



Hourly and Professional Staff

Mentoring Handbook

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Hourly and Professional Staff Mentoring Handbook

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Content Excerpted and Adapted from:

Saathoff, R.N., and Morgan, K.T. (2007). Family of Community Health Sciences Mentoring Handbook. Agricultural Experiment Station, Rutgers Cooperative Extension, New Brunswick, NJ. Used with permission.

Chapter I

INTRODUCTION

Introduction to the Hourly and Professional Staff Mentoring Handbook

UMaine Extension believes all staff can benefit from being a part of a mentoring relationship. Given the structure of our organization, the mentor for an hourly or professional staff member may be located in a different office. In fact, that difference is a strength in the mentoring relationship as it brings a level of objectivity and the possibility of new ways of approaching similar work for the benefit of the mentee, unit and Extension.

The mentoring relationship is initiated by the new staff member's supervisor and can be structured to provide general support to the new staff member or the support provided by the mentee could be focused on an aspect or aspects of the new staff members work.

Purpose

The purpose of the Mentoring Program is to provide a network of support and guidance to new staff members in meeting the objectives of their position descriptions.

Objectives

The member (mentor) will:

- Help to create a climate of trust that allows the mentee to share and reflect upon their experiences in the organization.
- Offer personal and professional knowledge, insight and feedback that support the growth and development of the mentee.
- Help the mentee work towards their goals.
- Demonstrate a working knowledge of processes (reclassification, professional career ladder) that affect the mentee.

The new member (mentee) will:

- Achieve excellence in performance.
- Demonstrate the knowledge and skills appropriate to their position.
- Attain career ladder advancement (professional staff) and satisfactory or above performance.

General Timeline of the Mentoring Program

Month 1

The mentor initiates contact with the mentee to:

- a. Get acquainted and design the mentoring partnership.

- b. Review the mentor's role/job description.

Month 2 to 4

The mentor and mentee connect to review:

- a. *Duties of the job*
- b. *Topics important to the mentee (technology skills, policies, organizational procedures, etc.)*
- c. Agree to how often to meet, how you will meet (in person, video conference, etc.) and what topics you will focus on.

Recommended:

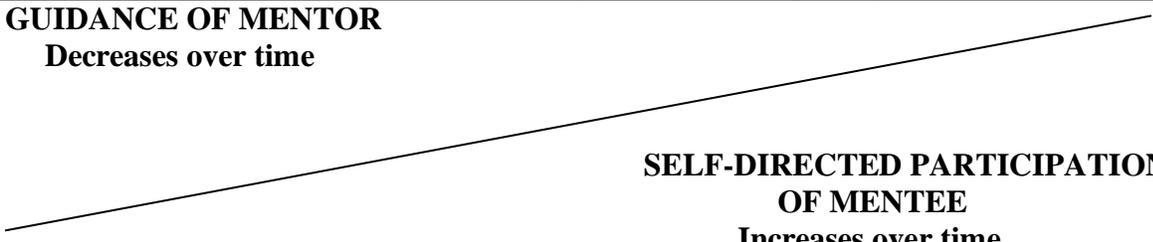
Mentor initiates on-going contact once every month during the first six months and then every other month thereafter.

Chapter II

The Mentoring Process

Mentoring is a dynamic process, during which the roles of the mentor change with the growth and experience of the mentee. The following model illustrates the transition which occurs as the relationship progresses.

On Becoming a Mentor.....The Mentoring Process

PHASE 1	PHASE 2	PHASE 3	PHASE 4
Mentor as Initiator	Mentor as Guide	Mentor as Facilitator	Mentor as Companion
<i>Sharing</i>	<i>Coaching</i>	<i>Supporting</i>	<i>Empowering</i>
Mentor initiates meeting and shares with mentee information about Extension.	Mentor coaches mentee with job performance skills.	Mentor encourages mentee's approaches to meeting performance expectations.	Mentor as advocate/cheerleader.
Mentor provides specific information and maintains regular contact with mentee.	Mentor suggests new information and methods and encourages the mentee.	Mentor provides factual information when requested and supports mentee's own creative decision-making.	Mentee assumes full responsibility for meeting performance expectations.
<p>GUIDANCE OF MENTOR Decreases over time</p>  <p style="text-align: center;">SELF-DIRECTED PARTICIPATION OF MENTEE Increases over time</p>			

What Mentors Do

The following are some specific functions mentors perform to meet the needs of the mentees in the mentoring relationship:

- Share knowledge of Extension's culture, traditions, processes, policies, and values to help them become acclimated and comfortable. Provide information about the university system and other organizational realities, and socialize them to the organization and profession.

