



AmericanCollege of
HealthcareExecutives
for leaders who care®

ACHE Mentor Guide

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The appendices are a collection of ACHE articles on mentoring that offer further knowledge, tips and tools to enhance your mentoring relationships.

Disclaimer: For the ease of reading, we will refer to the mentor with masculine pronouns and the mentee with feminine pronouns throughout this guide.

ACHE sincerely thanks Pat Shehorn, LFACHE, senior consultant to ACHE's Career Resource Center, for her contributions to the ACHE Mentor and Mentee Guides.

CHAPTER 1

Being A Mentor

First Things First: What Is Mentoring?

It was Homer's epic tale *The Odyssey* that formally introduced us to the concept of mentoring: Mentor was a friend of Odysseus, who placed Mentor in charge of his son when Odysseus left for the Trojan War. Today, Merriam-Webster defines mentoring as a wise and trusted counselor or teacher; an influential senior sponsor or supporter. This is a good definition, but merely a starting point in the journey of understanding mentoring.

Mentoring is a relationship between two individuals, with the more experienced individual, the mentor, serving as coach, cheerleader, confidant, role model, devil's advocate, counselor and, when possible, a "door opener" for the mentee. It is a relationship based on trust and mutual respect in which both partners, the mentor and the mentee, have responsibilities and should benefit from the relationship.

Mentoring is all about learning and growing. At the professional level, both partners in the relationship are adults, so it is important to consider how we learn as adults. Malcolm S. Knowles, a noted practitioner and theorist of adult education, laid out the basic principles of adult learning in the 1970s. He says that critical to effective adult learning is one's own involvement in diagnosing, planning, implementing and evaluating their learning. In essence, adults like to be self-directed learners. This should be a relief for you as a mentor. You need not do all the work. In fact, you **should not** do all the work.

Some Myths About Mentoring

Mentoring and managing are the same.

Understanding what's involved in your role as a mentor—and how it differs from your role as a manager—is key to providing your mentee with a meaningful mentoring experience. Your role as a manager and as a mentor may seem very similar. In both roles you may serve as a combination of coach, confidant and sounding board to someone. However,

as a mentor, you have to be prepared to take on a broader, more personal relationship than the one you have established with your employees. The main difference between managing and mentoring is mostly a matter of intensity and direction. Managers are primarily concerned with their employees' performances and making sure they complete tasks accurately, on time and within budget. As a mentor, your purpose is to provide your mentee with perspective and questions that encourage learning and to challenge the individual to think in new and creative ways. And unlike the manager/employee relationship, the mentor/mentee relationship extends beyond the typical workday or a traditional workplace role.

Agreeing to be a mentor is a lifelong commitment.

Look back on your own life. How many mentors can you identify? Remembering that mentoring is a relationship based on learning and growing as an individual and as a professional, our needs as human beings change over time and with experience.

Just as all our relationships change over time, what we need in a mentor also changes as time passes and we grow. While serving as a mentor is a role you may repeat often during your lifetime, for the majority of us, a formal mentor/mentee relationship is of relatively short duration. While the length of time depends on the mentee and the mutually agreed upon goals that you will be focusing on, best practice suggests that about a year of meeting regularly is necessary in order to develop a relationship based on trust and respect, and to work your way through defining and then achieving the learning objectives of the relationship together.

Living close to my mentee is important.

In today's global world, where families and friends are often spread far and wide, we are able to not only maintain close meaningful relationships but also develop new ones. **Virtual** mentoring is not only possible, it can have its benefits. A mentor from another part of the country may bring different perspectives and insights than a mentor who may work in the same organization or city.

Mentoring **virtually** does require a bit more thought, planning and focus. You will need to agree upon the primary method of meeting, be it by phone, Teams, FaceTime or some other Internet-based audio/visual tools.

My Role as Mentor

The role of the mentor is primarily one of facilitating learning and development, and creating and maintaining a supportive environment so the relationship can flourish. Your mentee's development should always be at the forefront, with you facilitating self-directed learning by your mentee.

Perhaps it is effective to state what a mentor is not. A mentor is not the Wizard of Oz behind the curtain that the mentee comes to for all of the answers. In fact, one of the main roles of the mentor is to ask good questions so the mentee produces his or her own answers. The mentor manages the learning experience and helps the mentee identify goals and set career objectives. The mentor keeps the mentee focused on her goals, objectives and learning strategies.

At different points in the relationship, the role of the mentor may take on that of a coach: giving advice and guidance, sharing ideas and providing feedback. At other times, the mentor is a source of encouragement and support for his mentee, acting as a sounding board for ideas and concerns, or providing insights into possible opportunities. The mentor may also need to play devil's advocate to help the mentee critically think about important decisions. It is important to understand what role you need to be playing at a particular time in order to facilitate the learning and growth of your mentee.

How To Be the Best Mentor

Perhaps the most important thing a mentor can do is to **listen**. In order to facilitate learning for your mentee to provide advice and encouragement, you need to really listen and understand your mentee first. Great mentors spend considerably more time listening than they do speaking.

Be **open-minded** and **compassionate**. Work hard to see your mentee's side, her wants, needs, feelings and perspectives. With this empathetic approach, your insights or next questions to help your mentee sort through an issue will be better received.

Be **patient** and **honest**. You may need to deliver some tough love in the form of constructive criticism or honest feedback, being the mirror so that the mentee can better reflect on a situation. In some cases, the feedback may not be heard or accepted, and may need to be reintroduced in another conversation.

Challenge your mentee. Set high expectations of performance and encourage trying. Play devil's advocate.

Care about the relationship. The more you invest in this relationship, not only the more will your mentee get out of it, but also the more you will get out of it. Your mentee requested this relationship and thus is likely eager, invested and reading a lot into your availability, or lack thereof, and your tone of voice. When you have scheduled time together, **be there**, physically and mentally.

Share your experiences and insight, but don't tell your mentee what to do—only what you did. Choose stories that you feel are helpful and appropriate to the issue being discussed. Tell the story in a neutral way, so as not to be directing your mentee. You want to demonstrate that you, too, have faced issues and challenges, and it is possible to overcome them.

Mentor's Tools

Questions

Questions encourage learning and growth by giving the mentee time to reflect and articulate her own thinking. So ask questions that require thoughtful answers to help your mentee think through an issue. Ask questions that support and challenge your mentee, such as "It seems as though you handled that issue with your colleague well. How might you apply some of what you did in that situation to your issue with the committee you are experiencing difficulty with now?" Also ask questions that spur reflection by your mentee such as, "Tell me more about what you mean when you say that?" or "Is it possible to look at that in another way?"

Restatements

Many times when someone repeats or rephrases something we have said, we understand it in a different light. As a mentor, you can help your mentee by doing just that for her. For example, ask "From what you just said, my understanding is that..." or even more simply, "So what I think I heard you say was..."

These tactics allow you to serve as a mirror for the mentee by reformulating her statement, which can sometimes be the most important tool in your toolbox as a mentor. The goal is to help your mentee hear what she said and then for her to build on those thoughts and feelings that she has just expressed and explore them further.

