



Children's Hospital Boston
Office of Faculty Development

COMMUNITY OF MENTORS
Frequently Asked Questions

1) Why do we need a formal program on mentoring?

To train the next generation of leaders, superior academic medical institutions must have excellent mentoring programs. Mentoring relationships convey important aspects of academic medicine and create a healthy professional climate.

Children's Hospital has many outstanding senior faculty mentors who have worked closely with junior faculty. Our academic community will be enriched by a program that assures that all junior faculty have access to mentoring.

2) Aren't informal relationships, created by the individuals involved, superior to those "arranged" by external forces?

Yes, and that is one of the reasons that Community of Mentors advocates that junior faculty work closely with their Chiefs and take an active part in choosing their mentor team. If they are part of the process, a healthy dynamic can be established. Workshops and senior faculty identified as experts in various academic skills help create and enable a community in which mentoring can thrive. Junior faculty who do not have a mentor, particularly if they are new to Children's, may need to have a mentor assigned by their Chief until they can take an active role in developing this relationship.

3) Why do we need guidelines?

Mentoring is an art and while it comes naturally to some, newcomers on both sides of the relationship can develop the basic skills by looking over some of the tips. Of course, mentoring relationships can gain their own momentum and move far beyond the expectations listed in the booklets. In a hectic, productive academic environment, individual needs can sometimes get lost. All the Chiefs are in favor of developing a mentoring program at Children's.

4) Aren't there differences between mentoring and advising? Community of Mentors doesn't seem to differentiate between the two.

Mentoring involves a whole spectrum of interactions, and the relationships enable one another. Even providing basic information helps to create an atmosphere conducive to mentoring. With constraints on time, some senior faculty may prefer to mentor or to advise several junior faculty members in one competency area; others may prefer to mentor a few across many skill and career development strategies.

5) Are mentors required to submit a written plan?

No, the Office of Faculty Development (OFD) does **not** ask anyone to submit a form. The guidelines are introduced as a way for mentors and junior faculty to begin their relationship with goals in mind. The Annual Career Conference form includes a question that asks about an individual's mentor or mentor team. This form is available from the OFD internal website (<http://web2.tch.harvard.edu/ofd/conf.html>)

6) How will we know if the program is successful?

Mentors and junior faculty will need to review the effectiveness of their relationships. When a relationship does not work well, faculty should end this respectfully, with guidance from their Chiefs. Other ineffective mentor teams can be supplemented with additional mentors. Junior faculty are encouraged to work with several mentors. The OFD plans to survey junior and senior faculty on their satisfaction with the program.

7) Where can I go to look for further information on mentoring?

The CH Library's Career and Faculty Development contains an annotated list of mentoring resources and numerous reviews and manuals that can further your knowledge on the subject. The Office of Faculty Development, 333 Longwood Ave (room 637), maintains copies of several key articles on mentoring.