

## YNP Mentorship Programme

### Brief guide to topics for discussion between mentor and mentee

Mentoring is a special partnership between two people based on shared goals and expectations, focus, and mutual trust and respect. In nephrology, mentoring plays an important role in the education and mentoring of trainees. Successful mentoring requires commitment to the process by both mentors and mentees, and it serves as an important career development mechanism for both. However, there are sometimes many barriers to successful mentorship for both mentors and mentees, including time constraints and the ability of mentors to provide valuable, personalized advice, or a lack of confidence in suggesting topics or identifying a list of important topics to discuss in advance of the meeting.

The specific objective of the YNP Mentorship Programme is to support the professional and career development of the mentee. It is essential that mentors and mentees have a clear understanding of the aims, objectives and desired outcomes of the collaboration. Mentors should be prepared to commit to working with mentees on a one-to-one basis, while mentees should identify one or two aspects to work on with their mentors having a clear understanding of expectations.

#### What are mentoring topics?

A mentor and a mentee can cover a wide range of topics that can yield helpful results even after the initial meetings, such as helping with curriculum and career management/development; helping to overcome professional challenges; reviewing time management; discussing strategies (e.g. seeking resources and collaborations) for advancement in research and/or clinical practice; creating a network of contacts and giving the mentee visibility; giving the mentee the opportunity to join one of your ongoing projects.

The purpose of this document is to facilitate the possible discussion mentoring topics that can be addressed from both the mentor and mentee perspectives, and to guide them in a successful direction. The following list explores some of these areas to help you cultivate your own refreshed discussion topics and give examples for both mentors and mentees on how to start a discussion about it.

Mentoring can begin with two simple questions such as:

- What should be the focus of our next meeting?
- Can we discuss concrete goals for our relationship and what we each hope to gain?

#### 1. Mentees to mentors

*Skill-related topics:* consider bringing up the areas of skill that you already have and that you would like to develop and improve upon.

What personal or professional skills do you think I should work on developing?

What do you think my three best skills are?

What skill areas do you think I could improve in?

What skills do you think are the most beneficial to have in my current position?

How can you describe your current academic environment? How does your current academic environment support your clinical and research career development?

*Feedback topics:* feedback can be used as a constructive method for improvement, so it is a great topic to discuss during a meeting with your mentor. Allow your mentor to give you constructive feedback and take notes on what you could improve and what you did well.

How would you rate my presentation at the last ERA congress?

Do you think I am ready to apply for a fellowship?

What changes would you make to my project/article?

What could I have done differently in this particular situation?

#### *Tips for receiving feedback*

Be a good listener

When in doubt, ask for clarification

Embrace the feedback session as a learning opportunity

Remember to pause and think before responding

Avoid jumping to conclusions, and show that you are invested in the learning process and keen to improve

Think positively and be open to helpful hints

Learn from your mistakes and be motivated

Be a good sport and show appreciation

Be proactive

Depending on the mentees' needs, additional questions may include:

How should I define my academic or research goals? How does my current academic environment fit with my goals? How do my goals fit to the current academic environment?

How can you best help me achieve my goals?

What resources do you have that might be useful to me?

Who can you put me in touch with to help me achieve my goals?

## **2. Here are some topics for mentors to initiate with their mentees:**

### *Career choice*

- What made you apply for this role? How does it align with your long-term plans?
- What led you to this career path?

### *Academic advancement*

- Where do you see yourself in five years?

- Do you have any reservations about your responsibilities?

#### *Career satisfaction*

- Are you happy in your current position?
- What methods are you using to communicate effectively with your team?
- How do you track the progress of your goals?

#### *Work-life-balance*

- How do you manage stress?
- Could you propose/suggest one or two strategies that could try to promote a better work-life balance?
- What do you enjoy doing during non-working hours?
- What does work/life balance look like for you?

#### *Long- and short-term goal topics*

- What is your goal? What do you hope to achieve from this experience?
- What steps can you take to achieve that goal?
- What other roles would you be interested in your career?
- What quantitative goals do you want to achieve within the next six months?
- How can I support you in reaching your goals?
- What kind of support are you looking for specifically?

*Feedback delivery:* feedback is a valuable tool for indicating whether things are going in the right direction or whether a change of direction is needed. In medical education, it is designed to provide doctors with information about their practice through the eyes of their peers. Appropriate feedback contributes significantly to developing learners' competence and confidence at all stages of their professional career; it helps them think about the gap between actual and desired performance, and identify ways to narrow the gap and improve. Giving and receiving feedback is not an easy task and poses significant challenges for both sides. According to Hardavella et al., here are some questions and tips for giving effective feedback.

- What do you think went well?
- What do you think could be done differently?
- What could be further improved?
- How can this be achieved?

#### *Tips on giving effective feedback*

- Plan in advance
- Give promptly, right after the event/meeting
- Think about what you want to achieve and drive the discussion accordingly

- One-on-one feedback is preferable
- Start gently
- Be specific
- Encourage self-reflection
- Be aware of nonverbal clues
- Self-reflect after the feedback session is completed

Please keep in mind that mentor's qualities and responsibilities:

- is non-judgmental and accepts of personal differences
- commits time and energy as a volunteer on a regular and ongoing basis
- assists in the mentee's identity development
- gives honest feedback in a constructive and caring manner

#### References

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