Summarizations

We are all accustomed to having meeting minutes so that we are able to remember what took place and verify with those who attended what we discussed and/or agreed upon. Similarly, it is important for you as the mentor to summarize what you have heard/learned during the session with your mentee. This summarization will serve as a reminder of what has just transpired between the two of you and help you and your mentee check on any assumptions. Do take a few summary notes, as it will be good to start your next meeting with a quick review of your last conversation.

You will want to simply share what you heard, learned or accomplished, without judgment and then say something like "Today we spent our time together discussing ... as a result I understand that the following outcomes were achieved ... Did I get that right?"

Silence

Silence is an important tool in learning and growing. We need silence to reflect on actions, thoughts and words that we have spoken or others have spoken to us. Some people need a lot of silence to think through things. But silence can make a lot of people very uncomfortable. Understand that but don't be afraid of silence!

Instead, listen for silence and see if it is being used by your mentee to avoid discussing a particular issue or if she just needs more time to reflect and then will be able to talk further about a particular topic. If your mentee gets silent every time you begin talking about a particular subject, you may need to ask something like "Every time we start talking about _____ it seems to me that you get quiet and seem uncomfortable. Can you share with me what that might be about?"

Generational Differences

While it is not appropriate to make generalizations about people or to assume that we know them based on where they are from, their sex, their religion, etc.,—it may be helpful to understand the context of the generation they grew up in and how it may differ from the characteristics typical of your generation. Being aware of your own generation and the attitudes and perspectives you hold that may have resulted from growing up in that era may help you become a better mentor. Likewise, understanding the context that your mentee grew up in may be useful as you ask reflective questions, listen to her verbal and nonverbal communication, and assist her in clarifying her goals and helping her in a learning and developmental environment. Based on this, we examined what many experts say about the potential impact of generational, cultural and other differences.

Working with Boomers

Those born between 1946 and 1964, or the post-World War II generation, are known as baby boomers and tend to be optimistic, competitive and goal-driven. While they may put in long hours and their work/life balanced may be skewed toward work, many boomers just want to make a difference in the world. They seek recognition and reward for their efforts, and expect the same type of commitment and hard work of others. Based on this traditionalist concept, many baby boomers may believe that the right mentoring relationship should be mentor-directed. Boomers are often asked to be mentors because of their desire to make a difference and because they tend to hold senior leadership positions.

Boomers also want and need a mentor at times. When mentoring a boomer, keep in mind that this generation typically wants to be shown respect, appreciates recognition for their accomplishments and likes to be intellectually challenged. Remember that while some baby boomers are tech savvy, some may be reluctant to use newer methods of technology since they did not grow up with computers.

Working with Gen Xers

Born between 1965 and 1980, Gen Xers watched their parents work hard to “have it all,” and consequently this generation typically seeks a healthy work/life balance. The generation is known for being independent and entrepreneurial. They are largely self-reliant, but value a diverse workplace. Gen Xers seem to prefer immediate feedback and like to communicate via email.

According to Lois J. Zachary, an internationally recognized expert on mentoring, Gen Xers want a mentor who is not only competent but also one who is direct, yet informal, in their style. She notes in her book, *The Mentor’s Guide: Facilitating Effective Learning Relationships*, that due to their independent nature, a hands-off approach may be best in working with Gen Xers. When mentoring a Gen Xer, Zachary advises mentors to “encourage creativity and initiative” and help our “mentees discover new approaches, set expectations, raise the bar and then turn them loose to figure out how to achieve their goals” (Zachary, 2012, p. 52).

Working with Millennials

Those born between 1981 and 2000 are called Generation Y or more commonly, Millennials. This generation also craves a work/life balance. They tend to have high expectations of their workplaces, desire flexible work hours and telecommuting, and prefer communicating electronically. They are known for being entrepreneurial and goal-oriented, and desire to make a positive difference in the world. Those in this generation grew up multitasking, being social and feeling confident. Generally, Millennials appreciate instant feedback and recognition. Millennials’ No. 1 priority seems to be growth and development.

According to Zachary, Millennial mentors should offer hands-on experience that will empower their mentee to take the next step. She states, “They [Millennials] prefer positive, collaborative, achievement-oriented mentors who take them seriously” (2012, p. 53).

Cultural Differences

In addition to generational differences, it may be helpful to consider cultural differences, as these differences may impact the mentoring relationship. If this is the case, you may wish to discuss with your mentee what mentorship means in each of your cultures, whether organizational or national. Explore how giving and getting advice might be different across cultures, especially if you work at different levels in the organization. For example, in some cultures, directives are expected from people in senior positions, while a suggested range of options might be baffling. Some cultures expect some type of criticism, while others bristle at hearing anything negative. Bottom line, if you are entering a mentoring relationship with someone from another culture, learn everything you can about how your differences might affect your relationship and take this into account as you build the relationship.

Additional Differences

Differences can be good in a relationship, yet it seems to be best if we understand those differences in each other so that we can keep things in context. We described generational differences and cultural differences above but there are many more differences that can impact any relationship, including the mentoring relationship. Age, race, gender, sexual orientation, religion, upbringing and life experiences are all factors that influence how we see the world, how we behave, how we react to people and situations, and how we interpret things.

It is important to keep in mind that the mentoring relationship exists within this context of the two individuals from very different life experiences in some ways. As mentors, we need to work to get to know and then respect the context of our mentee's life and then consciously try to use it, sensitive and respectful of our mentee's needs that may be very different than our own, based on his or her life experience.

For example, say a 50-year-old male is mentoring a 34-year-old male who is a promising young executive. The mentor rapidly moved up the ranks to the C-suite while his wife stayed home to raise their family and he missed many birthdays, anniversaries, athletic events and music recitals. After just one and half years in his current position, the mentee's military wife is being transferred to another city. The mentee requested a meeting with his mentor to discuss his need to look for a new position in that city. If the mentor and mentee had not developed a relationship that helped the mentor understand the importance to his mentee to support his wife and participate 50/50 with her in raising their children while growing his career, there could have been a problem with the relationship and the ability of the mentee to move forward with his developmental plan. Instead, the mentor was supportive of his mentee and worked to assist

him with networking.

Even though both individuals were males following similar career paths leading to the C-Suite, their backgrounds and experiences were very different. It would have been easy for this mentor to tell his mentee that he was making a mistake. Because this mentor had become aware of his own filters, how he saw the world and recognized that it was just one way to do things, he was able to look at his mentee's way of getting to the C-suite and support him down a very different path.

Self-Reflection/Personal Journey

In order to best help someone else learn and grow, it is important that we know ourselves and understand where we have been and how we grew into the person we are today. Take the time to look back over your life as an adult and examine those significant life events, both personal and work-related, that influenced you. Write down the events, milestones and transitions that have had the most impact on who you are today. Remember that both positive and negative events play an important role regarding who we are, so list both. Then, think about *who* helped you grow. Finally, consider what you learned and how your direction or thinking changed as a result of these influential events and people.

