



The AAPD Mentoring Program

PURPOSE AND OBJECTIVES

The Australasian Academy of Paediatric Dentistry (AAPD) mentoring program has been designed to support recent graduates in their transition to specialist practice and to encourage continued leadership, learning and development within the Academy.

Objectives:

- To connect members and create positive relationships within the AAPD
- To support recent graduates in their transition to specialist practice
- To expose mentees to different interest areas and subspecialties within Paediatric Dentistry
- To develop leadership skills within the AAPD community

WHAT IS MENTORING?

Mentoring is a relationship in which one person, usually more experienced or senior, takes time to assist the career, professional or personal development of someone else, who is known as a mentee.

Mentoring is the sharing of knowledge, skills and life experience to guide another towards reaching their full potential. The AAPD program has a focus on professional and personal development of the mentee but there are many mutual benefits.

A mentor is a trusted advisor and role model. A mentor listens well and asks questions that focus on problem-solving and challenges the mentee to think outside their comfort zone. A mentor provides guidance, support, encouragement and gives constructive feedback, with the goal being to help mentees improve their skills. Mentoring can help both parties build leadership skills, communication skills, learn new perspectives and gain personal satisfaction.



CRITERIA FOR MATCHING

An essential first step in a successful mentoring relationship is for both the mentor and mentee to identify, define, and honestly articulate their common and individual goals and motives.

- Eligibility criteria for Mentees
 - Can be accessed up to five years after graduation. However, first and second year graduates are prioritized to ensure they receive early mentorship.
- Eligibility criteria for Mentors
 - Mentors must have a minimum of five years' experience in the field of Paediatric Dentistry since the completion of post-graduate studies.
- Mentees and Mentors nominate themselves and complete a questionnaire where each party outlines what type of mentor/mentee they are looking for relating to areas of interest and career objective.
- Pairs are matched by the AAPD Mentoring Committee
 - The mentor selected will work and live in a different state or country to the mentee. This is to reduce potential conflict of interests.
 - The AAPD president, or committee, suggest a pairing they believe would be the most suitable.
 - The initial meeting is held over by phone, Skype, Facetime or other method agreed upon by the parties, so both the mentee and mentor become familiar and ensure they are happy with each other.
 - If either party thinks that the relationship would not work, they can contact the committee to look at seeking a different mentee/mentor.
 - Once a relationship has been confirmed, the mentee and mentor would contact the committee/president and advise if they would like to continue into the next year, end the relationship or try a new relationship.
 - After three years, the AAPD's involvement in the relationship would cease. However, the relationship can continue without AAPD involvement.



MEETING STRUCTURE

- The first meeting would cover several topics
 - General information
 - Background, work experiences, interests, life experience etc
 - Goals
 - Current issues
 - Limitations
 - Aims for the relationship – what do both parties want out of it?
 - Can you contact each other outside of the scheduled meeting times? Are both parties happy with this?
 - Contact preferences to be discussed such as telephone, email, skype, facetime, Zoom etc.

- Specific questions could be emailed to each other prior to allow time to prepare if required.
- Ensure to highlight any topics that should not be discussed.
 - Eg conflicts of interest, personal life etc...
- Ensure that the next meeting is tentatively arranged, ideally within three months depending on the mentor/mentee requirements and availability.
 - This could be via phone, skype, facetime
 - Face-to-face meetings would have the best impact, however, would be more challenging to coordinate. This may be possible if both parties are attending the same conferences.

Suggested Questions for the First Meeting by the Mentor

- What do you think I can help you with?
- What are you hoping to get out of the next 12 months?
- How long do you think you would like this mentor program to continue for?
- Do you have any immediate concerns?
- Can you outline your short, medium and long-term goals?
- Is there anything that is creating difficulties for you now?
- How will we give each other feedback?
- How do we coordinate the next meeting?



CODE OF CONDUCT

The code of conduct is to set standards for expected behaviour, attitudes and responsibilities between participants in the AAPD Mentoring Program.

The mentoring relationship should be defined from the beginning as mutually beneficial. Each participant has committed to the relationship by choice and mentors should be frank and honest about their previous experiences and challenges. Each should openly share his or her goals for the relationship and work collaboratively to help achieve them.

Mentors should remember that the relationship is primarily focused on the mentee's learning and development. The mentee has the ability and the potential, the mentor's job is to help them realise it.

The mentor is encouraged to help the mentee to find solutions for themselves, as opposed to solving the problem for them. This can be achieved through a process of reflection, questions, challenge and feedback that allows the mentee to come to their own conclusion. This will assist the mentee in improving their own problem-solving skills and will help instill confidence in their own abilities.

The mentee's responsibility is to manage his/her own learning, identification and achievement of goals, using the mentor as a support for this learning.