- Foster creativity and help them develop their own style.
- Increase their sense of competence by praising them, and asking their opinions.
- Encourage them to grow and take initiative.
- Provide them with contacts, opportunities and other resources which will help them to perform their job responsibilities and advance their careers.
- Be an advocate/cheerleader – nominate them for appropriate recognition and awards and praise them to others to establish a general perception that the mentee is competent and capable.
- Coach when necessary – help them deal with professional and personal issues and conflicts that affect their job performance. Direct them to others who can provide support (Extension’s Assistant Director, their supervisor, (HR) and Cigna EAP).
- Give constructive and honest feedback about ideas and plans.

Note: This section speaks directly to what mentors do. However, supervisors also have an important role in the growth and development of the new staff member and may perform some or all of the specific functions listed above. Mentors provide informal feedback about the mentee’s performance while supervisors provide both informal and formal feedback about the mentee’s job performance.

Chapter III

The Mentoring Relationship

Mentor and Mentee: Definitions and Characteristics

Mentor: By Webster's definition, a mentor is a *wise and trusted teacher or counselor*. A mentor has many roles – friend, role model, advocate, confidant – and has the ability to empower others. An effective mentor possesses the following characteristics:

- High standards; commitment to excellence.
- Proven effectiveness in operation.
- Respect for the abilities of others.
- Commitment to spend time in shared learning.
- Willing to be an advocate and supporter.
- Trustworthy – able to trust and be trusted.
- Caring and empathetic.
- Ability to communicate effectively.
- Creative – receptive to new ideas.
- Positive attitude.
- Flexible.
- Respect for the differences in others.
- Commitment to high standards of ethical behavior.
- Maintain appropriate confidentiality.

Mentee: A mentee is one whose *orientation, performance, training or career is supported by a colleague/mentor*. While all individuals embarking in a new professional experience can benefit from a mentor, success in the mentoring relationship may be more likely for a person with the following characteristics:

- Interacts well with others.
- Good interpersonal communication skills – knows how to ask the right questions.
- Sensitive to others.
- Interested in new experiences, challenges and taking risks.
- Interested in learning; able to discover own resources and opportunities.
- Actively seeks advice and counsel from others.
- Good observer – watches and learns from others.
- Teaches self, reflects on learning, works through problems.

Developing the Relationship

Taking part in a mentoring program means becoming involved in a relationship. The mentoring relationship is one which is designed to promote the growth and development of the mentee.

Effective relationships are based on many factors. Some of these include communication, an attraction to or appreciation of the other person's qualities, commitment to the same goals, and sharing of feelings, values and beliefs.

The mentoring program is designed to help develop an effective relationship between mentee and mentor. The structure is designed to allow, as much as possible, mentees to be assigned mentors to whom they can relate and with whom they share common work assignments.

Communication, Commitment and Trust

The keys to making the mentoring relationship work for both parties are *communication, commitment and trust*.

Communication: Both parties must communicate openly and honestly. The mentee must willingly indicate his or her needs and the mentors must willingly share their strengths and knowledge.

Commitment: Both parties must be committed to making the relationship work. All individuals involved must live up to their responsibilities. Taking on the role of a mentor is a serious responsibility – someone is depending on you. In turn, because the program is designed mostly for the benefit of the mentee, they must take as much initiative as possible in making the relationship work.

Trust: Trust is an underlying factor in a successful mentoring relationship. Building trust depends on simple actions such as keeping appointments, as well as more profound actions such as sharing successes and failures. Other trust-builders include respecting confidentiality, being honest and consistent, exhibiting a positive attitude toward the other person, and respecting and valuing each other's differences.

The Mentor's Role in Building the Relationship

As the "wise and trusted teacher and counselor," it is the mentor's role to take the initiative in building the relationship. Some suggestions include:

Find out about your mentee in a caring, non-intrusive way.....

- Past work experiences.
- Education – degrees in what from where.
- Hobbies and avocations.
- Community involvement.
- Things they value most.
- Family responsibilities – partner/spouse, children, pets.

- Concerns about the workload or certain aspects of the job.
- Concerns about office or organizational politics.
- Birthday and other significant life events.

Call your mentee once a month during the first six months and then every month thereafter. Or, design the timing that works best given the focus and objectives co-designed by the mentee and mentor.

