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# Surgical Training Mentoring Programme Being a Mentor

**RCSI**  
**mentoring**  
*for Surgical Trainees*



## What does this guide cover

- Clear Understanding of what mentorship is
- Guidelines on establishing an effective mentoring relationship

## Background

- Mentoring in Post Graduate Surgical Training can take a number of forms and in many ways takes place on an informal basis throughout the surgical training environment on a daily basis.
- However, not all trainees are fortunate enough to find a mentor that can guide and support them through this critical phase of their career.

# Definitions of Mentoring



- There is no clear definition of mentoring in literature, however;

***Mentoring is generally classed as a reciprocal relationship between an experienced person (mentor) and a less experienced person (mentee).***



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# Mentoring Myths



- Mentoring is not a counselling or advice service
- You're trying to create a 'mini you'
- Mentors are expected to have all the answers
- You have to be right all the time
- I'm going to have to do this forever!



# Principles Underlying Mentoring



- The mentoring relationship must be freely entered into
- The discussions are at all times confidential (patient safety supersedes this)
- Boundaries should be agreed at the start



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## What is expected of me as a Mentor?

- Act as an advisor to their trainee and to focus on two main areas;
- Help the trainee to deal with **current problems or challenges** they may be experiencing with regards to their training. Mentors should advise trainees re solutions where appropriate or signpost accordingly.
- Facilitate trainees with **future career planning and development** (e.g. fellowship, professional development) so trainees are optimally placed to sub-specialise and practice as competent surgeons, educators and leaders.

# How do Mentors help others learn?

## Expert

Sharing Experience

## Challenger

Encouraging different ways of thinking

## Sounding Board

Test ideas and suggestions



## Goal Setter

Help set and focus on achieving goals

## Motivator

Encouraging and motivating

*You won't have all the answers but you do have the priceless ability to help your mentee consider their goals, experiences and dilemmas as an objective outsider*



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## Core Skills of Successful Mentors

- Effective Questioning
- Active Listening



## Effective Questioning Tips for Mentors

- Your role is to help the Mentee think for themselves and find their own solutions. The best way to do this involves you asking thought-provoking questions that aid their reflection.
- Questions should usually be open ended i.e. questions that can't be answered with a one word answer.
- Ask probing questions to dig deeper - Try TED: 'Tell me about...,' 'Explain to me...' or 'Describe to me...' to draw out your mentee.
- Avoid asking 'Why'? as this tends to create defensiveness. Instead of "Why are you upset about this?" Rephrase to: "What is it about this situation that upsets you?"
- Try a scaling technique : e.g. If you were to rate this issue on a scale
- Don't be afraid of silence

## 5 Useful Questions

- What is it that you really want to be and do?
- What are you doing really well that is helping you get there?
- What are you not doing well that is preventing you from getting there?
- What will you do differently to meet those challenges?
- How can I help / where do you need the most help?

# GROW Model



**G**

**Goal**

What is it you  
want?

**R**

**Reality**

Where are  
you now?

**O**

**Options**

What could  
you do?

**W**

**Will**

What will you  
do?

From: "Coaching for Performance," John Whitmore



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# Getting Started – First Meeting

## When?

Discuss & agree best time/venue to meet

## Why?

Spend some time discussing each other's expectations of mentoring



## What?

Discuss overall goals and desired outcomes for the mentoring relationship

## How?

Discuss & agree confidentiality, boundaries