Here's an example: Since Pat was a sophomore in high school, she wanted to be a physical therapist. Her dream came to fruition and she got a great job at a large city hospital. She never thought of doing anything more. Then, her boss asked her to take on a leadership role in the local Physical Therapy Association during her second year at the hospital. He told her that he thought she had leadership skills. She agreed and ended up leading the local chapter and being elected to a state office. With this new confidence in her leadership abilities, she decided to attend graduate school. Without her boss believing in her and opening the door to a local leadership role, Pat says she doesn't know if she would have landed her current position: hospital CEO.

CHAPTER 2

My Mentee

Role Of The Mentee

The mentee is typically the initiator of the mentor/mentee relationship. The relationship exists primarily for the growth and development of the mentee. As such, the mentee should be proactive not only in seeking out a mentor but also in approaching the overall mentoring relationship with an agenda in mind and coming to each mentoring conversation prepared with topics for discussion. It is up to the mentee to inform the mentor how she best learns and communicates, and what her objectives and vision/dreams are. The more insights into her learning and communication styles and goals, the better you can assist her in her growth and development.

Ideally, the mentee should be the one planning and managing the direction of her professional life. It is the mentee who should take responsibility for her own development, learning and professional growth. As mentor, you may need to support her as she grows into this role.

Expectations Of The Mentee

The mentee should have a clear understanding of why she wants to be mentored. She should understand that the mentoring relationship is confidential so that the mentor will feel free to share his personal experiences with his mentee. The mentee should be able to clearly articulate her expectations of her mentor so there can be a conversation and agreement upon those expectations early in the relationship.

It is important for a mentee to remain flexible in changing expectations and plans. She must be able to create goals and milestones and remain focused on achieving what has been agreed upon in the mentoring sessions. A mentee also needs to be a good listener, setting aside time for self-reflection. She must be able to accept constructive criticism and have the courage to provide feedback both positive and constructive to her mentor in order to maintain a healthy productive mentoring relationship.

Selecting A Mentee

Generally it is the mentee who asks an individual to become her mentor. But whether it is the mentee asking you to be her mentor or an organization asking to assign a criteria-based mentee match, your decision to participate needs to be made after careful, purposeful deliberation.

Agreeing to be a mentor requires a real commitment not only in terms of time but also in terms of opening yourself up for self-reflection, building a meaningful relationship, often **virtually** with a stranger for an extended period of time.

Before saying yes, ask yourself:

- Am I committed to getting to know this stranger, investing in her and helping her develop professionally?
- Am I willing to communicate openly and honestly so that my mentee really gets to know me and I get to know her so that we understand and respect each other's perspective?
- Do I have the time over the next year?
- Do I have the skills to be a good mentor?

CHAPTER 3

Starting the Journey

Preparing for Initial Contact

So, you have made the decision to be a mentor and have the name and contact information of your mentee. You may have some anxiety about where to start, what to say and what to do if the two of you don't immediately hit it off. You can be sure that your mentee is having similar anxiety.

Some programs have the mentor be the one to make initial contact, whereas some put the responsibility on the mentee. However, it is usually the responsibility of the mentee to make that initial contact. If you do not hear from your mentee within the first two weeks of receiving their contact information, you may want to take the initiative to reach out. As you know, first impressions are important. These first impressions can set the tone for a relationship, thus it is important for you to have an agenda for that first contact.

Agenda for Initial Contact

Whether via phone, email or Teams, the following suggestions may facilitate the development of a good relationship. While the first contact is mostly task oriented, it will lay important groundwork.

- Tell your mentee a little about yourself and ask the mentee to do the same.
- Discuss the needs, expectations and limitations that each of you may have. For example, you may mention that you will not be available on weekends or the last week of the month due to your meeting schedule.
- Agree upon a regular meeting schedule and whether you will meet via phone, Skype or in-person, preferably every two weeks for at least an hour each time, at least initially.
- Talk about the respect for each other's time and thus how best to cancel or reschedule a meeting. Commit to doing your best to keep changes to a minimum and ask that your mentee do the same. Agree on how to communicate the need to make changes in the schedule. Is an email, text or call the best way to convey the need to change a meeting or to speak in between meetings if advice or support is required in a crisis?
- End the call on a positive note, noting that you are looking forward to getting to know your mentee better and working with her.
- Ask your mentee to develop an agenda for your first official meeting. Suggest that it may be beneficial to discuss how each of you sees your roles and responsibilities.

Remember, relationships take time and they take work. The first few months of your mentoring experience should focus on building a trusting, respectful relationship.

The typical lifespan of a mentoring relationship is six months to a year and often follows the phases described below, which are outlined in greater detail in the forthcoming chapters:

- Starting the Journey—Chapter 3
- Building and Nurturing the Relationship (approximately two months)—Chapter 4
- Working Toward the Goals (approximately two months)—Chapter 5
- Hitting Our Stride (approximately four to eight months)—Chapter 6
- Phase Out/Closure—Chapter 7

Chapter 4.

Phase 1: Building & Nurturing the Relationship

Expectations for the First Two Months

This is a critical time as you lay the groundwork for your mentoring relationship during these first few months. It is important that you spend the time getting to know one another, preferably meeting as often as every two weeks, if possible. This is the time to get clarity about each other's expectations regarding the relationship, and for both you and your mentee to understand your own skills and gain an understanding of each other's contexts. Do not rush through this phase, as it is critical to the long-term success of the mentoring relationship.

Meeting Agendas

While the mentee should be developing an agenda for each session, it is important that both of you have a clear idea of what that agenda should look like. You want to engage your mentee in meaningful conversation from the start, going beyond job responsibilities and titles and focusing on each other as people—your histories, cultures, what you like/dislike, etc. Hopefully you have completed your self-reflection/personal journey exercise discussed in Chapter 1, so you have some insights about yourself: how you got to where you are, who helped and supported you along the way, and what/whom was most effective in influencing you on your life journey. You can begin to share some of that with your mentee and continue to do so throughout your journey as a mentor.

Ask your mentee to describe where she sees herself headed in her career and in broad terms, what her development goals are. Ask her questions about how her goals align with where she wants to be. Try to gain clarity but be careful not to come across as judgmental in any way. Talk about each of your personal communication and learning styles. Determine what your mentee wants from this relationship and explain to your mentee what you want from this relationship. A sample agenda and conversation questions can be found in the tool section of this chapter.

Before concluding each meeting, together review the agenda and what you accomplished at the meeting. Talk openly about whether you each believe that you had substantive versus superficial discussion and whether you each feel that you are advancing in your level of trust. Finally, agree on next steps and the next meeting agenda. This is a time that you can suggest a reading or an assessment, such as the ACHE Healthcare Executive Competencies Assessment Tool, to your mentee in preparation for future discussions.

