

# Community of Mentors

Guidelines for Junior Faculty



Children's Hospital Boston



## Office of Faculty Development (OFD)

### Mission

The mission of the OFD is to recruit and retain the best faculty at Children’s Hospital Boston (CHB), to facilitate the career advancement and satisfaction of all junior faculty, and to increase leadership opportunities for women and minorities.

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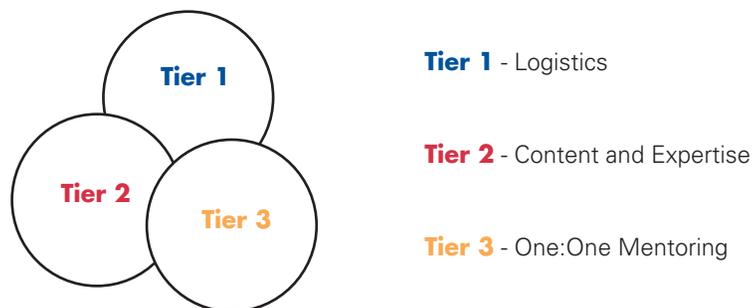
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### Background of the Community of Mentors

Recognizing the value of mentoring for clinical, teaching, and research careers, the OFD, in collaboration with its Advisory Committee and the Department and Division Chiefs, developed the “Community of Mentors” so that all junior faculty will have access to a mentor or a mentor team. “Community of Mentors” is a three-tier system, running the spectrum from providing logistical information in Tier 1, to skills building courses and panels in Tier 2, to enabling committed personal and professional relationships in Tier 3. As part of Tier 2, the OFD will identify experts in various content and process skill sets to help facilitate mentor teams. Individual appointments with the OFD Director can help direct junior faculty to establish their own personalized “Community of Mentors,” in addition to special interest networking sessions, courses, workshops, and panel presentations. Each tier draws on the support services of its related tiers, working collaboratively to create a climate of success.

Figure 1



Community of Mentoring = a network of interdependent support services

The “Community of Mentors” begins with an appointed or selected mentor at the division or department level and guides junior faculty to think more broadly about a “Community of Mentors” hospital wide – within their department and across departments, disciplines, and potentially institutions. “Home support” at the department level is highly valued, and the Chief or senior faculty mentor plays an active role to help junior faculty choose additional mentors. Community of Mentors, with the support of Children’s Hospital Chiefs and Senior Administration, encourages junior faculty to select senior colleagues with appropriate experience to promote their career development.

- Tier 1:** Communication: Perspectives, OFD website, Email  
 Orientation for new faculty: introduction to OFD and senior administration  
 Housing through Harvard websites  
 Career and Family Network, Bulletin board, website  
 Childcare and eldercare resources  
     CHB Employee Assistance Program (EAP)  
     Harvard Medical Office of Work and Family  
 HMS Office for Diversity and Community Partnership, linked from OFD website  
 HMS promotion criteria, linked on OFD website
- Tier 2:** Workshops, networking sessions  
 Promotion seminars with HMS Faculty/Deans  
 Research fellowships for faculty  
 Annotated bibliography of articles and programs on mentoring  
 Career Development Collection in Library  
 Partnerships with Chief Executive Officer, Chief Operating Officer, Clinical Research Program,  
     Office of Sponsored Programs, Clinical and Translational Research Executive  
     Committee, Research Recruitment and Resource Committee, and the Harvard Catalyst  
 CV and grant templates, guidelines and tips  
 Appointments with S. Jean Emans, MD, Director, OFD, and Mary Clark, PhD, former HMS  
     Associate Dean of Faculty Affairs  
 Diversity and Cultural Competency Council Faculty Director, Valerie Ward, MD, MPH  
 The Academy at CHB, directed by Alan Leichtner, MD  
 Identification of process/content experts
- Tier 3:** Chief’s commitment to Community of Mentors  
 CEO/COO support for faculty development  
 Cross-departmental and cross-institutional support  
 Identification of mentors and facilitation of matches  
 Mentoring panel and courses  
 Annual Career Conferences and individualized Professional Development Plans  
 Faculty Development Month

## What is a traditional mentor?

The literature is replete with definitions of mentors from a variety of sources, including classical literature, military training, academia, business, and government. These definitions include advocate, coach, teacher, guide, role model, valued friend, door-opener, benevolent authority, available resource, cheerful critic, and career enthusiast. It has also been noted that “supermentors” combine many of these definitions, both generating processes for leadership development for succeeding generations and innately leading change. The Community of Mentors model defines a mentor as someone who provides individual or group mentoring support that contributes to the career development of a junior colleague.

