient, and compassionate healthcare system.

Key activities under Phase I included:

- **Consultations with nursing staff** at all levels of Bhaktapur Hospital to surface a wide range of claims, concerns, and issues affecting their professional practice (Koch et al., 2000).
- **Strengthening partnerships** with key stakeholders, including Bhaktapur Hospital's leadership, the local Nursing School, and the Nursing and Social Security Division at the Ministry of Health and Population, to ensure collective ownership and alignment in subsequent phases (Clarke et al., 2015; Draper et al., 2016).

- Finalisation of a programme theory/theory of change, including clearly defined outcomes, indicators, and mechanisms for change, to guide both implementation and evaluation.

PHASE II: CAPACITY BUILDING – DEVELOPING THE CAPACITY OF MENTORS

Building on insights from Phase I, Phase II involved **tailored training and capacity building** for senior nurses.

Developing the capacity of nursing mentors is essential for building a strong, skilled, and confident nursing workforce. Effective mentors play a critical role in guiding, supporting, and inspiring new and junior nurses, helping them navigate clinical challenges, build professional competence, and grow in confidence. By investing in the development of nursing mentors—through training, resources, and institutional recognition, we ensure that mentorship is not only available but impactful. Strengthening mentor capacity also contributes to better retention, improved quality of care, and a culture of continuous learning within healthcare settings, ultimately benefiting both healthcare workers and the patients they serve.



Key activities under Phase II included:

- Designing **targeted interventions** that directly addressed the key themes and issues identified during the initial consultation phase.
- Delivering a **mentorship training programme** for senior nursing staff, with a strong emphasis on developing both **professional skills** (e.g., clinical leadership, quality of care), and **soft skills** (e.g., communication, team collaboration, emotional intelligence).

- Embedding a structured **leadership development module** that equipped mentors with the confidence, language, and tools to influence practice, support colleagues, and advocate for their profession.

PHASE III: ACHIEVING AND EVALUATING CHANGE

The final phase aimed to consolidate learning, evaluate outcomes, and support the transition from training to impact within clinical settings.

Supporting the transition from training to impact within clinical settings is vital to ensuring that newly trained nurses and healthcare professionals can apply their knowledge confidently and effectively. This period is often marked by uncertainty and high pressure, where the gap between theory and practice becomes most apparent. Structured support—such as onboarding programmes, clinical supervision, peer mentoring, and opportunities for reflective practice—can bridge this gap and empower individuals to translate their training into meaningful, patient-centred care. When this transition is well-supported, it not only enhances clinical competence and job satisfaction but also contributes to better patient outcomes and long-term workforce sustainability.

Key activities under Phase III included:

- Mentors implemented change initiatives within their own departments, applying their new skills to support mentees, improve team culture, and enhance service delivery.
- Ongoing support was provided to ensure the sustainability and institutionalisation of mentorship and leadership practices within the hospital's systems.
- A structured evaluation of project outcomes was carried out, with results to be shared in the future through:
 - The Nursing and Social Security Division of the Ministry of Health and Population, Nepal,
 - National and international platforms to influence wider policy and practice.

IV. Implementation Overview

The implementation of each project phase was critically important in turning plans into action, marking the point where strategies, resources, and frameworks developed earlier were put into practice to deliver the intended outcomes.

PHASE I: GIVING NURSES A VOICE

April – August 2022

The first phase of the project—"Giving Nurses a Voice: Mentoring and Scoping of Interventions"—was implemented between April and August 2022. It followed a **needs-based assessment approach** designed to identify professional priorities, set realistic goals, and most importantly, provide nurses with a safe platform to reflect on their work environment and envision change.

This initial phase served as both a diagnostic and empowering tool, capturing the lived experiences of nursing staff at Bhaktapur Hospital. Nurses were invited to engage in a series of **interactive workshops and a World Café**, facilitating open, collaborative dialogue. Structured assessment tools such as a Job Satisfaction Survey and the **Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale** were used to evaluate perceptions of self-worth and professional satisfaction at the start of the project.

Some of the topics explored in the interactive workshops included:

1. Day-to-day barriers and challenges faced by nursing staff.
2. Leadership qualities most valued and needed in the clinical context.
3. Practical and emotional support needed for effective nursing leadership.
4. Collective aspirations for a well-functioning, empowered nursing team.



The World Café format, held over four days, ensured all 70 nurses working at Bhaktapur Hospital at the time could participate. Sessions were structured around small groups of 4–5 participants to encourage meaningful conversation and peer learning. Nurses came from diverse departments including:

- **Intensive Care Unit** – 19 participants
- **Neonatal ICU** – 7 participants
- **Surgical Unit** – 15 participants
- **General Ward** – 22 participants
- **Emergency Department** – 7 participants

Participants ranged in age from 22 to 60 and represented a mix of early-career and experienced professionals:

- Newly registered nurses
- Nurses with less than one year of experience
- Nurses with 1–3 years' experience
- Senior nurses with 10+ years in practice





- Challenges & barriers in day-to-day role as a nurse:
- 1) Visitors: घर के अंदर, बुझाने, गार्ड
Visiting hour करवाने आने
 - 2) Miscommunication: Beet staffs & patients, visitors, helpers
Gossiping
 - 3) Senior-Junior conflict
 - 4) Nurse-patient ratio
 - 5) No time for eat & drink, urinal
 - 6) No time for patient complete care [patient staff Ratio]
 - 7) No sufficient supply (materials, medicines)
 - 8) Inservice education lacking [Training]
 - 9) रात को बिना बिदा आना, Duty hour extra without payment
 - 10) No salary on time; No incentives
 - 11) सर्विको रिस्ट Nurse staff सब (Doctor, Administration, Visitor, patient)
 - 12) Work-life imbalance: Heavy duty जी करने को
family including Baby (Breastfeeding)
 - 13) Transportation facilities: रात को को Bus पडने
 - 14) No hospital facilities added for staff (Bett & others) (locker)
proper changing room, tea room
 - 15) No any monthly meetings, conferences
 - 16) No enough security & manpower (विचार) direct अपना जो अवधि

KEY INSIGHTS AND FINDINGS:

JOB SATISFACTION SURVEY, MAY 2022

62 nurses participated in the job satisfaction survey. Of these:

4

were satisfied
with their job

44

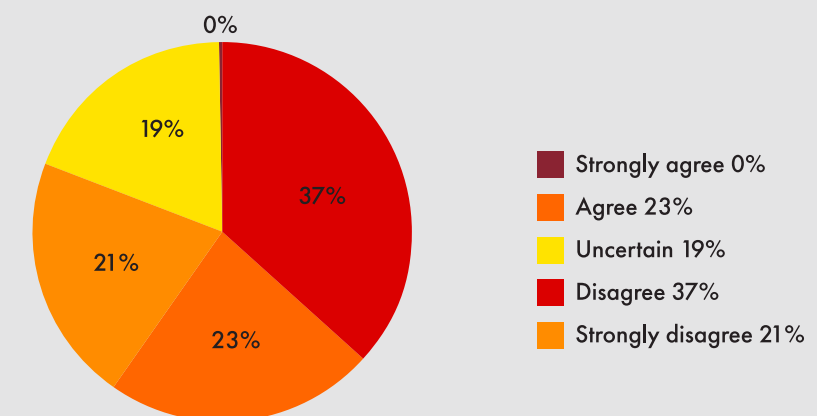
were ambivalent
about their job

14

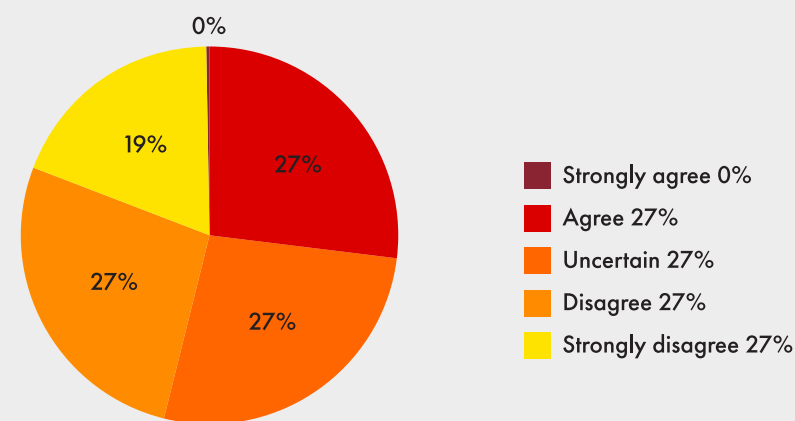
were dissatisfied
with their job

In addition:

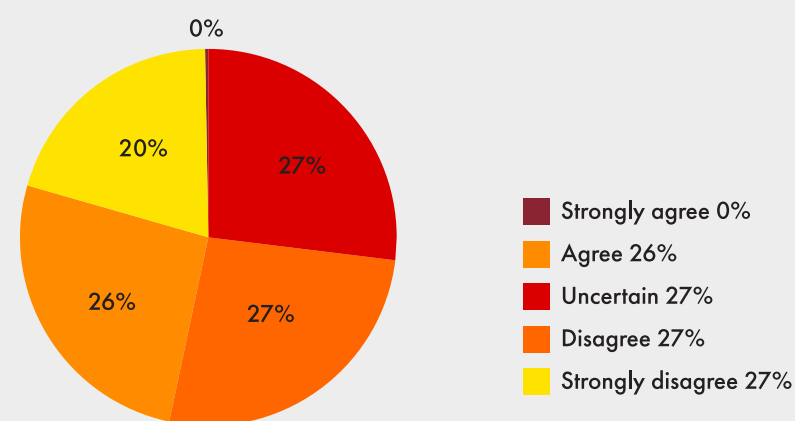
- 58% disagreed or strongly disagreed with the statement: *I am satisfied with the nurse-to-patient ratio in a shift.* (strongly agree 0%; agree 23%; uncertain 19%; disagree 37%; strongly disagree 21%)



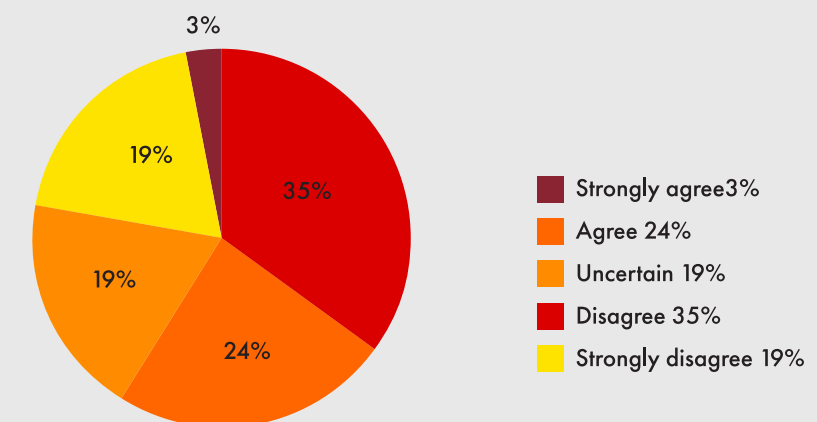
- 73% were uncertain, disagreed or strongly disagreed with the statement: *I am satisfied with the career advancement opportunities.* (strongly agree 0%; agree 27%; uncertain 27%; disagree 27%; strongly disagree 19%)



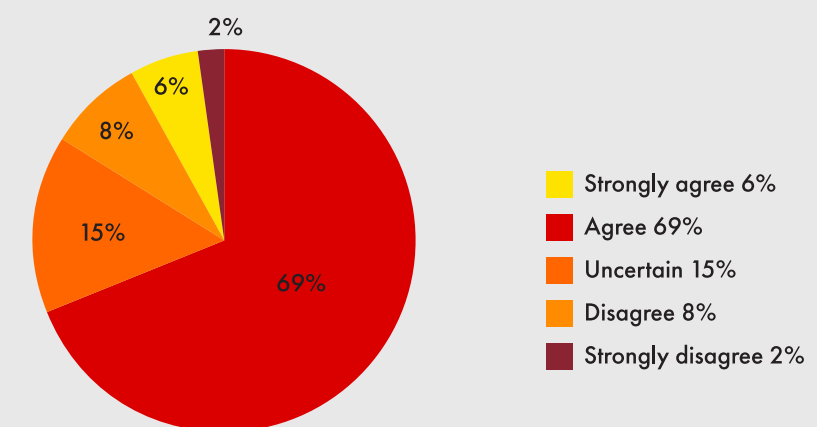
- 74% were uncertain, disagreed or strongly disagreed with the statement: *I am satisfied with the fact that my work is rewarded and/or valued by my superiors.* (strongly agree 0%; agree 26%; uncertain 27%; disagree 27%; strongly disagree 20%)



