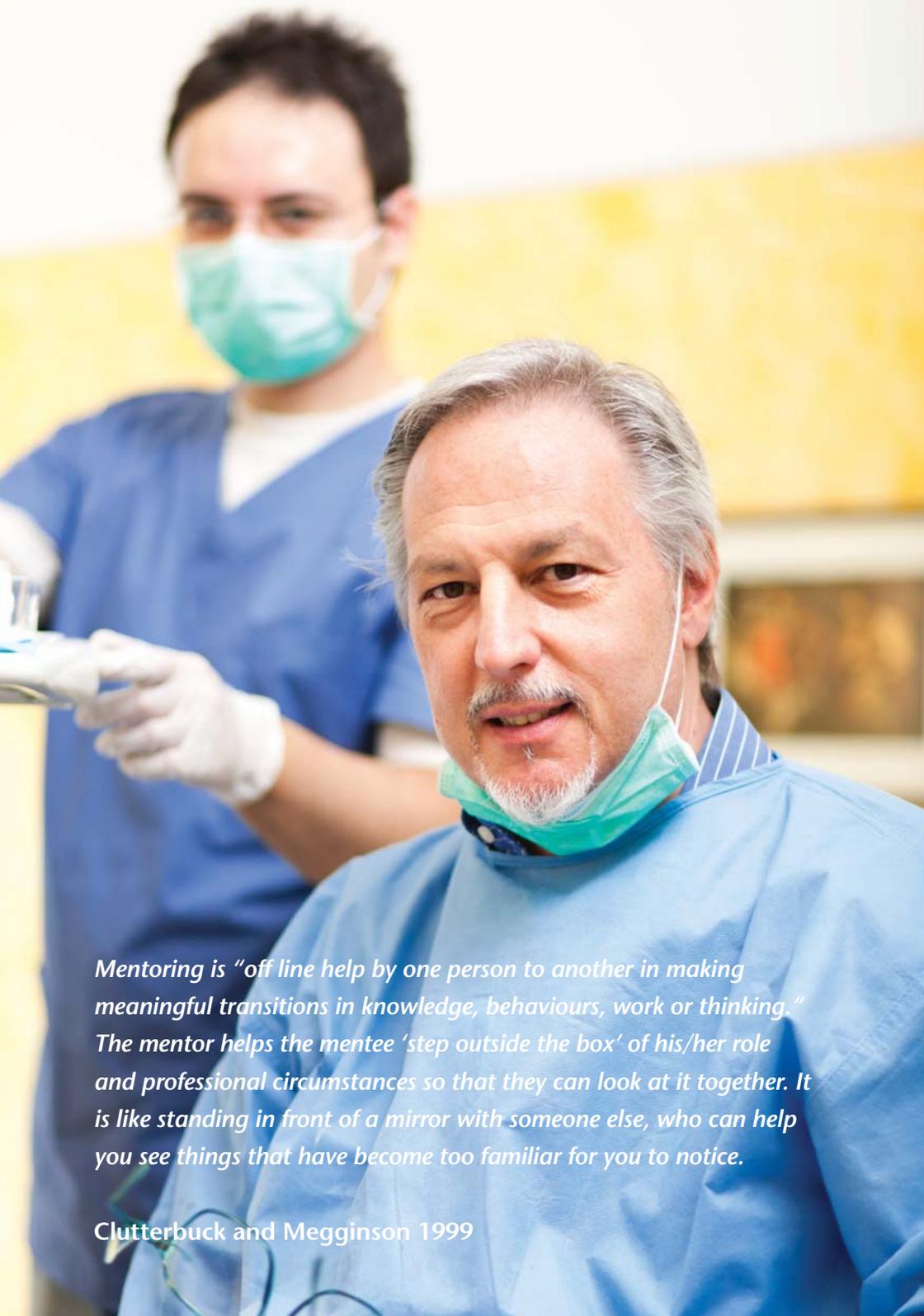




Guide to Mentoring

A Guide to the IDA Professional
Mentoring Programme



Mentoring is "off line help by one person to another in making meaningful transitions in knowledge, behaviours, work or thinking." The mentor helps the mentee 'step outside the box' of his/her role and professional circumstances so that they can look at it together. It is like standing in front of a mirror with someone else, who can help you see things that have become too familiar for you to notice.

Clutterbuck and Megginson 1999

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What is the purpose of the IDA Professional Mentoring Programme?

