



Healthcare Leadership Network
of the Delaware Valley

MENTORSHIP PROGRAM

Components of a Quality Experience



American College of
Healthcare Executives
for leaders who care®

INTRODUCTION

The Healthcare Leadership Network of the Delaware Valley (HLNDV) provides a Mentorship Program to expand opportunities for learning and professional development for members at all levels, including students, early careerists, executives in transition, and senior executives. It is designed to promote professionalism and leadership in healthcare management, support specific developmental goals, and encourage greater involvement in HLNDV.

The following information is intended to serve as a general tool and resource for both Mentors and Mentees to assist in the formation and development of a productive and worthwhile relationship. The framework, timeline, and objectives of each mentoring partnership are unique; therefore, HLNDV encourages participants in the Mentorship Program to structure their relationship in a manner that works best based on the guidance offered from successful mentoring experiences.

If you have any comments or questions about the Mentorship Program, please email one of the program liaisons listed below:

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GETTING STARTED

HLNDV members interested in finding or becoming a mentor are asked to complete and file a Mentor or Mentee Profile form with the Mentorship Program Liaisons. These forms may be found at the HLNDV website located at www.hlndv.org. Click the “Career Development” tab and then the tab labeled “Mentorship Program”. The profile provides essential information for creating promising matches between volunteer Mentor and Mentee applicants. After an appropriate match is made with the approval of both Mentor and Mentee, the relationship will be launched through a scheduled introduction facilitated by a member of the Mentorship Committee. Additionally, HLNDV is available to provide assistance to participating Mentors and Mentees in developing, conducting and assessing their mentoring partnerships. The Mentorship Program does not seek to manage or mediate relationships once a partnership is established.

PURPOSE OF MENTORING PARTNERSHIPS

Serving as a Mentor provides an opportunity to play a direct role in the professional development of the next generation of healthcare leaders. Sharing insights from personal experiences and “lessons learned” as a one-on-one advisor supports the growth of the Mentee, while adding to the leadership portfolio of the Mentor.

Mentees benefit from the practical guidance and perspective offered by their Mentor, and the opportunity to develop a relationship that will expand their professional network, a key driver in career advancement.

Mentoring Partnerships are intended to focus on specific developmental goals and are structured as traditional one-to-one relationships within an established timeframe. Successful mentoring partners are encouraged to continue their relationship as long as they wish.

What is a Mentor/Advisor?

Mentoring or advising is perhaps the truest form of dynamic learning. It involves two people with a commitment to assisting each other in furthering their professional careers. Making the decision to mentor another individual is a conscious decision to return to your profession some of the expert advice that you may have been given (or wished you had been given) in the pursuit of your personal career objectives.

In today's highly competitive environment, a Mentee is expected to be proactive in seeking a Mentor and in having set objectives and goals for the relationship. While a Mentor offers the gifts of knowledge and experience, the Mentee has the responsibility for taking full advantage of that knowledge by internalizing it, putting it into action, and ultimately for passing it on.

The Mentor/Mentee relationship is open-ended, but not static. As career paths change and professionals move on, the relationship will transition to another level and hopefully result in an enduring association. By definition, a mentorship relationship is one that fosters growth in both parties, and may successfully end, at least in the formal mentoring sense.

A Mentor is a person who is, or has been, where you want to go. He/she is a person who is willing to assist you in meeting the challenges of reaching your next goal. It is important, as you establish your relationship with your Mentor, that you understand what expectations are realistic.

A Mentor is:

- A person who is willing to share his/her assessments, viewpoints, and life experiences with you to help you succeed.
- A person you can “bounce ideas” off before you take the risk of going public.
- A person who can assist in your development by sharing his/her areas of expertise or by suggesting alternative sources of information.

A Mentor is not:

- A person who is going to get you a job.
- A person who is going to give you all of the answers you need to be successful.
- A personal counselor to deal with areas of life outside of your career.

EXPECTATIONS**What to expect as a Mentor**

- You should be the first one to initiate contact with your Mentee. Remember that Mentees are often new to the process of working with an advisor, and may be somewhat hesitant to contact a senior executive.
- Share your history and experiences with your Mentee, as well as your ideas and enthusiasm for your profession.
- Ask your Mentee to develop a written outline of his/her developmental goals. This will help to clarify the purpose and direction of the relationship and serve as a work plan for a productive experience.
- Make sure the expectations the two of you develop are clear and are understood. This will reduce or eliminate confusion that could potentially damage your relationship.
- If logistically possible, invite your Mentee to accompany you to appropriate meetings and conferences. Your Mentee can learn from seeing you “in action” and dealing with new people and situations. These types of activities provide fertile ground for discussion.
- Do not hesitate to challenge your Mentee with reading assignments or small projects. (Keep in mind, the Mentee has other obligations and responsibilities that impact on his/her time).
- Contact the HLNDV Mentorship Program Liaisons if you have any questions or problems during your mentorship period.
- Do not forget to recognize and enjoy the fact that you are fostering the development of future healthcare leaders who will provide significant contributions to the profession and their communities.
- Enjoy the experience!