- 73% were uncertain, disagreed or strongly disagreed with the statement: *I am satisfied with my salary taking into account the tasks I perform.* (strongly agree 3%; agree 24%; uncertain 19%; disagree 35%; strongly disagree 19%)



- 75% strongly agreed or agreed with the statement: *I am satisfied with the level of trust that I have in my co-workers.* (strongly agree 6%; agree 69%; uncertain 15%; disagree 8%; strongly disagree 2%)



The consultations revealed a nursing workforce deeply committed to their profession but depleted of support:

- A widespread human resources crisis was evident, severely impacting the capacity of nurses to meet patient needs.
- Many felt overburdened and unsupported by hospital leadership, with minimal recognition of their contributions.
- Nurses were not seen as professionals, but rather as assistants to medical staff—with damaging effects on morale.
- During the COVID-19 pandemic, many nurses worked for up to seven months without pay, leading to serious financial distress and reliance on family for basic needs.
- There was a deep hunger for mentorship, role models, and leadership—particularly from senior nurses who could guide, inspire, and advocate for them.

Rosenberg self-esteem scale, April/ May 2022

Of the 62 nurses who completed the scale:

- 52 scored low (i.e. feelings of incompetence, inadequacy, and difficulty facing life's challenges)
- 10 scored medium (i.e. fluctuating between feelings of approval and rejection)
- 0 scored high (i.e. self-judgment of value, confidence, and competence)

Despite the difficulties, the response from the nursing team was overwhelmingly hopeful. Many described the process as emotional and cathartic, recognising in themselves the potential to drive change within their hospital and across the profession. Participants expressed a strong desire to take part in building a structured, sustainable mentorship programme; improve professional identity and respect for nurses; strengthen teamwork, communication, and leadership; and enhance the quality of care for service users through a more confident and empowered workforce.

"My father was a government official. He did not want me to be a nurse, he thought it wasn't a good, dignifying job. Still, I applied for nursing school without him knowing, and I became who I am today. I am proud of being a nurse. Every nurse deserves to grow professionally and personally. We are not here just to receive orders."

RN Roshani Shrestha,
Training Coordinator, Bhaktapur Hospital



"I don't know how to thank Jaya Mental Health for this opportunity to share what and how I feel about my job, my duties, my role as a nurse. I feel I have gained more respect for my nursing colleagues, and for myself. There was so much I did not know about my nursing colleagues. It feels good being part of this change. It gives me hope for the future".

RN Monika Bade,
Staff Nurse, Medical Ward



PHASE II: CAPACITY BUILDING – DEVELOPING THE CAPACITY OF MENTORS

September 2022 – February 2023

The second phase of the Nursing Mentorship Pilot Project focused on addressing the priority concerns identified in Phase I through a structured capacity-building programme. Central to this phase was the delivery of tailored mentorship training to senior nurses, equipping them with both technical and interpersonal skills to support mentees effectively and grow into confident nursing leaders.

This stage aimed to deepen nurses' sense of professional identity, strengthen their self-belief, and enhance their team communication and problem-solving abilities—critical elements for fostering a culture of mentorship and leadership within the hospital.

Training Structure and Focus Areas

The training programme was designed around three core modules, each focusing on a fundamental aspect of professional and leadership development:

Module I: Professional Identity & Reflective Practice

- **Key themes:**
 - Mindfulness and reflection on the nursing journey
 - Understanding and strengthening professional identity
 - “Different, but same” – exploring shared values and challenges in nursing
- **Objective:** To help participants reconnect with the purpose of their work, reflect on their strengths, and recognise their role as agents of change within the healthcare system.

Module II: Effective Communication and Conflict Management

- **Key themes:**
 - Active listening and empathy in patient care
 - Navigating personal space and professional boundaries
 - Understanding and responding to stress and interpersonal conflict

- **Objective:** To promote compassionate, clear communication and equip mentors with strategies to manage challenging conversations and maintain positive team dynamics.

Module III: Time Management and Teamwork

- **Key themes:**
 - Identifying and addressing time management barriers
 - Tools and techniques for effective planning and prioritisation
 - Importance of communication and collaboration in high-functioning teams
- **Objective:** To improve productivity, reduce burnout, and promote a culture of mutual support and accountability within nursing teams.





METHODOLOGY AND LEARNING APPROACH

The delivery approach combined theoretical instruction with practical, experiential learning, making the content relevant and immediately applicable to the nurses' clinical context. Key methods included:

- Interactive discussions grounded in real-life scenarios.
- Role play and simulation exercises to build problem-solving confidence.
- Peer learning and group reflection to encourage critical thinking and solidarity.
- Facilitated feedback to reinforce growth and self-awareness.

This phase not only provided a structured learning experience but also created a safe and encouraging space where nurses could express themselves, learn from each other, and begin to see themselves as future leaders.

By the end of Phase II, participants showed noticeable growth in confidence, communication, and leadership capacity, laying a strong foundation for Phase III, where their learning would be applied and evaluated within their clinical practice.

PHASE III: ACHIEVING AND EVALUATING CHANGE

FEBRUARY 2023 – APRIL 2024

Phase III of the project focused on supporting participants to translate their learning into practice, while simultaneously evaluating the impact of the initiative and identifying sustainable pathways for continued growth in nursing leadership at Bhaktapur Hospital.

This phase aimed to ensure the long-term integration of mentorship practices into daily clinical work and to evaluate the project’s influence on both individual participants and the broader hospital culture. A combination of refresher workshops, reflective exercises, and collaborative group activities formed the backbone of this stage. Also key to this stage was the re-visiting of the Nepal Nursing Council’s Code of Conduct and the creation of a formal Nursing Orientation Framework that was subsequently embedded into the hospital’s system.

