

Paper on mentoring of new entrants as part of Continuing Professional Development

Introduction

It is widely recognised that all professionals, wherever they are in their career, can benefit from having a mentor. However, there are particular benefits for new entrants to receive mentoring support during their first few years after qualification. At the Education Committee in July it was agreed that mentoring is a valuable support for new entrants and that Professional Associations should be encouraged to set up a mentoring scheme as part of their CPD requirements.

Good practice in mentoring

The primary focus of mentoring should be to help the practitioner improve their practice and to receive support when they face problems. Mentoring involves an inexperienced member of the profession having regular contact in a non judgmental situation with a more experienced member of the profession. The inexperienced member of the profession is known as a mentee and the individual providing the support is known as a mentor.

The mentee should be willing to receive the help offered by the mentor. The mentee should recognise that the mentor has the credibility to support them in developing their professional practice.

The role of the mentor should be seen as:

- Essentially supportive and developmental
- Not linked to the formal assessment of a mentee
- Provide clinical advice and pastoral support
- Personal and confidential in nature

There should be a regular programme of meetings between the mentor and mentee so that a good working relationship can be built up. Typically this might require 10 to 20 hours of contact during the first two years as appropriate (some should be face to face).

The characteristics of the mentor should include:

- Personal compatibility between mentor and mentee
- The mentor needs to be committed to the process
- Mentors should be practicing clinicians

Proposals

1. That all Professional Associations should introduce a mentoring scheme as part of their CPD requirements for new entrants to the profession.

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