What to expect as a Mentee

- Spend time with your mentor sharing your past experiences. You may want to bring your resume to your first session to provide more details about your accomplishments. Your mentor may also offer suggestions on how to improve your resume after he/she has time to review it.
- Ask your Mentor to review how he/she reached the position he/she is in today. Listen carefully and ask questions along the way.
- Let your Mentor know in the first session what your objectives are for the relationship. Provide your Mentor with a written outline of your developmental goals and interests. Your Mentor should also tell you his/her objectives. If your Mentor doesn't offer, ask.
- Your Mentor should make clear that the personal conversations you share with him/her are confidential. If he/she does not, ask your Mentor for assurance that all your discussions will be kept confidential.
- After getting to know you and your objectives, your Mentor may suggest that you take certain professional development courses or read key management books to assist in your continued development. Be prepared to follow through.
- Be ready for your Mentor to push you outside of your comfort zone. He/she may encourage you to take risks to achieve your goals.
- You should always follow up by writing a personal thank you note to your Mentor. Acknowledge how he/she has helped you and express your gratitude.
- You should contact your Mentor if you are considering a job change or are evaluating job offers. Your Mentor may suggest additional information to research before accepting an offer and may assist you in evaluating why you want a job change.
- Enjoy the experience!

COMMUNICATION

It is critical to the success of the mentorship relationship that both Mentor and Mentee determine the frequency and method of communication that will work effectively to support the developmental goals of their partnership. Face-to-face meetings provide an advantage in building a close working relationship; however, time and geographic constraints may limit this opportunity. Telephone and e-mail communication will likely serve as a primary vehicle to exchange information and ideas, and maintain momentum toward the goals of the relationship. Understanding each participant's preferred method

and style of communication, as well as available time to engage in the mentorship process, will help to support a positive experience.

You should make every effort to communicate with each other at least once a week (in addition to your scheduled face-to-face meetings) either by telephone or email. This will ensure that you are both kept abreast of what is happening to each other, as well as maintaining your open lines of communication.

Mentoring partners are cautioned against the exclusive use of e-mail for communication, and encouraged to speak by phone and/or meet in person when possible to build a stronger working relationship.

ACTIVE LISTENING SKILLS

Active listening is a fundamental communication skill. It tells one that you are interested. It involves listening carefully to the words and feelings expressed, and repeating these facts in such a way that the speaker knows he or she has been understood. Active listening takes energy. This means listening to, rather than just hearing. Concentration is vital. The listener suspends judgment and prejudice and focuses on the feeling of the underlying message. By responding this way, you show you care about the person with whom you are listening.

Active Listening Includes the Following Techniques:

Paraphrasing – The listener states an understanding of what has been heard and asks the speaker to verify or correct this interpretation. Paraphrases may employ such words as, "Do I hear you saying...?" or "I believe you mean...right?"

Door Opening and Probing - The listener invites the speaker to elaborate. Examples include: "Give me an example." "Please tell me more about it."

Perception Checking - The listener pays attention to what is not being said, to reach new insights and hunches, then checks the accuracy of these with the speaker. Body language, eye contact and unmentioned feelings that lie behind the words are some of the things worth noticing. "Every time you mentioned that, you clenched your fist and gritted your teeth. I sense a lot of anger. Is something wrong?"

"I" Statements - "You" messages are belittling and blaming. They put the responsibility for your feelings on the other person. It is more effective to use "I" messages. They are helpful in expressing feelings without blaming. "You make me so mad" is best phrased "I feel frustrated when you."

Open Ended Questions - Asking questions demonstrates you care about the other person. To enhance communication, avoid questions that require a simple yes or no answer. Example: The question "Did you have a good day?" is best phrased, "What did you do today?"

EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION TECHNIQUES

Try using these proven techniques to improve communication with your Mentor or Mentee.

- Be open and honest.
- Share personal experiences with one another. This will encourage familiarity, helping one another feel more comfortable and communicative.
- Provide positive feedback to one another.
- Make eye contact. Be on eye level when talking.
- Slow thinking speed.
- Control the urge to respond too quickly.
- Keep an open mind.
- Avoid jumping to conclusions.
- Make mental summaries.
- Give positive feedback - verbal and nonverbal.