Some of the key moments of Phase III include:

a. February 2023: Refresher Workshop

To initiate this phase, all participating nurses attended a refresher workshop, which served as both a consolidation and launchpad for implementation.

The objectives of the workshop were to revisit and reflect on the core learnings from the three training modules; share personal and professional growth experiences resulting from the mentorship training; identify remaining barriers to effective mentorship, collegial relationships, and career development; and explore practical strategies to mitigate these barriers and sustain positive changes in the workplace.

The workshop used group-based reflection and participatory methods to generate honest, constructive feedback from all nurses, including small-group discussions guided by targeted prompts, real-world scenario analysis, and peer-sharing sessions to highlight moments of growth and challenge.

Sample reflection questions explored during the sessions included:

- What changes have you noticed in how you communicate with colleagues or junior staff?

- What have you done differently in your role since attending the training?
- Have you noticed improvements in how nursing teams function or collaborate?
- What mentorship-related practices have you adopted, and what has been the response from mentees?
- What challenges remain, and what support would help address them?

Key Themes from Participant Feedback

Feedback from participants surfaced a number of insightful themes:

- Increased confidence and self-awareness: Many participants shared that they felt more empowered to speak up in clinical discussions and to guide junior staff with more assurance.
- Improved team dynamics: Several nurses reported a noticeable shift in workplace relationships, with improved communication and mutual support.
- Recognition of mentorship value: Participants acknowledged how mentorship improved their ability to support less experienced staff and contributed to a more welcoming and learning-oriented environment.
- Persistent systemic challenges: Despite these gains, nurses continued to experience barriers such as limited time for mentorship activities, lack of institutional recognition for mentoring roles, and insufficient staffing levels.

Following the refresher workshop, the project team facilitated a structured implementation period. Key activities included:

- Mentor-led change projects within clinical departments, allowing participants to apply mentorship concepts in real-world settings.
- Peer support groups to sustain learning and share implementation challenges.
- Monitoring and evaluation exercises, including:

- Feedback surveys and focus group discussions
- Informal interviews with mentees and senior nurses
- Observation of mentorship practices and team interactions

The project team assessed outcomes across several domains:

- Individual growth in confidence, communication, and leadership capacity.
- Departmental change in attitudes toward mentoring and team collaboration.
- Institutional impact on policy awareness and interest in nursing-led initiatives.

Overall, evaluation results demonstrated:

- Stronger sense of agency and professional identity among participants.
- Enhanced mentorship culture, with increased willingness to support junior staff.
- Early signs of culture shift at Bhaktapur Hospital, with nurses increasingly viewed as key contributors to patient care and system improvement.

b. June 2023: World Café on Orientation, Mentoring & Supervision

In June 2023, JMH facilitated a World Café session that brought together 52 nurses from Bhaktapur Hospital to explore current practices around the orientation, supervision, and mentoring of junior nursing staff. The session was designed as a space for both junior and senior nurses to engage in open dialogue, reflect on lived experiences, and co-identify strategies for improvement.

The activity, conducted over four hours, was divided into four separate group discussions to ensure meaningful participation and in-depth conversation across different nursing departments and levels of seniority.

c. November 2023 – April 2024: Mentorship Framework & Code of Conduct Integration

Between November 2023 and April 2024, Jaya Mental Health (JMH) worked closely with a selected group of senior nurses at Bhaktapur Hospital, preparing them to assume formal mentorship roles within the hospital. This period marked a critical transition from training and reflection to structured implementation, with two central objectives guiding the work:

1. Development of a Practical, Adaptable Mentorship Framework

JMH facilitated the co-creation of a simple yet effective mentorship framework, designed to:

- Provide a clear structure for mentor–mentee relationships;

- Include practical tools to guide both parties through key phases of the mentorship journey;
- Be time-limited, with defined stages and measurable goals;
- Remain adaptable to evolving needs and circumstances within the hospital's departments.
- The framework outlines expected roles and responsibilities, core milestones, and feedback mechanisms. It also includes templates for mentorship agreements, reflection logs, and evaluation forms, ensuring that the process is both standardised and flexible.

2. Integration of the Nursing Code of Conduct

A key focus of this phase was aligning mentorship and orientation practices with **the Nepal Nursing Council's Code of Conduct (2019)**—a document originally based on the UK's Nursing and Midwifery Council (NMC) standards. Despite its national relevance, it became evident during workshops that most nurses, including those in senior positions, were unfamiliar with the existence or contents of the Code.

This gap highlighted a wider systemic issue in the dissemination and practical application of regulatory standards across Nepal's healthcare sector.

As a result, JMH introduced a structured programme of interpretation, discussion, and contextualisation of the Code's key standards. Together, senior nurses:

- Reviewed each of the professional standards;
- Reflected on how these align with the **realities of practice at Bhaktapur Hospital**;
- Identified ways to **embed these principles into mentorship, supervision, and day-to-day care**;
- Developed department-specific examples of how the Code can guide ethical practice and professional behaviour.

Key Outcomes

- Senior nurses and mentors have recognised the urgent need to implement the newly developed mentorship framework. The next crucial step will be to pilot this framework in the wards, paving the way for more consistent, supportive, and sustainable staff development practices.
- Senior nurses gained working knowledge of the Nursing Code of Conduct and began using it as a reference point for guiding mentees and evaluating care standards.

- A shared understanding emerged around the role of ethical leadership in nursing, particularly in contexts of limited oversight and systemic undervaluing of the profession.

This phase not only strengthened the professional foundation of the mentorship initiative, but also began to foster a culture of accountability, reflection, and ethical leadership, key to long-term improvements in nursing care and the professional status of nurses in Nepal.

Since then, all nurses practicing at Bhaktapur Hospital have read and formally signed

the Nursing Code of Conduct, marking a significant milestone in the institutionalisation of professional standards within the hospital. This commitment reflects a growing awareness and ownership among nursing staff of their professional responsibilities and ethical obligations.

Post-Phase III activities

In the post-Phase III period, and as part of JMH's continued commitment to strengthening



the nursing workforce at Bhaktapur Hospital, a Train the Trainer (ToT) mentorship programme was launched in 2025. A total of 11 senior nursing staff were selected to take part in this initiative, equipping them with the tools and confidence to pass on their knowledge, not only to recruits at Bhaktapur Hospital, but also to senior nursing colleagues in major hospitals across Nepal.

