



## What is the Foundation Mentoring Scheme?

It is a peer-led scheme; the mentors are CT (some ST) volunteers on the rotation. The mentor and mentee meet up over a period to provide neutral support. It is thought to be particularly helpful for Foundation doctors due to the common concerns regarding isolation from peers and the unfamiliarity of the environment.

## What is mentoring?

Mentoring can be defined as 'the process whereby an experienced, empathic individual guides another individual in the development and re-examination of their own ideas, learning, and personal and professional development' .

## How does the scheme work?

It is offered as an opt-in scheme for all new Foundation doctors in Psychiatry. We recommend the mentoring pair to meet 3 times during the placement but you can meet more frequently if it is felt to be helpful.

## Who are the mentors?

All mentors are core or higher trainees who have been on the SLAM rotations. They will almost all have had the experience of being mentored on this scheme. A two-hour Mentoring Skills workshop is offered to all core trainees during the first year as part of their teaching and there are regular supervision / mentoring skills workshops available for all mentors to attend.



## Where do we meet?

You can meet wherever you want that is convenient for you. The important thing to remember is to choose somewhere where a) you feel comfortable and b) you are unlikely to be interrupted by phone calls or colleagues.

How about over-the-phone sessions? The answer is that they are better than nothing, but not as easy as face to face. They may work fine later on when you know each other a bit. Many communicate via text, phone and email in between sessions and this is fine as long as it is mutually agreed.

## What do we talk about?

You can talk about anything. The sort of thing that we have found commonly comes up in sessions is:

- Clinical support
- Career choices
- Research
- Quality Improvement
- Teaching / Exams
- Dynamics with colleagues
- Where to go for help if having difficulties
- Work-Life balance



The focus generally is on your own professional and personal development, and on how you can use mentoring as a helping and learning relationship.

## How do I get the best out of my sessions?

A bit of planning (even if just in your head) before a session can really help you to get the most out of the session. Mentoring sessions are structured and they will usually start with your mentor asking you 'What would you like to cover or discuss today?' You might want to take a broad area to explore in more detail with the mentor (e.g. research, clinical scenario). If you are really not sure what to discuss you might want to ask your mentor to guide you.

Try not to cancel sessions because you are 'stressed' or 'too busy'. Your mentor may well be able to help. All mentors have juggled busy clinical jobs like you are trying to do, and many can pass on helpful tips. There is usually a solution.

## What should I expect from my first session?

The first session of mentoring is usually a bit of an introduction. Your mentor will tell you a bit about him/herself in terms of experience and explain a bit about the scheme. They will explain about the confidentiality of mentoring . Together you will decide on a frequency of meetings, where, and when. If you decide to continue, at the end of the session your mentor will suggest that you make the next couple of