## Beyond the dyadic model of mentoring – Community of Mentors and Developmental Networks

In addition to the traditional dyadic model of mentor-mentee, mentoring may include multiple relationships that we have called a “Community of Mentors” where each mentor provides part of the needed coaching and career development; one professional may provide scientific critique and expertise, another advice on family/work juggling, and another advice on grantsmanship or scholarly writing or networking in professional societies. The Community of Mentors includes traditional mentors, supermentors, peer mentors, and e-mentors (Figure 2).

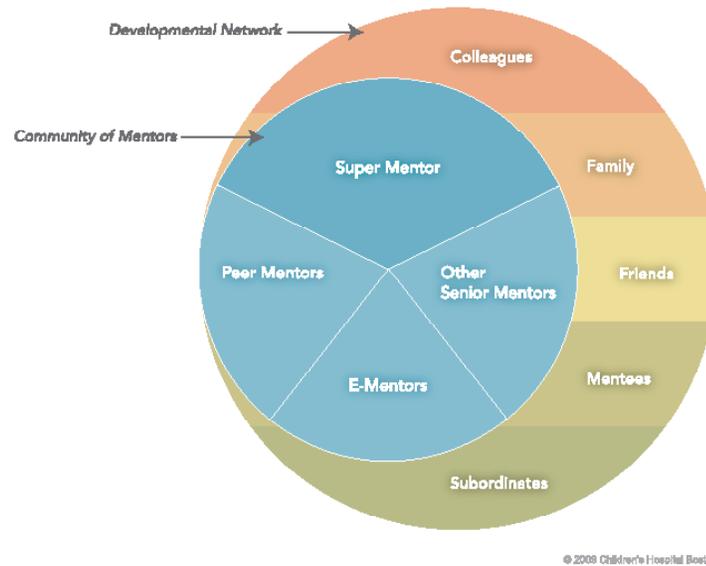
*Collaborative peer mentoring* allows faculty to work together at a regularly scheduled time, sometimes facilitated by a senior faculty member, and combining a curriculum (scholarship, teaching, grant writing, career development) along with a scholarly product. Peer-mentoring can also create an opportunity to share information, strategize about careers, and provide each other feedback, friendship, and emotional support.

*E-mentoring* typically builds on an existing traditional mentoring relationship that because of time, location or other constraints, continues primarily via electronic communication, but may include two professionals who have never met in person.

*Project-based mentoring*, often referred to as functional mentoring in the literature, pairs junior faculty with mentors who have the skills, expertise, and interest required for a specific project. The mentoring relationship may cease when the project is completed or it may continue and possibly evolve into a more traditional mentoring relationship.

A newer framework for career development and mentoring has been defined by David Thomas, Kathy Kram, Monica Higgins and others [2,3,4,5] who have noted the value in the business world of “Developmental Networks” composed of an even broader range of people (including one’s Community of Mentors, colleagues, subordinates, mentees, family, and friends) who can provide career advice and support (Figure 2). These simultaneously held relationships include people from the mentee’s own organization as well as external organizations and communities. They provide access to knowledge, opportunities, and resources across institutions and cultures. Developmental Networks, because they draw from all levels, can offer more diverse viewpoints, experiences, and facilitation of two-way learning, than those drawn solely from the senior level. Junior faculty should regularly assess and re-configure their network in parallel with their career trajectory and work/life needs. Junior faculty are encouraged to map their developmental network by listing people for each category in Figure 2.

Figure 2



## How can mentors be helpful to faculty career development?

The mentoring relationship is a dynamic process requiring active participation and flexibility on both sides. The acquisition of knowledge should be mutually beneficial, with mentees as well as mentors acting as teachers. Mentors may be prepared to offer both personal and professional support and advice.

