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# Mentoring

Mentoring is the practice of facilitating development and is a dynamic process that will change throughout a doctor's career.

Mentors provide support, direction and an objective view on how the mentee can develop and progress in their working environment.

Mentoring is not just a one-way process that benefits the mentee.

There are many definitions of mentorship available across the business world.

It is generally accepted that there is an overlap of skills with a supervisor or a coach. However, supervisors need to be more directive and coaches generally do not need to have specialist knowledge of the individual’s area of practice, with questioning used to help the individual to find their own solution. Mentoring tends to involve an experienced individual using their greater knowledge and understanding of the work or workplace to support the development of an inexperienced colleague; which may also involve opening doors for them.

### Benefits of mentoring

Mentoring can be a helpful tool to aid development of doctors at all stages of their career.It is not just a one-way process that benefits the mentee.

There are many well documented benefits for all involved including the employing organisation and regulatory bodies such as improved retention rates and work performance as well as improved working relationships. It has recently been well used as a tool to encourage equality and reduce discrimination, with schemes targeted at minority groups.

Mentoring has become increasingly prominent on the medical education agenda. Most medical schools, postgraduate deaneries, royal colleges, and NHS trusts and employers mention mentoring in some context.

The Department of Health and the NHS also value mentoring, as part of the Improving Working Lives initiative. The CMO (England) report on Women in Medicine and a [BMA study](https://www.bma.org.uk/collective-voice/committees/medical-academics-committee/women-in-academic-medicine) asserted that mentoring can increase retention within the profession.

If a mentoring scheme is a formal relationship with the permission of the employer, time should be set aside for discussions. If it is formal, it may need to be job planned for the mentor (if a consultant or SAS doctor). Mentee time is often included within SPAs in the job plan. The BMA strongly encourages employers to have mentoring schemes in place for all permanent staff and to allow adequate time in job plans for this to happen.

It is also often the case that mentoring may be a short term relationship, and it is important to recognise that it does not have to be long term. It may come to a natural conclusion or either party may need to break the relationship.

The mentee gains:

* + A better understanding of the culture and structure of the organisation
  + Improved self-confidence
  + Increased skills and knowledge
  + A supportive environment in which successes and failures can be evaluated
  + Provision of necessary support and information
  + Potential for increased visibility and demonstration of their career focus
  + Individual attention from experienced senior colleagues

The mentor gains:

* + Satisfaction from contributing to the mentee's development
  + Enhanced self-esteem
  + Revitalised interest in work through an opportunity to examine one's own achievements and skills
  + Opportunities to test new ideas
  + Improved ability to share experience and knowledge

### Becoming a mentor

Some key characteristics that make a good mentor include approachability, a genuine interest in others, patience, objectivity, a willingness to share your experiences and a passion to develop others.

Some of the key skills include:

* + questioning
  + active listening
  + challenging
  + probing
  + clarifying
  + coaching

Being an expert in a field, topic or specialty does not necessarily mean that someone will be a good mentor. Understanding something and helping another person to understand something are two different situations.

Although it is helpful, a mentor does not need to have a complete understanding of the working environment of the mentee in order to be able to offer advice and support, but they will need to be skilled in the process of mentorship to ensure the mentee gets the maximum benefit from the relationship.

Training for mentors and mentees is essential - contact your HR department, local deanery or royal college to find out about what training you can do to help you become an effective mentor.

### Becoming a mentee

#### Identify the area of work

If you are interested in establishing a mentoring relationship you should first identify which areas of your work would benefit most from having the support of a mentor. Whilst most schemes are voluntary and may follow this process, mentoring can also be used as a condition of practice as directed by the GMC/NCAS.

#### Inform your line manager

You should then inform your line manager of your plans. You do not need permission to establish a mentoring relationship but it would be helpful to involve your line manager. Your mentor should be separate from your line manager and it is best not to involve anyone that has any management role in your performance.

#### Contact your deanery

Once you have considered your needs and discussed the idea with your line manager you should then contact your deanery to see if there is an existing mentorship scheme in your area. If you already have a potential mentor in mind then you should approach them and ask to set up a meeting about it. If they are not ready to commit to the relationship they may have suggestions for other colleagues or contacts in other organisations that could help. The majority of formal schemes match mentors to mentees by a third party who can assess the respective needs of both sides and facilitate an introductory meeting or set some ground rules.

#### Arrange your first meeting with the mentor

When you contact an individual who agrees to act as your mentor make sure that you arrange the first meeting at this point.

#### Make decisions on documentation

Mentoring can be formal or informal and there may be a good mentoring relationship with no documentation. However, many find documentation helpful to assist with their portfolio and some employers with formal schemes in place ask for some documentation. If this is the case you may be creating a number of documents during this process which you should keep together safely. Some of these will require signatures so it is recommended that you print paper copies and use a binder or folder as your portfolio record.

#### Set the groundrules

In your first meeting with your mentor you should set the ground rules for discussion (eg confidentiality), discuss the boundaries as well as objectives, goals, frequency of meetings etc. Confidentiality is a key component of mentoring and both mentor and mentee should feel able to speak freely.