Remember the goal of this phase is to build a strong foundation of trust and understanding of each other. This will take multiple conversations over a period of approximately two months. Before moving on to the next phase, use the checklist in the tools section of this chapter to assure that you have established a firm foundation of trust and understanding.

TOOLS

Agenda	Conversations
Introduction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have mentee tell you about herself. • Share a little of your personal journey. • Talk about each other's current professional situation. • Talk about each other's leadership values and philosophies. • May wish to discuss ground rules that may assist in building the relationship (see chart on next page).
Getting to Know You (<i>multiple meetings</i>)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Share some previous mentoring experiences with each other. What did you like/what didn't you like? • Share why each of you want to engage in this relationship. • Discuss what each of you see as your role in the relationship and if your views differ, how to resolve or how the differences may impact the relationship. Determine exactly what your mentee is trying to accomplish with this mentoring relationship. • Ask your mentee where she sees herself headed in her career. • Have mentee share her broad development goals and how these relate to where she sees herself headed. • Discuss the mentee's learning style and both of your personal styles. If either or both of you have your results from the Myers-Briggs or DISC, you can use these tools in your discussion
Ending Each Meeting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discuss expectations regarding open and honest feedback with one another and ask for that feedback at the end of every meeting. • Agree upon next steps and the next meeting agenda.

Phase 1: Building & Nurturing the Relationship

Ground Rules for Mentor Relationship

- We will start and end all meetings on time.
- We will use our agendas to keep us on track.
- We will both participate fully in the conversation.
- We will be open and honest with each other in a respectful manner.
- We will respect each other's differences and not make judgments.
- We will keep our conversations confidential.
- If we come across an issue of disagreement or concern, we will discuss it openly.
- If the relationship does not work out, we will discuss this and see what we can each learn from it.

Checklist Before Moving to Phase 2

- _____ Am I truly invested in my mentee?
- _____ Do I feel that we are communicating openly and honestly?
- _____ Do we seem to understand and agree upon each of our roles in this relationship?
- _____ Can I commit adequate time to help this person?
- _____ Am I committed to continuing to evaluate and develop my mentoring skills in order to help my mentee?

CHAPTER 5

Phase 2: Working Toward the Goals

Expectations for the Next Two Months

The good news is that if you have made it this far in your mentoring relationship both you and your mentee are committed to continue. In this phase, you are working as much on the relationship building as you are on the task of addressing your mentee's developmental goals. Again, during this phase, it is highly recommended that you continue to meet twice a month, if possible. This is the phase to assist your mentee in clarifying her goals, developing a plan to tackle these goals and beginning the work. Your objective during this phase is to develop commitment to a set of goals and an approach to moving toward those goals.

You may wish to codify the goals and commitments that you are making to each other in a written Mentoring Partnership Agreement. Some find this helpful to keep them on track toward achieving goals. A sample agreement is in the Tools section of this chapter. If you do decide to use an agreement, keep it simple.

Meeting Agendas

While it is important to continue building the trusting relationship, now is the time to begin building the plan. While some mentees come to the relationship with a clearly defined goal, most come with only a broadly defined goal. As mentor, it is important for you to understand her goal rather than assume you understand what she means. If your mentee already has a specific well-defined learning goal, ask her clarifying questions so that you come to understand exactly what she means and where she wants to go. For example, say your mentee says her goal is to move into a position with a better title, higher salary and location closer to her family within the next year. Rather than assuming that you know what she means, you need to begin asking questions such as "Could you describe what a 'better title' means to you?" and "What do you think is needed in order to reach that goal?"

If your mentee comes to you with only a broadly defined goal, your job is to assist her in thinking through her goals and helping her to make those goals as specific and quantifiable as possible. A great way to start is by asking her a series of key questions that will assist her in creating and aligning her developmental goals with her current role and/or aspirational role. Ask her to complete the Mentee Developmental Goal Assessment in the Tools section of this chapter and work with her on examining the gap between her requirements and what an employer or role offers to her, as well as examining what she brings to the table in relation to what an employer or role requires. This gap analysis can form the basis of a work plan and frame discussions for the next phase of mentoring.

You may also want to encourage her to complete the ACHE Healthcare Executive Competencies Assessment Tool. This tool can assist healthcare leaders in assessing their expertise in critical areas of healthcare management, helping her better understand what may be needed to reach her desired future goals.

We stated at the beginning of this guide that mentoring is all about learning and growing. A work plan can keep you and your mentee focused on this learning, growth and development and may help keep the relationship on track. See Sample Work Plan in the Tools section below.

TOOLS

To create an effective developmental plan, it is important to look at your mentee’s requirements, what she needs to fulfill these requirements, what she currently has to offer and what is required for success. Assess whether these are in or out of balance and if so, by how much and what she must do to bring them into balance. In doing so, she discovers areas in which her skills and attributes are currently relevant or in need of development, as well as determines what factors might increase her level of satisfaction. After answering the questions, your mentee should look for gaps, then move forward and develop a work plan.

Mentee Developmental Goal Assessment

<p>Your Requirements For Work/Life Fulfillment</p> <p>What are my values and interests?</p> <p>What do I need to keep my life in balance?</p> <p>What are my developmental needs?</p>	<p>Contributions To Your Work/Life Fulfillment From Your Current or Desired Role</p> <p>What is the culture of the organization?</p> <p>What benefits will help me achieve this life balance?</p> <p>What are my growth opportunities?</p>
<p>Contributions To Your Current Role or Desired Role</p> <p>How do I deliver value?</p> <p>What are my skills and talents?</p> <p>What is my competitive advantage?</p>	<p>Requirements For Success In Your Current or Desired Role</p> <p>What is the mission and key objective for the organization?</p> <p>What skillsets are needed to achieve success?</p> <p>What changes may impact the organization’s requirements?</p>

Work Plan for Mentoring Relationship

Mentee’s Goal:

Objectives	Action Plan	Resources Needed	Target Date
1.			
2.			
3.			

Sample Mentoring Partnership Agreement

Mentor/Mentee Agreement

We the undersigned hereby agree on the following:

The goals and objectives of our mentoring relationship are as follows:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

We agree to meet regularly. The time committed to this relationship will be as follows:

Our meetings will typically last for one hour and occur twice a month for the first four to six months, followed by monthly meetings during the remainder of our relationship, up to an anticipated period of 12 months. We commit to reevaluating the relationship and both understand that this relationship may end sooner than the originally projected 12 months. Our specific meeting schedule will be as follows:

If either of us needs to reschedule a meeting, we will do so only in a real emergency and will notify the other via phone/text/email (agree on one) no later than _____ (hours/days) in advance.

We agreed to the following set of ground rules: *(See sample in Chapter 4, Tools section)*

We agree to provide routine feedback to each other and evaluate our relationship at least every _____ months by openly discussing our sense of how the relationship is working for us and how we each feel we are progressing toward the mentoring relationship goals as described above.

We agree that when one or both of us feel it is time to terminate the relationship that we will discuss this and either mutually agree to terminate or develop a plan to get the relationship back on track.