This activity supports a ripple effect of shared expertise, leadership, and collaboration, furthering JMH's mission to empower nurses as changemakers within their communities and beyond.

Also, this year, and for the first time in their careers, all nurses received personalised name badges—a symbolic yet deeply meaningful milestone—especially significant as most staff uniforms previously lacked names and titles. These badges not only helped patients identify who was caring for them, but also reinforced professional pride and visibility among staff. Each badge was colour-coded according to the nurse's role, introducing a new and significant system that marked an important moment in the evolution of the hospital's nursing workforce.

IN THEIR OWN WORDS: HOW NURSES GREW THROUGH THIS PROJECT

"For me, one of the best aspects of this project was how it helped me to recognise and embrace my nursing role more fully. It improved my ability to communicate effectively, interact with patients more confidently, and contribute to a more coordinated and compassionate care environment in our hospital."

RN Prajina khatri, Staff Nurse,
Medical Ward



"Through this project, I gained a deeper understanding of the importance of self-care, effective stress management, and maintaining a strong professional identity. It highlighted the critical role of mentorship, highlighting the value of supporting junior nurses and fostering clear, respectful communication between junior and senior staff."

On a personal level, the experience helped me achieve a healthier work-life balance, encouraging me to set boundaries and prioritise well-being."

Professionally, it sharpened my decision-making abilities and improved my time management skills—both of which are essential for delivering high-quality care in a demanding environment like the one we have in our hospital."

RN Sandhya Shrestha,
Staff Nurse, High Dependency Unit



"I felt genuinely proud to finally receive a badge that displays my name and the colour representing my role within the hospital. It's a simple yet powerful symbol of professional identity and recognition."

Name badges play an important role in our daily work—they help clarify our professional level, make it easier for patients and colleagues to address us, and reinforce a sense of accountability. Most importantly, they reflect who we are and the value we bring to the healthcare team."

RN Srijana Bhattarai,
Charge Nurse, Intensive Care Unit



"I feel proud to have contributed to the development of the orientation framework. Being part of this initiative gave me a sense of ownership and accomplishment, knowing that my input played a role in shaping a valuable resource for new staff joining our hospital's nursing workforce."

Through the newly established mentorship framework, we are creating a foundation for better patient care and a healthier work environment. Patients will benefit from good quality nursing care delivered by a more confident and well-supported team. The framework encourages effective teamwork among us nurses and our co-workers, promoting collaboration and mutual respect."

RN Yamuna Pradhan,
Hospital Nursing Inspector, Maternity Ward



"This experience was truly rewarding. It provided us with a valuable opportunity to learn about the process of developing official documents for nurses. As a member of the writing committee, I was proud to contribute, and I'm pleased to say that our team worked together exceptionally well."

The project also created a space where in-charge nurses could come together in a structured and meaningful way, which helped strengthen our sense of teamwork and collaboration. I genuinely enjoyed being part of the framework development process—it was both educational and fulfilling. One of the things I'm most proud of is how this experience gave me the confidence to engage more openly with others. Simply asking, "How are you?" and being more in tune with the well-being of my colleagues has helped me relate more closely to fellow nurses and support mental health in the workplace. That, for me, has been a particularly meaningful outcome."

RN Uma Gautam,
Senior Staff Nurse, Maternal & Child Health



"As a junior nurse, I was not directly involved in creating the nursing orientation framework. However, I can see why it is a very important and valuable resource—especially for new nurses like myself. This framework will help reduce confusion and challenges commonly faced by newcomers, providing clear guidance and expectations from the start."

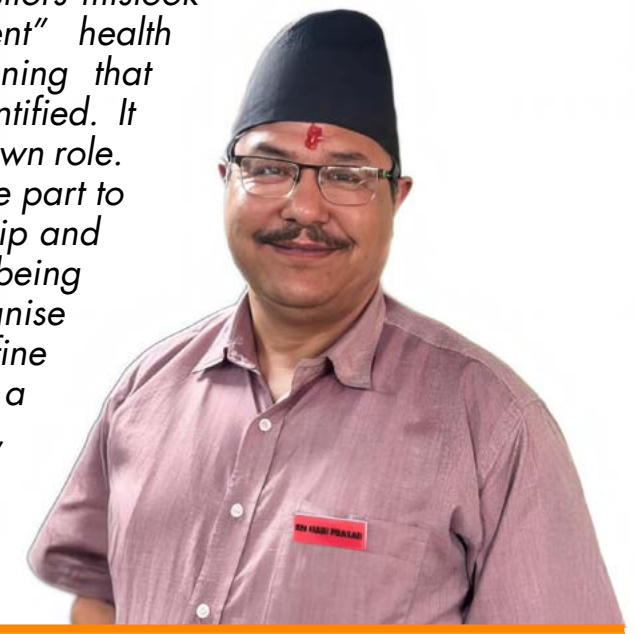
The framework offers a practical way to track the progress and competency of new nurses, ensuring we all receive the support we need to grow professionally. I believe this framework will be a vital tool in building confidence and competence across all our nursing team and everyone else who will join us in the future."

RN Sabina Basi,
Staff Nurse, Medical Ward



"Not long ago, I struggled to feel proud of being a nurse. I vividly remember moments—shared with colleagues—when we felt a sense of joy if patients or visitors mistook us for doctors or other more "prominent" health professionals. Looking back, it's disheartening that we once found pride only in being misidentified. It reflected a deeper issue of undervaluing our own role. But today, things are different. Thanks in large part to the work we've been doing around mentorship and nursing identity, I now feel genuine pride in being a nurse. This journey has helped me recognise the strength, skill, and compassion that define our profession. More than ever, I stand as a strong advocate for the rights, recognition, and dignity of nurses everywhere."

RN Hari Prasad Konju,
Charge Nurse, Operation Theatre



"This project will have a lasting impact on our nursing practice. The introduction of the new nursing orientation framework marks a major step forward, providing structured guidance and support for new staff. For the first time, we have a clear, formal process in place—and trained personnel ready to deliver this orientation effectively."