Senior faculty bring a wealth of expertise to junior faculty, based on their collective knowledge, proficiency and experience. It is their responsibility to create a supportive culture for junior faculty. Your first step as a mentee is to define your career goals in clinical innovation, teaching, administration, and research and then meet with your current mentor, Lab Director, Division or Department Chief. Bring your CV, Annual Career Conference Form, and Academic and Professional Development Plan, if applicable, and together decide the best mentor team. If you are new to Children's, your Department or Division Chief may have already assigned you a primary mentor. In small departments and divisions, the Chief may serve as a primary mentor for junior faculty or you may have selected a different mentor.

As you begin to recognize your colleagues' strengths, you can decide who might be the right personal and professional match for your needs. Since the mentoring process requires a commitment and a willingness to devote time and energy, we recommend a minimum one-year commitment, which could be formal or informal. Over time, you should supplement and change your mentor team with "no fault" assigned. Mentoring thrives in such a broad, developmental culture.

With increasing professional demands, there is no "one-size-fits-all" mentor. Successful mentoring is a dynamic process whereby each learns to respect and trust the other's commitment and expertise, but individual choice and style play important roles. This individuality creates unique mentor pairs or teams. The principle applied is that you receive sustained support, whether from one "supermentor," a team of mentors, or an evolving, developmental mentor composite.

To gain the most from your experience, you need to be active in choosing the best mentors to assist you in areas such as:

- Refining goals, career advancement, guidance on resources
- Scientific oversight, grant writing
- Scientific writing and critique
- Issues of authorship, publication, and integrity
- Time-management, pace of career and workload
- Work/life balance and practical tips for success
- Teaching skills, curriculum development, teaching portfolios
- Clinical practice strategies
- HMS promotion criteria, reorganization of CV
- Enhancing professional visibility, locally and nationally
- Joining professional societies
- Understanding the organizational culture: structure, politics, and management
- Advocacy

Figure 3



**“It is good I have some one To help me, “ he said.  
 “Right here in my hat On the top of my head!  
 It is good that I have her Here with me today.  
 She helps me a lot. This is Little Cat A.”**

**And then Little Cat A Took the hat off HER head.  
 “It is good I have some one To help ME,” she said.  
 “This is Little Cat B... I keep him about,  
 And when I need help Then I let him come out.”**

The Cat in the Hat Comes Back© &  
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## Mentorship – A Dynamic Process

Choosing mentors creates a strong basis for your professional growth, and so being active in the process is a good starting point. Faculty members are truly approachable. It is important that mentors have time and are successful at their level. Prospective mentors should have a “track record,” such that past trainees are successful in their own lives. Another indicator of success is a mentor’s commitment to diversity. At least one mentor should: be in your field of scholarship, share your goals, and support your career trajectory with critical feedback and resources.

Consider as well the professional and personal values and judgments you most admire in a mentor. Your Developmental Network should include senior faculty, as well as peer mentors, subordinates, family, and friends who can support your career advancement and/or psychosocial development.

By asking for advice and welcoming constructive criticism, you create a dynamic relationship with your mentor(s). It is not always safe to assume that advice will be offered if it is not solicited. As the relationship progresses, it will be easier to be more specific in your requests. As part of your responsibility, you should stimulate and engage your mentor with articles and discussions on research. If your interest crosses disciplines, it will be useful to seek advice from someone who has successfully bridged these fields and who will encourage your vision.

Accepting challenges willingly suggests a desire to progress. An eagerness to learn and respect for your mentor are solid platforms for growth. Even if your initial reaction to a mentor’s advice is skeptical, you should still consider it seriously. While it may seem irrelevant at the time, often the advice will become an important opportunity for you over time.

Show appreciation for the time and assistance of your mentor. Because one of their greatest rewards is your success, mentors may be very generous with their time. Along the way, you should reciprocate with even small measures of appreciation. These include returning phone calls, e-mail messages, or faxes promptly. At times, it may be appropriate to check how much time your mentor is able to provide; additional meetings can be scheduled as needed.

Through a relationship similar to a friendship, mentoring supports your professional growth, and you may be comfortable discussing “thorny” issues, including cultural, race, and gender concerns. Your mentor may ask you questions about your personal life to get to know you as a whole person. You should likewise consider reciprocating these friendship gestures. Knowing something about your mentor’s life outside the institution can help you both communicate better.

Make only positive or neutral comments about your mentor to others. If, after a period of time, you don’t believe that either you or your mentor are able to contribute to an effective mentoring relationship, the OFD or your Chief can assist in finding or selecting different mentors. If a relationship ends, do so on good terms, keeping the lines of communication open with your mentor.