- Following a comprehensive membership survey, the Association approved the Professional Mentoring Programme in response to a clearly identified membership desire and need.
- Accordingly, the IDA Professional Mentoring Programme has been designed to be rolled out on a pilot basis over 2014/15, subject to full evaluation, feedback and review.
- The Programme's core purpose is to enable the provision/sharing of informal guidance, insight and wisdom by trained IDA mentors to participating mentee colleagues, over a range of professional practice areas.
- The Programme is structured, safe and totally confidential.
- The Programme is entirely voluntary and operates within clear guidelines, with a focus on practical and helpful support. A careful matching process will be undertaken within the Programme to enable productive, useful and safe conversations. The Programme has been designed to meet best practice professional standards and acknowledges the value of focused peer support, sharing professional experience and expertise.

What is mentoring? Fundamental principles and essential features

- The principle of mentoring is well established in education and professional development. It is also widely utilised in business and organisational practice. There are many aspects of dentistry and practice management for which mentoring could be particularly suitable, if positioned carefully, confidentially and safely.

- Mentoring differs from coaching in some subtle, but fundamental ways. Mentoring tends to be longer term, more informal, and with a wider focus. Mentoring is flexible and driven by the needs of the mentee for guidance and support at any moment in time.
- Within the mentoring relationship the mentor passes on knowledge and experience and generally relies on the mentor having had similar, or different but relevant professional experience, challenges and opportunities to the mentee. This enables understanding, empathy, realism, and practical, helpful suggestions.
- A mentee can expect their mentor to pay attention to their situation, listening actively and objectively but without judgment. Objective and independent exploration of options, implications and potential solutions is a key feature of the conversation, to enable the mentee's best thinking and decision making.
- A mentee's desire to learn and improve is an essential element. Mentees will need to be:
 - open and focused on areas of challenge/opportunity; to set clear outcomes for the process;
 - ready to explore what they really want out of their professional practise and work;
 - ready to actively reflect on self-management and how they are resourcing themselves/their practice;
 - committed to carrying out actions;
 - organised and proactive in their record keeping as to their progress;
 - prepared to experiment or change; and,
 - able and open to accept constructive feedback and being held accountable to measure their own progress.
- Peer mentoring within a professional sector, as in this case, is always anchored for clarity and safety by clear guidelines and an agreed mutual understanding of roles, responsibilities and expectations. This will be the case within the IDA Professional Mentoring Programme. The participant guidelines and the agreement will be referred to shortly.

What mentoring is not

- Mentoring is a voluntary, confidential and focused conversation. Mentoring is not compulsory, directive or professional advice. The Programme is not just a reflection of the mentor reliving their experience.
- A mentor is a professional role; however, mentors do not take on any liability in respect of any advice furnished. This will be clearly set out in the mentoring agreement.
- Mentoring is not counselling or any kind of therapeutic service.
- Mentoring is also a carefully developed professional relationship with clear boundaries – rather than a personal friendship.

Who will act as mentors?

- IDA mentors will be respected and experienced dentists with a number of years' background in private and/or public sector professional practice.
- All mentors will undertake professional training in mentoring skills and process, designed specifically around the Professional Mentoring Programme and provided by the IDA. Mentors will also participate in any supplementary supervision and training provided.

How will mentors be accessed and identified within the Programme?

- Each participating mentor will enter an undertaking on entering the Programme to: (i) respect the essential terms of the Programme: voluntary ethos, confidentiality and no legal liability; and, (ii) identify areas of particular proficiency and interest, where they can offer useful insight and guidance.

- The mentor undertaking is returned to the Programme Co-ordinator, Fintan Hourihan, CEO, IDA.
- An anonymous mentor profile is then generated. This will be placed for access and review in the members' section of the IDA website.

Who can be a mentee? How do mentees get involved?

- Mentees will be dentists, at any stage in their professional career, who feel that they would benefit from the perspective that a fellow dentist colleague acting in the role of mentor could bring to issues related to their practice/professional development. Participation is open only to IDA members.
- Each participating mentee will enter an undertaking on entering the programme to: (i) respect the essential terms of the Programme; (ii) identify areas of particular interest, challenge or need, for discussion and best outcomes; and, (iii) identify their preferred choice of mentor.

How will mentors/mentees be matched?

- Upon receipt of a mentee undertaking, the Programme Co-ordinator will discuss the mentee objectives with the selected mentor and decide as to best fit and convenience.
- The Programme Co-ordinator will then advise both the mentee and mentor of their respective contact details and ask them to make contact with each other.