Through this initiative, we've also developed essential skills in working collaboratively with both junior and senior staff. It has given us practical tools that we can now apply in our day-to-day work. For example, we've learned to introduce ourselves at the beginning of each shift, clearly explain our roles and responsibilities, and inform others about key areas to visit or access when needed."

Perhaps most importantly, the project has strengthened our ability to communicate actively and confidently—an essential skill in building trust and ensuring patient safety."

RN Sharmila Khadka,
Charge Nurse, Surgical Unit



"I think this project provides essential guidance to all nurses and has the potential to significantly reduce staff turnover—a major challenge not only in our hospital but across many healthcare settings in Nepal. By supporting nurses as they transition into their new roles, we are really supporting a more confident and competent workforce."

This support directly contributes to improved quality of care for patients and, equally important, to the mental health and well-being of us all."

ANM Sarita Twanabasu,
Staff Nurse, Maternity Ward



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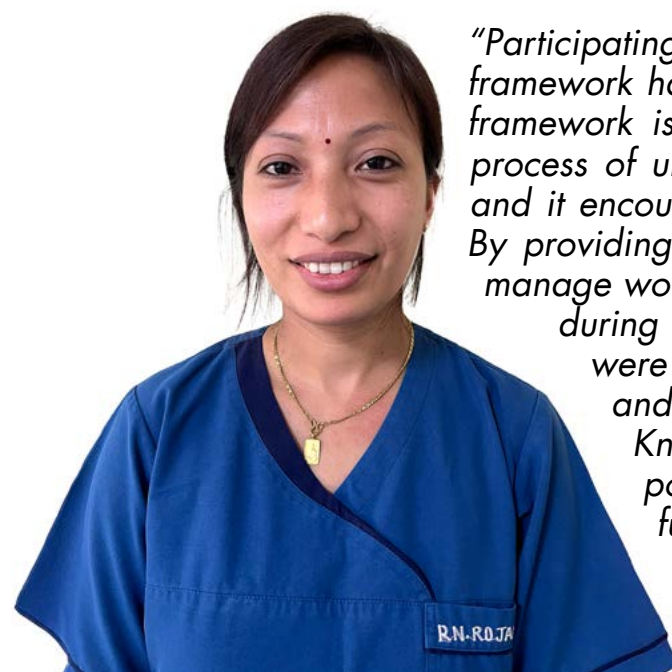
ANM Sarita Twanabasu,
Staff Nurse, Maternity Ward



"Can you see our name and position on our uniforms? That's thanks to the incredible support of Jaya Mental Health. This simple addition is deeply meaningful—it serves as a daily reminder of everything Jaya Mental Health has done to support our professional identity and well-being. It's more than just a name on a badge; it's a symbol of recognition, pride, and belonging.

My overall experience has been very positive. This project helped fill a significant gap—not just in training, but also in emotional support. For the first time, we feel truly seen and heard as nurses. The guidance we now receive is aligned with our level and specific needs, which makes our roles clearer and our work more effective. Looking ahead, I believe more need-based training will continue to strengthen our capacity, ensuring we grow not only as professionals but also as a united and supported team."

RN Devaki Kandel,
Hospital Nursing Inspector

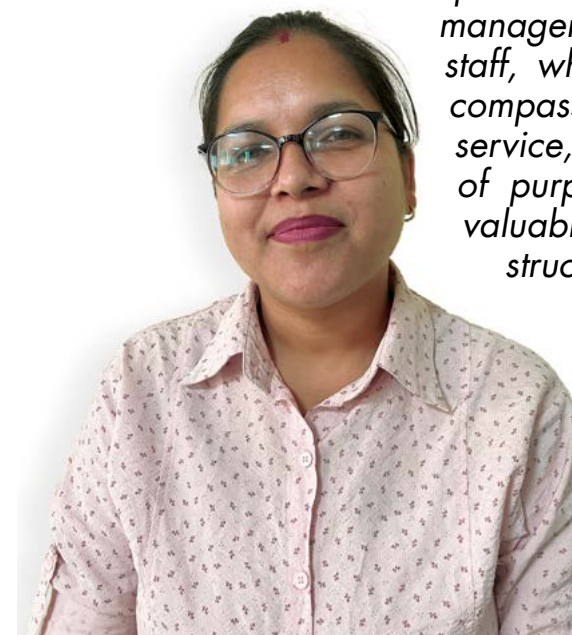


"Participating in the development of the orientation framework has been a truly proud moment for me. This framework is important for everyone—it simplifies the process of understanding key concepts and protocols, and it encourages nurses to work more independently. By providing clear guidance, it has made it easier to manage workloads and has helped save valuable time during daily tasks. The proudest moments for me were during the design phase of the document and, especially, when it was officially approved. Knowing that our work will have a lasting, positive impact on nursing practice is very fulfilling."

RN Rojana Bajracharya, Hospital Nursing Inspector,
Intensive Care Unit

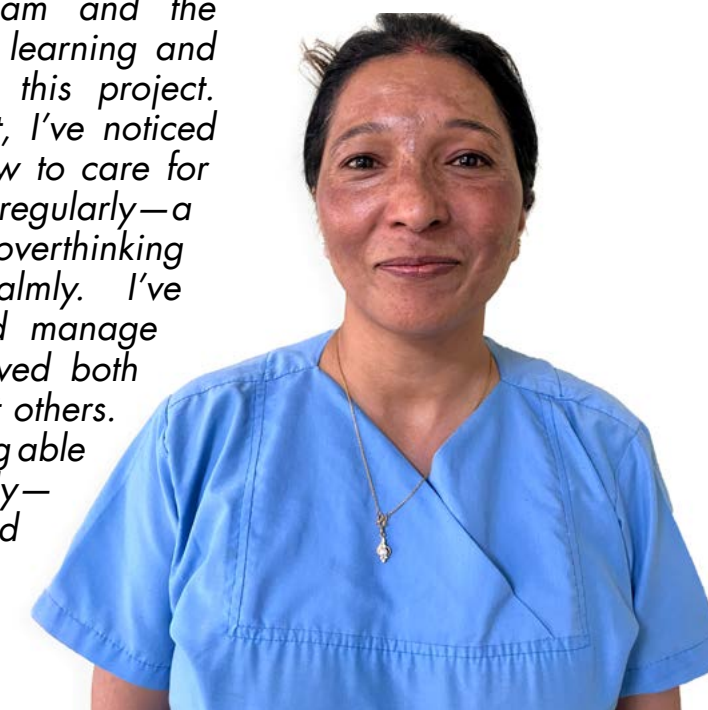
"This project is already making a meaningful difference—and its impact on patient care is clear. We are seeing better nursing management and improved coordination among staff, which directly translates into more effective and compassionate care. Patients now experience better service, delivered with a smile and a renewed sense of purpose from the nursing team. One of the most valuable outcomes has been the establishment of a structured orientation process for every nurse joining Bhaktapur Hospital. This ensures consistency, confidence, and competence from the start. Also, the emphasis on continued leadership and management training is strengthening our team and preparing us to face future challenges with greater resilience and unity."