## Mentorship - Expectations

It is essential that mutual expectations be agreed upon at the onset of the relationship, including the time frame of the mentoring relationship. Mentors expect that junior faculty will:

- Meet or make contact in accordance with the agreed upon plan.
- Formulate short- and long-term goals including identifying values and a timeline for acquisition of skills and completion of tasks such as: writing a paper, joining a professional society, applying for a grant, initiating a new clinical or teaching activity, etc.
- Respect and accept gender, racial/ethnic, and other differences.
- Ask for advice and listen thoughtfully.
- Keep confidences.
- Follow through on commitments.
- Discuss issues openly and be clear on expectations.
- Try to maintain relationship for at least one year.

## The Mentee's Checklist

### Preparation

- Ask yourself – What are my goals? How can a mentor assist me in meeting these goals? What are my competency levels and skill sets?
- You are encouraged to take the initiative. Introduce yourself by phone, brief letter or email. Invite a meeting and suggest potential topics. Be ready to ask for advice and listen thoughtfully. Look at some of your mentor's publications.
- Update your résumé/CV and send a copy to your mentor in advance of your first meeting.
- Think about your Developmental Network (colleagues, subordinates, mentees, family and friends) including your Community of Mentors (traditional mentors, supermentors, peer mentors, and e-mentors) who you turn to regularly for career advice and support, both inside and outside your lab/division/department/school.

### First meeting

- Discuss your short- and long-term professional goals and proposed project and work together to develop steps toward these goals, with a timeline.
- Consider the skill sets that require additional mentors: What skills do I need to learn or improve? Who can help me navigate the organizational culture? What do I want to change about my work style? What professional networks are important? List the people in your Community of Mentors who can provide career advice, coaching, or psychosocial support and review gaps.

- Decide together on the frequency of meetings which can vary based on needs of individuals, but occurs as often as several times a week to once every month or two. Interactions may range from brief email to a phone “check-in” to lengthy follow up. Either member can initiate a meeting; do not wait for your mentor.

## Some Topics for Discussion

### Research Meeting

- Discuss proposed project and how to develop aims and hypotheses.
- Write out a 2 page concept paper with brief background, aims and hypotheses, and analysis plan of your proposed research.
- Assess skills/resources needed for projects and timeline.
- Meet frequently to ensure progress in meeting original project goals, developing new projects, writing manuscripts.

### Promotion

- Discuss career trajectory and skills/deliverables needed to progress to next level.

### Balance and Negotiation

- Ask your primary mentor for his or her résumé/CV and ask to identify key steps in his/her career path that seem valuable.
- Ask about resources for family and child care.
- Learn about successful negotiating styles and skills.

## Follow-up Meetings

- Set mutual expectations and responsibilities at the onset of the relationship.
- Investigate need for specific mentors and skills and how the plan can be actualized over time.
- Use the checklist to track progress. Keep an ongoing portfolio of activities, works in progress, and check your timeline.
- Suggest potential topics for future meetings, such as meeting goals, time management, work/life balance, negotiation, manuscript completion, etc.
- Continue to assess the skill sets that require additional mentors: What skills do I need to learn or improve? What do I want to change about my work style? What professional networks are important?
- Try to maintain relationship for at least one year. Reevaluate mentoring relationship as needed, but at least annually. Agree on confidentiality and no-fault termination.

## OFD Advisory Committee

The Community of Mentors is endorsed by the OFD Advisory Committee, Senior Administration, and the Department and Division Chiefs.

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## Remarks/Symposia

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- How To Become an Effective Mentor: A Faculty Development Course on Mentoring March 3, 2004; November 15, 2004; May 1, 2006, November 16, 2007, November 21, 2008: Program Directors, Barbara Bierer MD, Rosemary Duda, MD, MPH; S. Jean Emans, MD, Carol Nadelson, MD, Glorian Sorensen, PhD, MPH; Nancy Tarbell, MD, and Anthony Whitemore, MD.
- Remarks of junior faculty, focus sessions on mentoring, July 29, 2004 and October 25, 2004.

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Guidelines from Mentoring Programs at the following academic medical centers: Eastern Virginia Medical School; UCLA School of Medicine; Medical College of Wisconsin; and the University of Michigan's ADVANCE Program.



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