The mentor and mentee will conduct themselves with dignity and will act in a way which respects diversity and promotes equal opportunities.

Confidentiality remains paramount at all times. **At no time** will a mentor disclose any part of the relationship to any person whatsoever, without the explicit agreement of the mentee. Maintaining an environment of confidentiality is a critical component in building trust between the participants. Without a mutually understood ability to speak freely, the relationship is unlikely to reach its full potential.

Neither party will share information or experiences that are not theirs to share. This will ensure the confidentiality and boundaries of other AAPD members, associated practices, businesses and parties are respected. No conversations shall be recorded in any format by either party.

Mentors and mentees will respect each other's time and other responsibilities, ensuring they do not impose beyond what is reasonable or that has been agreed upon between the parties. Both parties will be reliable and aware of their competencies and limitations so that commitments to the relationship can be delivered.

The mentoring relationship is non-judgemental and the mentee should be able to ask for help freely.



Both parties will extend a positive interpretation to the intentions, words, and actions of the other party.

Mentors will be open and truthful with themselves and their mentee whilst participating in the mentoring relationship.

Both parties have a responsibility to highlight any ethical issues (such as conflicts of interest) that may arise during a mentoring relationship at the earliest opportunity.

The parties will not intrude into areas the other party wishes to keep private unless invited to do so.

The mentoring relationship should not be exploitative in any way.

Mentors should not work beyond the bounds of their capability, experience and expertise to the point where they do not feel confident in providing the mentee with proper support. Where appropriate, mentors should seek advice or refer mentees to another point of contact through the AAPD Executive or Mentoring Program Committee.

Either party may dissolve the relationship at any time throughout the period of the mentoring relationship and notify the AAPD.

The mentee should be made aware of their rights and any complaints procedures.

As the relationship nears its termination, both parties have an obligation to ensure there is a smooth transition. Many mentees and mentors may opt to continue their relationship in an informal manner that will not be overseen by the AAPD. At the end of the mentoring relationship, there will be maintenance of professional responsibilities and agreed confidentiality beyond the termination the relationship.



EFFECTIVE MENTORING RELATIONSHIPS

Mentoring is most effective when there is a good match between the mentor and mentee—whether that be in backgrounds, skill sets, experiences, roles or they have faced similar challenges.

There should be a clear understanding of expectations for your mentor/mentee and the relationship and these should be communicated clearly. It is helpful to have a plan (formal or informal) with milestones or goals to achieve. Be realistic about the time commitment to successfully participate in the relationship.

What makes a good mentor?

Generally, a good mentor is someone who is motivated and energised, cares about developing others, and is willing to commit their time. They try to adapt their feedback to the mentee's learning style.

A great mentor is ready to listen, ask questions, and accept that they may not fully understand the issue. They acknowledge what the mentee does well rather than focussing on mistakes, recognises strengths and how they can be used to address the mentee's challenges. A good mentor can give feedback and hold a mentee accountable without shaming or blaming.

What makes a good mentee?

A good mentee makes sure to dedicate the time and energy necessary to be mentored properly. It is helpful to inform your mentor of your preferred learning style, methods of communication and identify clearly the skills, knowledge and goals you hope to achieve.

Responsibility is taken for the mentee's own learning – a mentor can only give you tools and guidance. Take charge by asking questions and actively participating in conversations.

A good mentee is respectful and appreciates the time the mentor spends and the value they provide. They are positive, motivated to succeed and have a willingness to learn. They embrace feedback with an open mind.



PATHWAYS FOR MANAGING MENTORING RELATIONSHIPS

The AAPD mentor program is contingent on all parties respecting each other's time, views, experiences, and opinions. If at any stage there is a disintegration of the relationship, either party is to notify the AAPD Committee as soon as possible. If the relationship requires mediation this can be coordinated with an independent 3rd party. At any stage either party can withdraw themselves from the relationship without fear of reprisal.

FEEDBACK

Feedback from both parties is crucial to build on the relationship and to also assist the AAPD in improving the mentor program. Feedback will be provided to the AAPD annually to ensure the program is functioning well. An initial confidential survey will be sent to both the mentor and mentee 6 months into the mentoring program. The AAPD Mentoring Committee will report the survey findings to the AAPD Executive in order to improve the program.

Ending the mentoring relationship does not mean it has failed. Often, it just means that the initial goals of the mentorship have been attained and it is time for the mentee to move on. It is important for both parties to recognise the parameters for when the relationship should change or end.

CONCLUSION

The AAPD is committed to developing a strong Mentorship Program which fulfils the specific aims and objective above, as well as creating an ongoing environment of collegiality, collaboration and care within our specialist profession.