RN Man Kumari Shrestha,
Senior Nursing Officer



"Wearing a badge is more than just part of the uniform—it's a reminder of who I am and the journey I've been on. It symbolises the learning and responsibilities I've embraced through this project. Since becoming involved in this project, I've noticed real changes in myself. I've learned how to care for my own well-being, and I now meditate regularly—a practice that has helped me reduce overthinking and approach challenges more calmly. I've also developed skills to stay safe and manage aggressive situations, which has improved both my confidence and my ability to support others. What's been especially meaningful is being able to share these tools with friends and family—helping them, too, to handle conflict and protect their mental well-being."

ANM Maiya Nayabha,
Maternity Ward



At the time of writing, JMH was also supporting the Nursing Department in designing a visual poster summarising the professional standards of practice and behaviour outlined in the Nursing Code. Once completed, the poster will be displayed prominently across multiple departments within the hospital, serving both as a daily point of reference for staff and a visible symbol of accountability and professional pride.

This initiative is expected to:

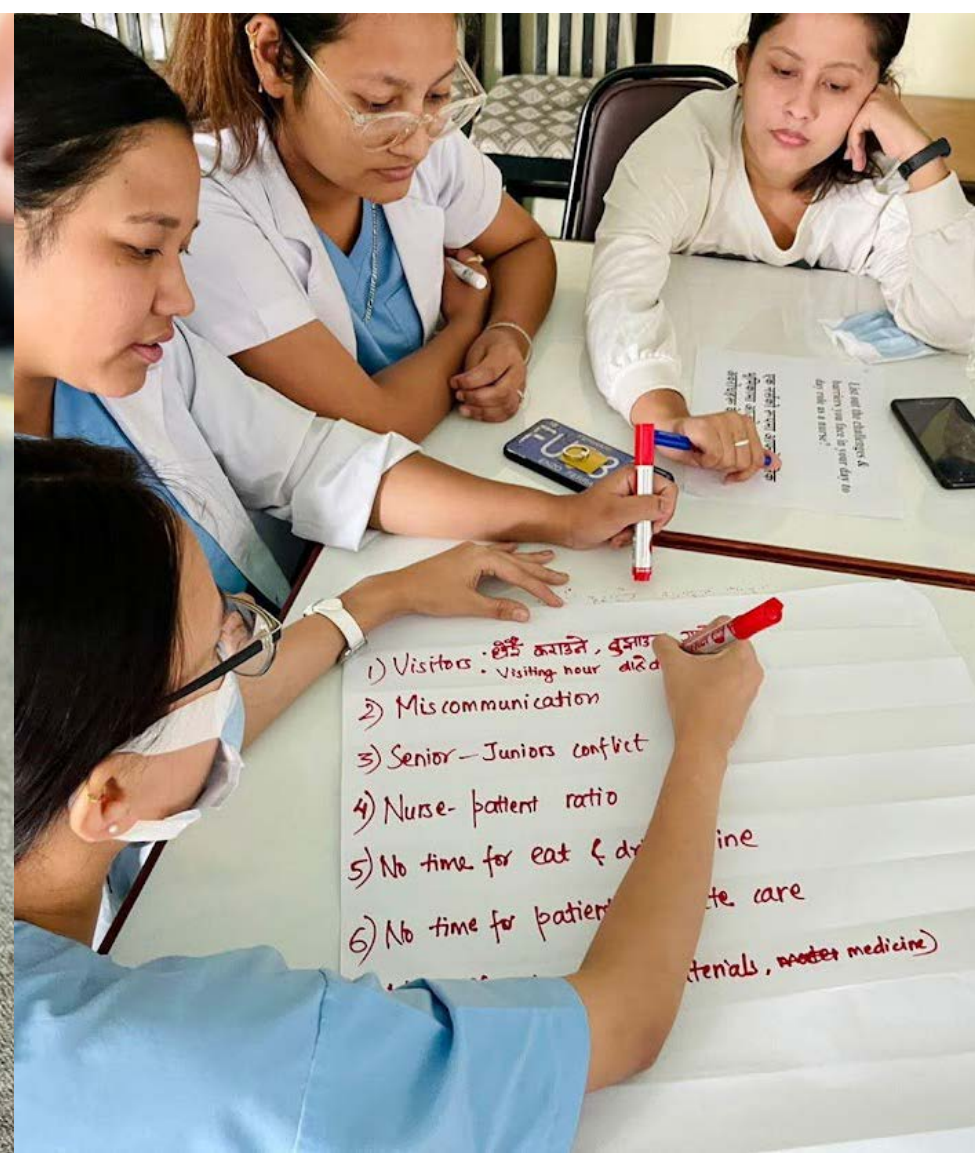
- Promote ongoing reflection on professional standards;
- Enhance interdisciplinary respect for the nursing profession;
- Act as an educational tool for new staff, patients, and visitors, increasing transparency around nursing values and expectations.

Together, these actions signal an important step forward in embedding leadership, professionalism, and ethical nursing practice into the culture of Bhaktapur Hospital—contributing to the long-term goal of raising the profile and impact of nurses across Nepal's health system.

V. A Scalable Model of Nursing Mentorship

In addition to strengthening nursing practice and leadership capacity at Bhaktapur Hospital, this project has developed a replicable model of nursing mentorship that can be adopted and implemented in similar clinical settings across Nepal and the wider region.