Mentor’s Signature

Mentee’s Signature

Date

Date

Checklist Before Moving to Phase 3

- _____ Goals are clearly defined and understood by both mentor and mentee.
- _____ Mentor and mentee have agreed upon routine meetings, the ground rules for the relationship and the preferred feedback method.
- _____ Agreement has been reached regarding the expectations and responsibilities of each party.
- _____ A work plan is in place that is based on learning/ growth and development with timelines for completing the work and agreement on periodic checks to reevaluate and modify the plan as well as check progress.
- _____ I remain committed to my mentee and to continuing to evaluate and develop my mentoring skills in order to help my mentee.

CHAPTER 6

Phase 3: Hitting Our Stride

Expectation for the Next Four to Eight Months

You have made it to the best part of the mentoring relationship. You have laid a foundation for trust and open communication, agreed upon how you will work together, laid out ground rules and expectations of one another, and have a mutually agreed upon work plan in place. Now, it's time to put the plan in motion. During this phase you will likely want to slowly move to meeting once a month with brief updates in between.

The ACHE cohort Mentoring program is a six—month commitment, but you may wish to extend this relationship further.

Your role as mentor during this phase will focus on supporting your mentee, challenging her and providing the vision for her that will help her grow and develop. As your mentee begins implementing objectives from her plan, it is likely that she will often need your support. This support may involve listening to your mentee or being that safe, nonjudgmental person with whom she can speak freely. Go back and review the Tools section of Chapter 1. Ask your mentee questions that will cause her to reflect and articulate her own thinking. Share some stories from your personal journey that relate to what she is experiencing. Express positive encouragement such as “I know that this is a very difficult time for you, but knowing you, I trust that you will do a great job in managing this situation that you just shared with me.”

For your mentee to learn and grow, she will need to consistently move forward. A good way to help her sustain that forward momentum is by challenging her. This can take the form of setting tasks for her such as “I think it would be good for you between now and our next meeting to arrange an informational interview with ... to get her perspective on ... ” Other ways to challenge your mentee include asking “what if” questions based on different hypotheses, engaging in discussions with your mentee and setting high standards for her that will also demonstrate you believe in her. In Chapter 1, we said the role of a mentor is sometimes that of cheerleader. During this phase, your mentee may lose sight of the vision. As mentor, it is your job to help inspire, motivate and encourage her to

continue to move boldly toward the future. Also recognize that it may be time to help your mentee step back and re-evaluate her goals and objectives and reframe them.

Feedback is critical to this phase of the mentoring relationship. It is the most powerful way for learning to occur. Remember to provide your feedback honestly, but in a supportive, encouraging way. Your feedback needs to be relevant, practical and specific, and aimed toward the growth and development of your mentee.

Only if we truly care about someone will we take the energy to give honest feedback. Hopefully at this point in your relationship, you are invested in the success of your mentee and although it may be difficult at times, you will not allow these teachable moments to be wasted. Staying focused on the issue or the situation rather than the person is best. Your goal in this phase is to help your mentee achieve her learning objectives.

Meeting Agendas

Your meetings should switch focus from what is the goal to how are we doing in reaching that goal. Each meeting should begin by doing a quick review of what was accomplished at the last meeting, how each of you felt it went and what could have been done differently now that you both have had time to think about it. Next, have the mentee update you on her current situation particularly as it relates to the plan and any progress she may have made: what is working, what is not working, how she is feeling about it, etc. Remember to stay focused on the plan and on the purpose of the relationship, which is the growth and development of the mentee.

TOOLS

Agenda	Conversations
Start of Each Meeting (Past Focus)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What did we do at the last meeting? • How do each of us feel about it? Are there things we might have said or done differently now that we have had time to think about it? • Review any action items that you both had agreed upon.
Majority of Each Meeting (Current Focus)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ask mentee to provide update on her current situation, particularly as it relates to the plan. • Ask mentee to provide progress report on action plan items. • Discuss what's working and what is not working relative to the action plan as it relates to achieving the goal. Discuss how the mentee is feeling about her progress and the plan. • Revise objectives and action plan if needed.
Ending Each Meeting (Future Focus)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agree on actions to be completed before the next meeting. • Discuss expectations regarding open and honest feedback with one another and ask for that feedback at the end of every meeting. • Agree upon next steps and the next meeting agenda.

Checklist Before Moving to Phase 4

- _____ Mentee is still learning and growing.
- _____ Mentee is still moving forward in pursuit of her goals.
- _____ The feedback I am giving is honest, thoughtful and constructive.
- _____ We are continuing to build and maintain a productive relationship.
- _____ I am still committed to my mentee and to continuing to evaluate and develop my mentoring skills in order to help my mentee.
- _____ There are no subjects that seem too difficult to discuss in our relationship.

CHAPTER 7

Phase 4: Phase Out/Closure

Ending the Relationship

While the location of this chapter may make it appear that closure comes neatly after you and your mentee have developed a trusting, respectful relationship, closure may come at any point during the relationship.

You may have noticed in the sample Mentor/Mentee Agreement in Chapter 5 that the agreement asked both parties to openly evaluate how the relationship is working and if there is a thought or desire to stop the relationship, whether it be one or both of you, that you will have a discussion. Both parties go into a mentoring relationship with high hopes. Sometimes the relationship just doesn't work out. No matter when one or both of you come to the realization that it is time to end the relationship, it is important to discuss it together.

Closure even after a successful mentoring relationship can be challenging and stressful. Sometimes, it may be that one person in the relationship has experienced a life or job change that shifts her attention and ability to focus on a mentoring relationship. Or it may be that you or your mentee are fearful of bringing up the topic of closure to avoid hurting the other person's feelings. Although the relationship may have been professionally fulfilling for both, it has run its course/achieved the agreed upon goals and has consequently grown stale. One or both of you may find it more comfortable to maintain the status quo than to engage in an awkward discussion.

No matter the reason, appropriate closure is important for both parties. To set the stage for the end, it is best to discuss the end at the beginning and periodically throughout the relationship. You may wish to add an item to your agenda every few months such as "How are each of us feeling about this relationship? What do we think about the value and longevity of this relationship?"

Just because the mentoring relationship ends, that does not mean that you can't maintain a relationship, be it as friend or colleague. Don't burn any bridges behind you. Work to have an honest conversation: Provide the mentee with your rationale for terminating the mentor/mentee relationship, listen to what she says carefully and respond to her thoughts in a nondefensive, nonjudgmental manner.

As the mentoring relationship is one of learning, growth and development, the relationship's end should serve as a learning conclusion. The ideal ending conversation should focus on the learning that took place during the relationship—not just the mentee's learning, but what you, as a mentor, learned. We all learn from good experiences as well as from the not so good experiences. Look at the pluses and minuses of the relationship. As the mentor, it is up to you to make every effort to have the ending be as positive as possible.

TOOLS

Is It Time For Closure?