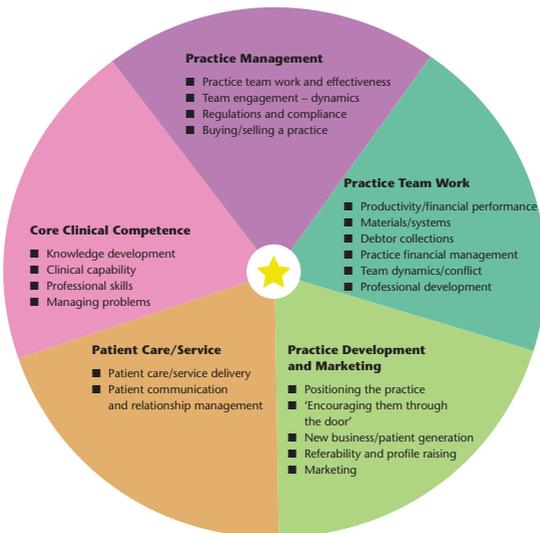
Participation is only open to IDA members.

What kinds of issues/areas and topics could be involved in mentoring conversations?

Whilst the priorities and content of the mentoring relationship will be mentee-led, it is anticipated that issues in one or more of the following subject areas could be addressed:

- Setting up a new practice; or taking over an existing practice
- Practice management/development
- Regulations and compliance
- Record keeping/financial management
- Patient care – patient management
- Team dynamics
- Managing conflict/stress management
- Managing clinical problems
- Buying/selling a practice
- Career planning/professional development

Mentoring discussions are not limited to topics listed above; however, topics should be related to issues that affect the mentee’s professional practice.



How does the Programme get started? How will mentees/mentors interact effectively... and make progress?

- The IDA 'Getting Started Guide and Checklist', which will be provided to mentor and mentee, provides guidance and a framework for the initial mentoring meeting and conversation.
- A key requirement for clearly agreeing both roles and expectations is that both the mentee and mentor discuss and sign up to the IDA Mentoring Agreement.
- The Agreement covers and reiterates the core features.
 - A short introduction to the overall IDA Mentoring Programme.
 - Mentor/mentee commitment: approach and roles.
 - Focus: objectives and outcomes for the mentoring partnership.
 - Mutual expectations and input.
 - Mentee: commitment – responsibility: active participation for full value.
 - Operations and convenient arrangements: duration of the mentoring partnership – meetings – scheduling.
 - Cancellation/rescheduling of meetings.
 - Records/review – evaluation.
 - Withdrawal from the mentoring partnership/request for change.
- Mutually convenient arrangements are then agreed for contact, meetings or discussion.
- It is hoped, anticipated and desired that the mentoring relationship is a cumulative experience, in which progress, momentum, trust and support builds over time.

Action planning/reflection and learning logs: how will they benefit the participants?

- Both participants will be provided with framework logs to help them reflect and plan in order to get the most value from the mentoring conversation. The learning logs, reflections and action plans should be completed after each mentoring discussion and referred to prior to the next discussion.
- They will help mentees to keep up to date with action plans to establish clear goals, accountability, a focus for progress, and evidence of barriers.
- If retained, the learning logs should reflect the progress made by the mentee (or identify inhibitors to progress) resulting from the mentoring partnership, learning for process management and improvement for the mentor.

Can you withdraw from the mentoring programme?

- Should either participant feel the mentoring relationship is not providing the value and benefit hoped for (for whatever reason), either the mentee or the mentor can end the mentoring relationship at any time, with no fault attributed to either participant, following consultation with the Programme Co-ordinator.
- Each is requested, however, to notify the other, with an explanation as to why they have reached that decision.

Reiteration of fundamentals and confidential 'Reach Back'

- When completing the matching process at the outset of the mentoring relationship, the fundamentals and guidelines for the Programme will be reiterated for all by the Programme Co-ordinator, Fintan Hourihan.
- The Programme Co-ordinator will also be available throughout the process in a totally 'confidential back up' manner, should they feel a professional or ethical need for guidance.

Does Dental Protection Limited support the Programme?

- Dental Protection Ltd (DPL) fully supports the Mentoring Programme. DPL has participated in mentor training design and has promised an ongoing commitment to support the Programme, as is needed and appropriate.
- It is anticipated that DPL will also be involved in the evaluation review and learning process. This will be completed by an external consultant in a confidential feedback process, guided by best practice.

Are there any similar dental professional mentoring programmes in other countries?

- There are dental professional mentoring programmes in the UK, US, Canada, Australia, and New Zealand. These programmes, however, are targeted mainly at students and recently qualified dentists.
- The new IDA Programme is different in that it is focused on providing support only to qualified practitioners.



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