#### Use a checklist

You may decide to use a meeting checklist such as that available on the Connecting for Health Mentoring toolkit for your first meeting. There are also model 'contracts' and 'session records' available to assist the process and keep track of issues discussed and actions planned.

#### NHS Mentoring Schemes

Several mentoring schemes are available across the NHS. Connecting for Health are aiming to produce a list of schemes on their website. The Midlands, London, North West and Yorkshire and the Humber already have established mentor schemes and several other employers across the UK are embracing the benefits that mentoring can bring. Some Royal Colleges can also provide mentoring support.

Ask your clinical director, human resources department, college or local deanery for information on any mentoring scheme in your area.

### Mentoring schemes

[Academy of Medical Sciences' National Mentoring and Outreach scheme](http://acmedsci.ac.uk/careers/mentoring-and-careers/mentoring/)  
The Academy's one-to-one mentoring scheme provides postdoctoral biomedical researchers with career development support by pairing them with an Academy Fellow

BMA - Find Your Deanery  
For practical information to assist you with your training and working, you should always contact your Deanery for information specific to your region.

[BMJ Learning](http://learning.bmj.com/learning/home.html)  
BMJ Learning offers a wide range of modules and events focusing on non-clinical skills to assist doctors in their continuing professional development (CPD). This includes BMJ learning skill module:[How mentoring can help you](http://learning.bmj.com/learning/module-intro/.html?moduleId=5003266&searchTerm=%E2%80%9Cmentoring%E2%80%9D&page=0)

[Derriford Hospital Plymouth](http://www.nhs.uk/Services/hospitals/Overview/DefaultView.aspx?id=921)   
Please contact [William Mukonoweshuro](mailto:William.Mukonoweshuro@phnt.swest.nhs.uk)

[KSS Deanery - GP Mentoring](http://kssdeanery.co.uk/gp-mentoring)  
The Mentoring Programme is designed as an important source of educational support for doctors in General Practice.

[LondonDeanery](http://mentoring.londondeanery.ac.uk/)   
LondonDeanery coaching and mentoring scheme emphasises the importance of maximising career potential and professional performance through personal development facilitated by the service.

[Royal College of Physicians' mentoring scheme](https://www.rcplondon.ac.uk/education-practice/advice/want-be-mentored)  
The RCP mentoring scheme is designed to support trainee doctors in their professional and personal development. As a mentee you can choose from our bank of trained mentors across the UK to find someone who fits your needs.

[Royal Cornwall Hospital](http://www.rcht.nhs.uk/RoyalCornwallHospitalsTrust/Homepage.aspx)  
Please contact - [Catherine Ralph](mailto:Catherine.Ralph@rcht.cornwall.nhs.uk)

[Social Mobility Foundation](http://www.socialmobility.org.uk/)  
Founded in 2005, the SMF is a charity which aims to make a practical improvement in social mobility for young people from low-income backgrounds. They extend support to 16-17 year old students throughout 11 career sectors including medicine. The SMF are always looking for mentors, contact them to [find out how you can get involved](http://www.socialmobility.org.uk/get-involved/professionals/ways-to-get-involved/).

[The South West Peninsula Deanery - Getting support and guidance through mentoring](http://www.peninsuladeanery.nhs.uk/about/mentoring/)  
The quality of support you receive during your period as a foundation doctor, core trainee or specialist trainee is vital to enable you to get the best out of your future career.

[Torbay Hospital](http://www.nhs.uk/Services/hospitals/Overview/DefaultView.aspx?id=RA901)   
Please contact - [Dr David Sinclair](mailto:david.sinclair@nhs.net)  
Director of Medical Education and Consultant

### Useful resources

We've pulled together some useful links to further information about coaching and mentoring services available. It's always worth checking with the Royal Medical College relevant to your specialty for programmes that may be on offer.

BMA

* + [BMJ Careers - coaching and mentoring skills](http://careers.bmj.com/careers/advice/view-article.html?id=20018242)

NHS

* + [NHS Leadership Academy](http://www.leadershipacademy.nhs.uk/)
  + [NHS Online Mentoring Project](https://www.nhsementoring.org/)

More

* + [The Coaching Network](http://www.coachingnetwork.org.uk/)
  + [Institute of Healthcare Management](http://www.ihm.org.uk/)
  + [David Clutterbuck Associates](http://www.clutterbuckassociates.com/)
  + [European Mentoring and Coaching Council](http://www.emccouncil.org/)
  + [International Mentoring Association](http://mentoring-association.org/)
  + [Oxford School of Coaching and Mentoring](http://www.theocm.co.uk/)
  + [University of South Wales - Institute of Leadership and Management](http://www.uswcommercial.co.uk/ilm/)
  + [General Medical Council - Induction and mentoring](http://www.gmc-uk.org/guidance/ethical_guidance/11825.asp)
  + [The Leadership Foundation in Scotland](http://www.lfhe.ac.uk/networks/scotland/)
  + [Management Futures](http://www.managementfutures.co.uk/)