- _____ My mentee has met his/her learning goals.
- _____ It feels as though we are meeting just to meet.
- _____ We have been meeting for months and do not seem to be making any progress.
- _____ My mentee does not seem to be following through.
- _____ I feel rushed and irritated when I have to meet with my mentee.

CHAPTER 8

Celebration & the Future

Summarize the Learning/Focusing on the Positive

The healthy discussion at closure provides you and your mentee with the opportunity to evaluate the learning outcomes and discuss how your mentee might build on her learning as she moves forward in her career. As the mentor, you play a major role in facilitating this conversation. Start by asking your mentee to look back over the goals that you developed early in your mentoring relationship. Then, ask your mentee for her assessment of what she learned/accomplished relative to each objective. For example, if one of your mentee's objectives was to position herself for a position with greater responsibility, ask her to describe the progress she felt she made toward that objective. Listen carefully to her response and ask follow up questions such as "Based on the progress you have just shared with me, what do you think are the implications for you as you move forward?" Your questions need to focus on the learning that has taken place, including what each of you learned as a result of the mentoring relationship itself.

You may be surprised at what you have learned about yourself through mentoring. Share with your mentee what you have learned. Offer your analysis of the learning that has taken place based on your perspective and ask your mentee if your perceptions are similar to her own. That conversation may go something like this:

Mentor: I have observed that you have grown more sure of yourself over the past year.

Mentee: You know, you're right. I do feel more confident and am now giving my opinions more often at meetings.

Mentor: That's terrific! You have taught me a lot about patience and the importance of listening this year. I am finding that my leadership team is being more open with me, so thank you.

Most of us have had a number of mentors at different points in our lives. Many of them have remained a friend or colleague that we touch base with periodically or think of from time to time with fondness. Ending the formal mentoring relationship should be done in a way that is focused on the future and leaves the relationship open to evolve into something different.

Celebrating

Most of us don't take the time to celebrate, we often look at something as done and move on to the next thing. However, celebration at the end of the mentoring relationship is important as it reinforces the learning that has taken place and helps with transitioning to the next phase, much like the graduation ceremony did when we completed our degree.

Some suggestions for celebrating may include a face-to-face get-together if you have been mentoring via computer-mediated methods. A written note expressing your gratitude to your mentee and vice-versa can be an expression of celebration, providing a permanent reminder of the relationship and its successes. You and your mentee may wish to exchange a meaningful memento. Any mementos should not be expensive—perhaps a book of reflections that will help continue the learning that the mentee began during the mentoring relationship.

The Future

Take the time to be honest about whether there will be a future relationship.

If you do wish to continue the relationship, agree whether it should be touching base periodically over email or phone or something more formal.

Whatever you agree upon, know that each of you will likely feel a loss. You have bonded over the past year or so. You have confided in each other and learned together. As mentor, you may worry about your mentee and wonder how she is doing without you. Your mentee may miss the support and feedback that you provided. The good news is that you may likely hear from each other when you least expect it. Over the years, you may receive voicemails, emails or notes informing you of your mentee's latest accomplishment and waiting for your praise or approval.

Now that you have agreed upon your future relationship with your mentee, it is time for you to do a self-evaluation. See the Tools section of this chapter for a sample self-assessment tool. Add this experience to the personal journey you did at the start of the relationship. Ask yourself: How has this mentoring experience changed you? What did you learn from this relationship? How can you use what you learned in future mentoring relationships? Are you ready to be a mentor again?

TOOLS

Take a moment to reflect on your experience by completing the following:

Mentor Self-Assessment

	Never	Sometimes	Usually	Always
I made myself available regularly for my mentee.				
I was truly present during our conversations.				
I shared personal experiences and information openly.				
I was satisfied with the level of trust we achieved in our relationship.				
Our discussions were substantive.				
I enabled learning more than I taught.				
My mentee established solid goals and objectives.				
My mentee was able to meet his learning goals and objectives.				
We had a good discussion about closure.				
I feel good about the mentoring relationship.				

What were your learnings from this experience?

CHAPTER 9

The ACHE Leadership Mentoring Network

ACHE created the Leadership Mentoring Network to expand opportunities for learning and development exclusively for ACHE members. This service is not intended for students, nor is its intent to find employment for mentees; rather it is designed for healthcare executives who are employed full-time and are seeking growth as leaders and professionals.

The Leadership Mentoring Network maintains the classic one-to-one mentoring experience, while relying primarily on a contemporary combination of communication channels such as phone, email, Skype and FaceTime. Face-to-face meetings will likely be the exception, not the rule. Using this approach, mentoring partnerships can develop even between individuals separated by great distances. Mentoring partnerships initially are expected to be established with a specific purpose and for a limited time. Successful mentoring partners are encouraged to expand their focus and continue their relationship as long as they wish.

Prospective mentors and mentees must file a personal profile with ACHE's Career Resource Center at ache.org/Leadership-MentoringNetwork so that CRC may identify appropriate matches.

Note: The Leadership Mentoring Network operates thanks to the service of dedicated volunteers. While their numbers are growing, their supply is finite. Consequently, we must limit the mentor and mentee pairings to ACHE members who currently hold healthcare management positions.

Other Options for ACHE Members Considering Participating in Mentoring

In addition to the national ACHE Leadership Mentoring Network, some ACHE local chapters have mentoring programs uniquely tailored to their own environments. For example, local mentoring programs may be designed to help Members pass the Board of Governors examination. Others may help early careerists to grow and prepare for greater responsibilities in the future. Use the Chapter Directory to find the chapter in your area for further information at ache.org/Chapters.

Members who are in full-time education, training or job search modes may instead consider the benefits of ACHE's Career Management Network. The network consists of a different pool of volunteers who have agreed to be resources for individuals considering career directions or making transitions between healthcare sectors or locations. Learn more at ache.org/CareerManagementNetwork.

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Roger W. Nutter

Mentoring: A Win-Win Proposition

How to make the most out of these relationships.

Mentoring has been a hot topic in healthcare circles for several years, and ACHE has long promoted mentoring to its membership. These relationships can be a win-win scenario for all those involved.

For a mentor-mentee relationship to be successful, the mentee needs to take the initiative. The mentee must identify his or her needs and seek out a mentor with those skills and a willingness to share.

Following is an exploration of how people of all ages can become mentors by helping others learn and develop, and guidance for mentees on how to get the most out of these relationships. ***Italicized*** words reflect key action points and behaviors on which executives can focus to realize successful mentoring outcomes.

Expert Guidance

Mentoring occurs when someone with one skill, competency or talent ***shares his or her knowledge in order to help another be better***

equipped in a job search or specific need for performance improvement. It is one individual readily and willingly sharing a specific skill or competency in the hopes of supporting the professional development of another. A key step toward a successful relationship is the mentor and mentee ***fostering a positive relationship*** at the onset. There is a great need for mentors in the field, and especially those who are ***willing to engage in the journey of mentoring***.

