



College of Medicine and Public Health Mentoring Program Guide for Mentors

Thank you for agreeing to act as a mentor in our program. We hope the time spent as a mentor is as valuable and rewarding for you as it will be for your mentee. Below is a basic guide to establishing and maintaining your mentoring relationship.

Some foundation principles:

- the mentoring relationship provides a confidential, non-judgmental and non-directive environment
- the parties to a mentoring relationship are equal within, and share responsibility for, the relationship.

The mentor and mentee should negotiate the operational details of the mentoring relationship in the first few meetings. Issues for consideration include:

- When, where, how often, and how long will the mentor and mentee meet?
- How formal/informal and how flexible would the mentor and mentee like the relationship to be?
- What are the mentee's objectives for the mentoring relationship?
- What are the expectations and roles of the mentor and mentee?
- What kind of issues, tasks or projects would the mentee like to work on with the mentor?
- What types of activities would the mentee find valuable, in addition to meeting and talking with the mentor? For example:
- Observing the mentor in action
- Shadowing the mentor to see what he/she does on a typical day
- Asking the mentor to review the mentee's work
- Asking the mentor to observe the mentee in action and provide feedback, and/or
- Working on a joint project or task together

- What kind and how much contact will the mentor and mentee have in between meetings, eg by email or phone?
- How will the mentor and mentee keep the relationship going if either party is away or if meetings have to be cancelled or rescheduled?
- What are the confidentiality requirements?
- Do both parties understand the no blame exit rule?

As much as possible, the mentor should anticipate offering the mentee support in one or more of the following areas:

- Listening objectively, and acting as a sounding board and confidante, to the mentee's ideas, ambitions, plans and problems;
- Asking questions that will encourage the mentee to explore issues from a variety of perspectives, and sharing expertise and experience;
- Challenging the mentee's traditional ways of thinking and acting to encourage them to try strategies that are outside her or his "comfort zone";
- Facilitating the mentee's learning and development and "raising the bar" in relation to her or his potential;
- Providing information, guidance, support, encouragement and constructive feedback eg on further professional contacts as appropriate;
- Providing guidance to the mentee on negotiating the agenda for discussions within the relationship;
- Respecting the mentee's standing, desire to be mentored and improve in their professional development and sensibilities;
- Facilitating problem-solving, decision-making and strategic planning processes in relation to work or career matters;
- Maintaining confidentiality at all times;
- Providing one-on-one career and professional guidance, not direction, and possibly including such things as how to manage difficult personalities or work situations.

Resources

"Making the Right Moves- a practical guide to scientific management for postdocs and new faculty" Burroughs Wellcome Fund and Howard Hughes Medical Institute.

"At the Helm: A Laboratory Navigator" Kathy Barker.

This document has been adapted, with permission, from the Mentoring Program of the Centre for Cancer Biology, Adelaide.