



Continuing professional development and mentoring

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Continuing professional development and mentoring

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ABSTRACT

This professional development paper aims to give you some pointers that will help you get the most from your mentorship experience as a mentor or a mentee. We look at how mentoring can support your professional development. A simple definition is that a mentor may share with a mentee (or protege) information about his or her own career path, as well as provide guidance, motivation, emotional support, and role modelling. A mentor may help with exploring careers, setting goals, developing contacts, and identifying resources.

ARTICLE HISTORY

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The Institute of Medical Illustrators (IMI) recommends six sessions over a period of six months:

Session 1: Getting to know each other.

Session 2: Setting objectives – What do we both want to get out of it, is it advice on career progression or team dynamics etc.

Sessions 3-5: Two-way discussions – each partner takes it in turn to lead the session.

Session 6: Reflection.

The activities in this paper follow this sequence with the added step of filling out the forms to apply for the scheme. The IMI scheme will be a rolling process as new members can sign up to the scheme at any time and IMI will aim to pair members within three months.

The primary purpose of a rather than the mentoring relationship is to help to develop the mentee. As a general rule this is fine, but specific to IMI's mentorship scheme, remember it is a 'reciprocal' mentorship model, so the learning should be going both ways. Therefore, the mentee needs to be proactive and help to create an agenda and a relationship which reflects the types of goals he/she would like to achieve. Mentors are offering their valuable time to their mentees. It is the mentee's responsibility to make the most of that time (think 'what you put in you get out') (Mogensen, 2021). There are plenty of useful suggestions online including Holiday (2018).

Activity – apply to the mentorship scheme

One real advantage is that the Institute is supporting the mentoring process (Erolin, 2021).

So that IMI members with less than two years of experience are paired with more experienced members. Members with over two years of experience however can choose whether they wish to be the 'junior' or 'senior' part of the mentorship match.

Download and fill out one of the mentorship application forms for either the senior or the junior at the following link: <https://www.imi.org.uk/resources/education-cpd/mentorship-scheme/>. The aim is for the partnership to allow learning to occur in both directions, as mentoring is a two-way street between mentor and mentee.

There is also something called reverse mentoring for example where older mentees can learn about younger members' experiences and expectations, for example, listen to the ted talk by Conley on what baby boomers can learn from millennials at work and vice versa (Conley, 2018).

Take some time to think about what you want from the mentorship as one of the questions on the form requires time and not a little thinking and preparation and can't be completed in a rush. You will be asked what you hope to get out of the mentorship scheme along with what you consider to be your areas of expertise (Management, interpersonal skills, specialist technical skills) as this helps IMI to pair you with the most suitable partner.

Activity – getting to know each other

Expectations are natural and can often be met if they're realistic and negotiated properly. However, if they're not well articulated or if they're not

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consistent with the purposes of the relationship, then this can lead to disappointment and problems. Therefore, an important step in creating an effective mentoring relationship is to discuss and negotiate expectations.

Have a discussion early on with your partner to discuss each other's expectations. The mentor should ideally lead this conversation. Make sure that both partners articulate expectations but also follow this formula:

State the expectations. Allow the other partner to ask clarifying questions to understand what the expectation means.

Agree on this expectation or mutually agree on a common definition and then move on to the next expectation.

If an expectation is not realistic or is inappropriate, this should be noted and put aside as 'not applicable' or 'to be discussed at a future time.' In the future, there might be a way to make it a more realistic expectation in light of the mentoring program goals.

'What matters is clarity between the two partners in a developmental relationship about what is expected of them' (Megginson and Clutterbuck, 2004, p. 5).

Looking for more guidance on aligning expectations? Have a look at the blog posts from <https://www.get.mentoringcomplete.com/blog>

Activity – setting objectives

As you prepare to work with your mentor you need to set your personal goals. Have a look at the following blog post by Nelson (2021) <https://www.get.mentoringcomplete.com/blog/the-5-parts-of-every-effective-mentoring-goal> or read chapter 2 on goal setting from Megginson and Clutterbuck (2004) to help you in setting your goals. Do remember that your mentor is not solely responsible for your education, well-being or success. You should be out there reading, experimenting, and connecting with other people, so you can bring that perspective to your mentor and bounce it off them and learn how to make use of it, so you are contributing to the discussion (Holiday, 2018).

Activity – online mentorship sessions

These will inevitably be online whilst we are still under pandemic conditions also with the wide geographic spread of IMI members nationally and internationally. So how do you mentor virtually?

Think about these virtual mentoring tips to keep the relationship engaging and rewarding for both mentor and mentee.

- Consistency is key
- Communicate Expectations
- Embrace and learn with technology
- Be in the moment
- Create a pull for feedback

For some useful tips for staying engaged look at the 5 tips suggested by Palmer (2021).

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Activity – reflection

Mentorship contributes towards the CPD portfolio of the mentor and mentee.

Do look at online resources from the Journal of Visual Communication in Medicine to support your reflection and other references for example Koshy et al.'s paper on Reflective practice in health care and how to reflect effectively (2017).

Mentor and mentee will need to reflect on the mentorship as both will learn and gain from the experience and it is important to record and reflect on how this benefits your personal development and ultimately patients.

More information on requirements for CPD audit is available via the Academy for Healthcare Sciences Website (<https://www.ahcs.ac.uk/the-register/continuing-professional-development/>) and the Institute of Medical Illustrators website (<https://www.imi.org.uk/resources/education-cpd/continuing-professional-development/>). For a good supporting book look at Techniques for Coaching and Mentoring (Lancer et al., 2016) which is the latest edition of the book quoted on the IMI webpage about the mentorship scheme (Megginson & Clutterbuck, 2004).

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