Key requirements of mentors are that they have something to offer, recognize another's need, and can offer time and attention to supporting a willing mentee. Potential mentors can seek out mentees by finding someone in need, taking initiative in a ***nonthreatening*** way, and offering advice and time to enrich a mentee's professional skill development.

A mentor must be open to a relationship with a mentee who is less skilled in a certain area and willing to accept the expert guidance of the mentor. When a mentor coaches a mentee, any thoughts of questioning who is better or knows more should not be the focus. Mentoring is pretty simple when you look at it in these terms.

An Intentional, Structured Approach

As formal mentoring programs suggest, one must ***be intentional*** in his or her efforts. Experts suggest the mentee develop a mentoring plan that is ***structured*** and includes ***regular meetings*** and ***consistent communication*** with the mentor. Both mentor and mentee must be ***committed*** to the process; an informal approach will not be successful. It is suggested that both parties make a minimum six-week commitment before assessing the value of the mentoring effort.

For a mentor-mentee relationship to be successful, ***the mentee needs to take the initiative***. The mentor is giving the time and expertise in sharing with the mentee. The mentee must ***identify his or her needs*** and seek out a mentor with those skills and a willingness to share. As a professional counselor might advise: The individual being counseled must desire change. The same goes for the mentee. ***The mentee must need and want to change and learn from the mentor***. The mentee should enter a mentoring relationship with a well-developed plan regarding what he or she wants. Then he or she can connect with a mentor with like interests to begin a mentoring journey.

Be Prepared and Committed

How does a healthcare leader know if he or she is ready to be mentored? As a mentee, it's wise to think about ***beginning the process with open and transparent communication with someone willing to serve as a mentor***. Executives seeking a mentor can consider those in their network who have mentored or know someone who has successfully mentored another

mentee or mentees. Next, they should isolate those potential mentors who have similar career paths and are known as experts, have a passion for helping others, and are willing to coach and guide others.

Next, the mentee should ***propose a formalized plan and timetable*** for when the mentee expects to achieve the goals outlined for the mentoring process. During the mentoring relationship, mentees should plan to report their progress to their mentors at regular intervals. This ***feedback*** about how mentees are doing on their professional journeys is invaluable to mentors. Mentors want to know they are making a difference to their mentees and if their time commitment is worthwhile and personally rewarding.

When providing feedback to mentors, mentees should be as specific as possible. They should let their mentors know about improvements they have identified in their professional lives as a result of the mentoring relationship and where they may still need help. At times mentees may feel like they are taking one step forward and two steps back; it may even feel like they are spinning their wheels. Don't give up. Instead, keep moving forward and remain committed to the mentoring program's success.

Beneficial at All Stages

Mentoring is valuable throughout the course of a leader's career; therefore, developing and maintaining one's professional network regularly is essential.

Before a job search or period of transition, it is good for leaders to have others within their professional

networks to whom they can turn. A community of friends and professional colleagues can be a valuable resource to encourage and support executives on their professional journeys. Leaders should be grateful and appreciative of their willingness to share in their growth and success. ▲

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Editor's note: For more information and resources on mentoring, please visit the Leadership Mentoring Network at **ache.org/Mentoring**.



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The Motivation to Mentor

These vital relationships are more important than ever.

This past year's events have accentuated the need for professional connectivity regardless of geographic location. One related outcome has been the elevation of mentoring as a valid venue for professional connectivity and innovative conversation at all stages. With physical location no longer a barrier, virtual connectivity has allowed many executives to enhance their professional networks and contribute to the growing global perspective of healthcare overall. It is no surprise that mentoring programs are on the rise across all industries, and healthcare is no exception.

A Mentoring Refresher

As our industry expands across a complex landscape, healthcare executives and leaders will need continuous support that encourages learning and growth at all stages of the professional path.

Many healthcare executives have participated in the mentoring process. They are well-versed in the intricacies of serving as a mentor or being a mentee. It's helpful, however, to remain up to date on this important professional development and career-enhancing mechanism.

Mentoring is a strategic tool designed to help people (mentees) develop their career paths more effectively. Mentoring is conducted long term for six months to one year. Often, one gains a lifelong relationship with a mentor or mentee.

When a mentee connects successfully with a mentor, the mentorship can open the ability to pursue opportunities, gain perspective, and challenge an individual to think in new and creative ways. The mentor-mentee

relationship also creates a feedback loop that is essential to anyone's career journey.

Benefits of Mentoring

Having a mentor and being a mentor are equally beneficial; both parties grow and learn in these relationships. Mentorship is probably the most underrated aspect of building a career foundation. The guidance one can potentially receive from a mentor is invaluable; a mentor's ability to help a mentee navigate the unknown paths of professional growth and define and reach one's goals more effectively is what makes them so important. As noted in a Jan. 21, 2020, *Harvard Business Review* article, "How to Build a Great Relationship with a Mentor," individuals with mentors perform better and advance more quickly in their careers, and they even have more work-life balance satisfaction.

7 Habits of Highly Successful Mentors and Mentees

1. Active listening.
2. Dedication to their success.
3. Dedication to others' success.
4. Curiosity.
5. Engagement with their surroundings.
6. Willingness to step out of their comfort zones.
7. Responsible, respectful and ready (the three "R's").

Mentors gain as well. A seasoned careerist can learn from early- or mid-careerists, especially as it relates to technological advancements and exposure to innovative healthcare practices. Research published in an August 2013 issue of the *Journal of Vocational Behavior* found that mentors experience increased job satisfaction, organizational commitment,

job performance and career success. Despite these benefits, however, while 76% of working professionals believe mentors are important to professional growth, more than 54% are not engaged in a mentorship relationship, according to research conducted in 2018 by Olivet Nazarene University and featured in the Jan. 21, 2020, issue of *Harvard Business Review*.

We know that navigating today's complex, changing business landscape requires a combination of soft and hard skills. Having a mentor provides an opportunity to glean an understanding of the best ways to accomplish this. There are valuable lessons to be learned by all, especially during uncertain times.

Organizations also benefit when their employees and members engage in mentoring relationships. The guidance imparted by a mentor might allow the mentee to take on new career opportunities, seek additional training or pursue advancement as an ACHE Fellow, for example.

Mentoring might also improve an employee's confidence and provide clarity with continuous learning objectives and goal setting. Mentoring programs can enable organizations to harness their organization's talent more effectively and deepen employee engagement, retention and organizational contribution.

Mentorship also lends a voice to many who encounter issues commonly experienced by those from diverse backgrounds such as implicit bias, stereotypes and identity backlash. Having a wide variety of diverse voices around the table is extremely

beneficial to running any business or project because it brings different solutions and perspectives that translate to direct success and, in turn, results in a positive cascading effect. Mentoring members of historically underrepresented groups remains a critical component of ACHE's mentoring program, and a key strategy to inspire diverse and inclusive healthcare leadership at all levels.

What Makes a Good Mentor?