GIVING FEEDBACK

Giving and receiving feedback is one of the most sensitive aspects of communication. Basically, people are non-confrontational and have a preference for maintaining harmony. However, one of the most crucial activities in mentoring is giving honest, direct, and unfiltered feedback.

Principles of Giving Feedback:

- ***Be sure the intent is to be helpful.*** Don't criticize; have some suggestions as to what the person might do differently.
- ***Focus feedback on behavior rather than on personal characteristics.*** Don't tell someone that they are not a good presenter. Say things such as: "When presenting, you need to project your voice more or use a lapel mike. If you projected better, it would help you appear more confident."
- ***Give feedback only when behavior can, in fact, be changed.*** Avoid any feedback that focuses on personality, physical characteristics or behaviors that are not readily modified. Avoid: "You are too defensive!" Try: "When you get feedback, put it into a work context and try not to take it personally."
- ***Focus feedback on observations, rather than on inferences.*** Avoid statements such as: "You seemed confused during the presentation." You are drawing a conclusion that may not be based on observable fact. It is better to stick to what you have seen. Example: "I observed you shaking your head, so I thought you were confused."

- ***Give feedback that is descriptive, not judgmental.*** When you make statements such as: “You don’t have a grasp on this subject”, you are passing judgment. It is better to say, “You hesitate whenever asked questions on that subject.”
- ***Deal with specific behaviors, not generalities.*** Saying, “You’re never on time” or “You never listen” are destined to meet with resistance. Use specific examples: “You were late for our last three meetings” or “You interrupted me constantly without allowing me to finish my statements.”
- ***Focus feedback on exploring alternatives, rather than fixed solutions.*** “You should do this,” suggests a directive. It is better to say, “Perhaps we should explore X or Y, and determine the best alternative.”
- ***Focus on the value it has to the recipient.*** Ensure that your comments are directly related to the skills that the person is trying to acquire.
- ***Let the recipient know the impact the behavior has on others.*** “When you interrupt, it makes me feel that you do not value my contribution.”
- ***Check to make sure the recipient understands the message the way you intended it.*** Ask the recipient to “clarify and confirm” they have understood.

TEN STEPS TO BECOMING A BETTER LISTENER

1. **Clear your mind.** Start with a clean slate. If you can’t break away from other pressing thoughts, you shouldn’t be in the conversation now. Focus.
2. **Close your mouth. Don’t talk.** In order to open your ears, you must first close your mouth. You can only hear what the other person has to say if you give him/her a chance to talk. Program in the good tape that says, “the good things happen when they’re talking.”
3. **Show the other person respect.** You must have, and sincerely show, a real concern for what the other person has to say. Don’t be a victim of your own preconceived ideas that can keep you from being open to what you can learn from him/her.
4. **Listen for the truth.** Evaluate what is being said – not who is saying it.
5. **Don’t interrupt. (Unless you should, then the rule is ... interrupt.)** Some people have a difficult time getting to the point. Patience can be rewarding. Some people need help getting to the point. You need to know the difference.
6. **Don’t speak for more than 30-45 seconds without asking for comments.** Studies show that the attention span of people engaged in conversation is only about 30

seconds or so. To keep the other person's mind from wandering while you speak, keep your thoughts short and ask for comments or feedback regularly.

7. **Don't talk to yourself while the other person is talking.** When you are talking to yourself, guess who you're listening to?
8. **Reflect back the other person's comment before you respond.** Be like a flat mirror, reflecting the message without distortion. For more in-depth reflection, include all aspects of the message (physiology, tonality and verbal).
9. **Validate the Real Meaning.** If words or phrases are masked in language that is unclear, drill down for the real meaning.
10. **Which is more important: Who is right or what is right?** And does it really matter who says it? You know it does ... it's much more important if they say it.

ASSESSMENT

Assessment and evaluation of the mentorship process will be part of your relationship during the program. Both the Mentor and Mentee need to establish early in the process how they will monitor and evaluate the progress that is being made. We do not suggest any particular form of assessment tool or schedule, but we strongly suggest that one be developed jointly.

Assessments can be formal or informal, verbal or written and self assessed or mutually assessed. The key is to ensure the process is moving ahead in a positive manner for both Mentor and Mentee.

PROGRAM FEEDBACK

HLNDV appreciates your participation in the Mentorship Program and encourages your feedback to help enhance and further develop the resources provided to both Mentors and Mentees. Please let us know how we can support a successful mentoring experience for you and future participants by contacting our liaisons. Thank you!

HELPFUL LINKS

Mentoring Resources - Web Sites

<http://www.mentoringgroup.com/index.html>

<http://www.peer.ca/mentor.html>