Seek out your mentee at meetings. Sit together if possible, have lunch. Ask how things are going, concerns, successes, new programs, etc. Offer to room with your mentee at overnight gatherings. Remember your mentee's birthday with a phone call or card; ask about other significant personal events.

The Value of the Mentoring Relationship

Benefits to the Mentee

Many individuals feel that the "bottom line" of the mentoring relationship is whether or not the individual achieves satisfactory performance and continues in their position for many years. However, even an effective mentor cannot assure those things. The mentor's primary role is to support and guide the mentee in efforts to attain desired performance. A successful mentoring relationship may continue throughout the mentee's career.

The value of the mentoring relationship to the mentee depends upon the nature and depth of the relationship. A mentor can be a friend and confidant throughout one's career. A mentor can help the mentee define personal, as well as professional goals. A mentor can help the mentee sort through the myriad of possibilities and opportunities which arise.

While a mentor must be supportive, they must also be objective and serve as an evaluator, providing caring and honest feedback in the most positive sense. The mentor facilitates the growth of the mentee based on evaluation and fostering of the mentee's individual strengths and qualities. Despite the many positive attributes of the mentor, the goal is never to produce "clones" but to develop the full and unique potential of the new staff member.

For professional staff the mentor can be very helpful when the mentee submits an application to be promoted in the Extension career ladder. They can review the packet of accomplishments before submission and provide their promotion packet as an example.

Benefits to the Mentors

While the benefits to the mentees are obvious, the mentors also benefit from the mentoring relationship. Some mentor benefits include opportunities to:

- Grow and be challenged.
- Keep abreast of changes, new ideas and concepts.

- Share ideas and expertise; develop leadership skills.
- Develop interpersonal relationships with the understanding of mentees.
- Be inspired to set new professional goals and to upgrade skills.
- Serve on committees with, conduct programs, produce publications and work on projects with mentees.
- Gain a sense of pride from watching mentees develop and grow.

Benefits to the University of Maine Cooperative Extension

The University of Maine Cooperative Extension and its clientele benefit from the mentoring program. Benefits include:

- Accelerated development of new talent – staff who are motivated and able to mobilize resources and people to meet work expectations.
- Improve performance and productivity of both mentors and mentees.
- Increased opportunities for collaborative efforts across county/unit lines.
- Retaining individuals with high levels of expertise who are able to meet the needs of clientele and their job expectations.

Chapter IV

Mentoring Responsibilities

Mentoring is a form of teaching and learning through consultation. As a mentor, you work in a learning/development partnership with your mentee. “Partnership” is the key word. To be successful, both parties must be willing to be fully engaged.

Responsibilities of the mentor:

- Design the mentoring partnership.
- Be willing to share experiences, successes, failures and observations.
- Help the mentee work towards their goals.
- Maintain confidentiality.
- Share information about the Professional Career Ladder.

More specifically:

- Maintain frequent contact with the mentee – this might be once a month or once a quarter and become less frequent over time.
- Provide insights about Cooperative Extension; advice about opportunities for professional improvement, grantsmanship, awards and recognition, as well as organizational committee membership.
- Link mentee with individuals in the field with specific subject matter or program expertise from other land grant universities or other counties.

Responsibilities of the Mentee

The goals of the mentoring program focus on the professional development of and attainment of successful performance of the mentee. Although all parties involved hold responsibilities for the success of the mentoring relationship, it is important that the mentee take initiative when needed to develop the mentoring relationship into one which can benefit them the most.

It must be emphasized that *mentoring cannot guarantee the achievement of success; the ultimate responsibility for this lies with the mentee*. The mentee needs to evaluate the information provided by the mentors, or anyone else, and decide how to apply it to their own professional situation.

Responsibilities of the mentee:

- Seize every opportunity the learning experience offers in order to gain personal and professional insight.
- Be purposeful in your actions; identify your career goals.
- Willingness to assume responsibility for accomplishing goals.
- Come prepared to meetings/conference calls.
- Be clear about the support you want.
- Maximize your time with your mentor. Apply what you learn and tap into your mentor's resources (people, organization, knowledge, etc.)
- Openness to feedback; implementing suggestions from your mentor.
- Be willing to candidly discuss issues and consider advice.
- Develop goals and establish benchmarks for achieving them.
- Respect the mentor's time and schedule.
- Be willing to pass on the gift of mentoring.

Chapter VI

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