JMH's three-stage model of nursing mentorship follows the SMART framework—Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, and Time-based. Designed to be low-cost and resource-efficient, the model offers a practical yet powerful tool for transforming nursing practice. With minimal investment required from hospitals, it has the potential to significantly enhance both professional development and the quality of patient care.



JAYA MENTAL HEALTH’S MODEL OF NURSING MENTORSHIP:



VI. Key Findings Informing the Way Forward

While this pilot project marks the completion of the first stage in the journey toward sustainable nursing leadership in Nepal, much remains to be done to build a confident, empowered workforce capable of guiding, leading, and influencing healthcare practice.

This project did not take place without a number of important challenges, which are valuable to acknowledge when planning future, similar initiatives. These include:

- High turnover among key staff—including nurses, directors, and nursing administrators—which disrupted continuity and limited the ability to scale tools such as the Job Satisfaction and Rosenberg Self-Esteem surveys.
- Limited time to pilot key tools, including the Orientation and Mentorship Frameworks, which have been developed but are not yet fully embedded into routine practice.
- Lack of existing governance structures, requiring the team to build systems from the ground up—adding both time and complexity to the process.
- Fragmented communication between departments, highlighted by the fact that many nurses were meeting one another for the first time during our workshops.
- The need for stronger institutional buy-in and accountability mechanisms to ensure that project outcomes are sustained and integrated into long-term practice.



These challenges underscore the importance of embedding flexibility, capacity-building, and leadership engagement into future project design to ensure meaningful and lasting impact.

Over the coming months, JMH will aim to continue to work alongside Bhaktapur Hospital to strengthen and embed the newly-created mentorship framework. Key priorities include ongoing testing and refinement of mentorship tools and processes, providing supervision and guidance to senior nurses in their evolving roles as mentors; and advocating for nurses and the profession's critical role in transforming healthcare delivery within Bhaktapur and beyond.

Once this consolidation phase is complete, JMH will initiate the next stage of its leadership development strategy, in close collaboration with Bhaktapur Hospital and other local partners. This includes:

- **Expanding mentorship practices** to other healthcare settings in Nepal;
- **Engaging with educational institutions, including nursing colleges to strengthen the practical application of leadership skills in clinical settings.** This collaboration seeks to better prepare nursing students for the transition from theory to practice, while addressing existing gaps in how leadership is currently taught and experienced, both in the classroom and during clinical placements.
- **Collaborating with the Ministry of Health and Population** to support policy-level change in nursing education and professional development.

This pilot project uncovered a nursing workforce starved of professional reflection opportunities, leadership support, and structured clinical governance. Nurses shared deep concerns about their ability to influence change, receive recognition, and deliver safe, high-quality care in an increasingly fragile system.

Particularly alarming was the issue of high nursing turnover, with many nurses leaving Nepal for positions abroad. This exodus poses a severe threat to the sustainability and quality of nursing care in Bhaktapur and across the country.

In this context, advancing a nationwide nursing mentorship and leadership framework has never been more urgent. Leadership development must become a central component of Nepal's strategy to retain skilled nurses and ensure safe, effective care.



VII. Broader Dissemination and Collaboration

To ensure the lessons learned in Bhaktapur are shared widely, JMH is already working with additional nursing teams to replicate and adapt the mentorship framework. This includes a new project at Nepal's only state-run mental health hospital, also supported by the Burdett Trust and other partners.

Simultaneously, JMH is engaging with the Nursing Association of Nepal, the Nepal Nursing Council, and others to explore avenues for wider dissemination and use of JMH Model of Nursing Mentorship as well as Nepal's official Nursing Code of Conduct, which remains underutilised across healthcare institutions. Making the Code a living, practical tool for nurses is essential to improving care standards and strengthening professional identity.



In May 2025, Jaya Mental Health (JMH) introduced its nursing mentorship model to the Mental Hospital in Lagankhel—Nepal's only state-run facility dedicated exclusively to mental health. This marks a significant milestone, as it becomes the second hospital to formally adopt JMH's mentorship approach, designed to foster sustainable leadership within the nursing workforce.

As part of this initiative, and with a vision of building a national support network of nursing leaders across Nepal, JMH invited a select group of senior nurses from Bhaktapur—graduates of the earlier mentorship project and recipients of Training of Trainers (ToT)—to co-facilitate components of the mentorship framework for their peers at the Mental Hospital Lagankhel.

This initiative represents more than a training programme. It's a powerful example of inter-hospital collaboration, where nurses from different institutions come together to share knowledge, exchange experiences, and strengthen leadership across the profession. It reflects a united effort to uplift nursing in Nepal—amplifying a collective voice that champions the needs and rights of nurses nationwide.





"Delivering my very first presentation at the Mental Hospital Lagankhel was both a nervous and exciting experience. At first, I felt anxious, but once I began presenting, my confidence grew and I focused on doing my best. It was a valuable learning opportunity, and it has motivated me to keep improving and sharing more in the future. I'd like to work on making my voice clearer to better engage my nursing colleagues. I also see the importance of increasing group involvement during presentations to make the sessions more interactive and impactful."

Preeti Napit, Nurse,
Bhaktapur Hospital and Co-facilitator at the Mental Hospital Lagankhel.

"I did my best to serve as an effective facilitator, and the experience taught me a lot. While I felt confident in many aspects, I also realised there's room for growth—particularly in encouraging more group involvement and managing time to ensure the content is delivered within the allotted timeframe."

Devaki Kandel, Nurse,
Bhaktapur Hospital and Co-facilitator at the Mental Hospital, Lagankhel.

A Note of Gratitude

In the face of ongoing challenges, the nurses at Bhaktapur Hospital remain unwavering in their dedication to professional growth, team unity, and the well-being of every person they care for. Their resilience and passion continue to inspire and shape the work of Jaya Mental Health.

Nurses are the backbone of healthcare in Nepal—and across the world. Without them, healthcare simply would not exist.

As a nursing-led organisation, Jaya Mental Health is deeply grateful to all our nursing colleagues. We are proud to stand alongside you—advocating for your profession, investing in your skills, amplifying your voices, and creating pathways for you to lead, inspire, and drive meaningful change.



**Together, we are building
a future that is more
just, equitable, and
compassionate for all.**



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