Generally, a good mentor is someone who is motivated and energized, cares about developing others, is a good listener, and is willing to commit his or her time. An engaged mentee is one who dedicates the necessary time and energy to be mentored properly. A mentoring relationship is most effective when there is a good match between the mentor and mentee in areas such as backgrounds, skill sets and experience facing similar challenges or roles.

A mentor is also someone with knowledge and experience in the mentee's desired industry, who is willing to share this expertise to help the mentee achieve his or her goals. A good mentor asks the right questions so the mentee can critically think about important decisions and produce his or her own answers. A mentor should be someone who has achieved a level of success that the mentee envisions and someone who can challenge and push the mentee in ways other people can't. The mentor is a continuous source of encouragement and support.

Mentoring's Basic Building Blocks

A strong mentorship is built on trust, is discreet and respects confidentiality. A mentee should feel safe and comfortable sharing with a mentor in

frank, transparent conversations. The best mentors don't hesitate to highlight weaknesses and provide critiques, in a constructive manner.

Goal setting is a particularly important aspect of mentorship. Mentees are best able to identify a suitable mentor when they are clear about what they are looking to accomplish through the mentorship. The accountability should lie with the mentee; however, a good mentor can help provide the mentee with a framework for goals and set career objectives, especially if the mentee is doubtful and uncertain.

Organizations stand much better chances of advancing and achieving positive business outcomes when they help build leaders at every level. At the organizational level, mentorship is a great pathway for enhancing employee skills, moving toward organizationwide diversity and making far-reaching impacts on employee development. At the individual level, mentorship is insightful and beneficial, and can be a transformational learning and growth experience for both mentors and mentees. ▲

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Editor's note: The ACHE Leadership Mentoring Network digital platform is an excellent resource to identify the best mentoring relationship aligned for specific development goals and objectives. Learn more at ache.org/Mentoring.



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Promoting the Joy of Mentoring

Proper mentoring can be mutually rewarding and enjoyable.

Although the value of mentoring should be self-evident, it is also clear that healthcare executives have a moral obligation to mentor the next generation of leaders. Doing so benefits both our successors and the organizations we serve.

In 2001, in response to the impressive inquiries being posed by Jeff Noblin, a young executive matched with me through ACHE's Leadership Mentoring Network, I asked if he would join me in co-authoring an article for *Healthcare Executive*, which would include my

answers to his questions (see sidebar on this page for a list of some of these insightful questions). In that article ("Mentoring Dialogue: Critical Questions and Answers," November/December 2002), we wrote that mentoring benefits mentees in three ways:

- The person has convenient access to a senior executive who has an interest in his or her career, and the relationship's objectives and expectations are jointly determined.
- Learning the intricacies of management through observations and analysis, followed by timely discussions, helps the junior executive become more sophisticated in addressing organizational issues.
- A young manager might feel hesitant to ask certain questions of a colleague or direct supervisor, but the mentee should feel less inhibited in raising issues with a mentor.

In retrospect, Noblin and other mentees would probably agree there are additional advantages to having an effective mentor. These include refining their professional values; developing stronger communication and leadership skills; honing other skills and expertise they need to succeed; establishing short- and long-term career goals; improving job satisfaction, performance and self-confidence; being exposed to new and different perspectives; expanding their professional network; being better prepared for interview questions; and identifying and addressing possible gaps in skills and

Questions Mentees Should Ask

The following questions appeared in the article "Mentoring Dialogue: Critical Questions and Answers" in the November/December 2002 issue of *Healthcare Executive*. They remain relevant questions for mentees to ask their mentors today:

- What specific skills should I be developing at this point in my career?
- If you were recruited to another institution, how would you evaluate the organization?
- What are the best steps to determine how a competing facility or health system is doing financially and operationally?
- Given the number of opportunities available in rural areas, what are the pros and cons of working in these settings?
- How will the role and influence of physicians be changing in the future?
- How should leadership respond when union organizing is initiated?
- If one or more individual board members begin to intercede by crossing the sometimes-ambiguous boundaries between governance and management, what should be done?
- Will physician influence in the healthcare setting become more prominent or diminish in the future?

knowledge. Of course, a good mentor will also share one of life's most critical lessons—the need to maintain a healthy work-life balance.

At the time the 2002 article was written, Noblin was a project manager at a health system in Albany, Ga. Not surprisingly, given his perceptive questions, he is now board certified in healthcare management as an ACHE Fellow and the CEO of Pleasant Valley Hospital in Point Pleasant, W.Va.

Benefits of Being a Mentor

It is unlikely that any effective executives have succeeded without having multiple mentors during their careers. Administrative residents and fellows are tutored by preceptors. Junior managers are mentored either formally or informally by their supervisors. Once becoming a senior executive, one should feel an innate instinct to reciprocate. It is rewarding—often in intangible ways.

Being a mentor is immensely satisfying and fulfilling. Based on my experience, early careerists who apply to ACHE's mentoring program (the Leadership Mentoring Network) or the National Center for Healthcare Leadership's Mentorship Program are unfailingly highly motivated and conscientious. Healthcare executives should also be strategic about how they approach mentoring and identify the programs that best fit their individual needs. The National Association of Health Service Executives and the National Association of Latino Executives have robust mentoring programs, as do many ACHE chapters. Every mentee has different

strengths and needs, making each interaction with a mentor, whether by email, phone, an online video platform or in person, stimulating and thought provoking. Being a mentor also helps one become a better listener.

It is unlikely that any effective executives have succeeded without having multiple mentors during their careers.

Yes, all senior executives have full schedules. But the time required is nominal, and the good feeling derived from contributing to the profession is immeasurable.

Both ACHE and NCHL ask mentors and mentees to complete a brief questionnaire soliciting feedback on the experience. However, mentors should frequently request informal confirmation from mentees that the experience is meeting their needs.

Mentees are encouraged to determine the interval between conversations. Typically, mentees and mentors meet monthly for an hour with the understanding that emails raising questions or giving updates are appropriate at any time. Though the duration of the relationship is usually six to 12 months, I always inform mentees that they can and should decide when it will conclude. Some associations have lasted for more than a year.

Fundamental to any relationship is mutual trust, thus building a strong

foundation for this trust should be a high priority. For example, the mentee must feel conversations will be kept confidential by the mentor, especially if the mentor is employed by the same organization.

Never Too Late to Consider Mentoring

Ideally, organizations that promote the joy of mentoring will benefit because eventually they will become more recognized as having nurturing cultures and enjoying higher rates of employee engagement and retention. In a June 8, 2021, *Harvard Business Review* article titled "You Need a Skills-Based Approach to Hiring and Developing Talent," LinkedIn CEO Ryan Roslansky noted a LinkedIn 2018 Workplace Learning Report that indicated 94% of employees admitted they would have stayed at a company longer if it had invested in their career.

Having a meaningful and ethical professional career is crucial for countless reasons, including ethical ones, so it is never too late to be reminded of Winston Churchill's astute observation: "We make a living by what we get. We make a life by what we give."▲

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Editor's note: Find out more about ACHE's Leadership Mentoring Network at ache.org/Mentoring.



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