

SuppoRTT Wessex Mentorship Scheme Information for Mentors



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Dear Mentor,

Welcome to the SuppoRTT Wessex Mentorship scheme. We are looking forward to working with you over the next few months.

This may be the beginning of your journey as a mentor, or maybe you have been mentoring individuals informally and wish to develop your skills. Alternatively, you may be coming to this mentorship scheme with a wealth of experience, but whatever your background we want to encourage an open environment where we support and learn from each other and continually develop our skills as mentors.

As a group we have the potential to really help make a positive difference to the experience of trainees returning back into practice. Offering support, but more importantly empowering the individual to navigate whatever opportunity or challenges they face.

In order to do this we have to offer a different approach. The challenges that are brought to mentors are often complicated and not amenable to our normal problem solving approaches, otherwise the mentee would have already found their solution! Instead, if we move away from the diagnostic listening and analysis that is so deeply ingrained in us as doctors and take a more open, out of the box and mentee focused approach then we start to make progress.

Our scheme aims to make mentorship an everyday part of the trainee experience. Mentorship is for everyone, a valuable tool to support personal development, not just something for those in need. By making mentorship commonplace we can go some way to start to shift the culture that our workplace environment needs.

Our course aims to equip you with the skills necessary to start your SuppoRTT Mentor journey. Many mentors find their mentorship work rewarding and in the process learn and develop skills, which enhance their day-to-day work.

We want this scheme to be for both the mentors and the mentees.

We would really value your feedback and suggestions for ongoing improvement and development throughout your time with us.

Many thanks and best wishes,

The Wessex SupportTT Team

Kate Shepherd - Clinical Fellow for SupportTT

Zehra Mehdi - SupportTT Mentorship Associate

Antonia Caolgeras - Associate Dean for SupportTT

Karina George - SupportTT Programme Manager

Letti Gilbert - Professional Support Officer

A BACKGROUND TO SUPPORTT AND MENTORSHIP IN HEALTHCARE

There is increasing recognition amongst the medical community of the challenges faced by doctors returning to clinical practice following a period of absence.

Taking time out of clinical practice is commonplace and a normal part of a trainees career trajectory and may be for any number of reasons including parental leave, sick leave, bereavement, academic research and career breaks. In 2018 Health Education England (HEE) reported that during the last five years at any given time, there were approximately 5,000, or 10% of postgraduate doctors taking approved time out of programme¹. Evidence suggests that it is becoming increasingly common to take time out of programme and there are a greater number of trainees wishing to take a break from clinical activities^{1, 2, 3}

In 2017 Health Education England conducted a 'call for ideas' to identify the key issues facing trainees returning to practice following time out of programme. Confidence and self-perception of capability was the upmost concern for returners by a considerable margin, followed by provision of pastoral support such as mentorship¹.

Evidence suggests that mentoring may improve confidence and well-being and can help doctors feel more valued^{4, 5}. It may be particularly beneficial at career or personal transition points^{6, 7, 8, 9, 10}. Employee well-being is associated with better staff engagement, motivation and retention⁴, which may all lead to improved performance at work and consequently better patient care^{7, 8}. These benefits are recognised by the GMC and the good medical practice guidelines identify that mentoring is essential to supporting and developing good practice¹¹.

Our SupportTT Mentorship Scheme aims to offer trainee-focused mentorship to all trainees returning to work following time out of programme.

SupportTT mentorship should:

- Allow time and a safe (non-judgemental) space for trainees to clarify goals and learning priorities.
- Encourage mentees to take charge of their own development
- Provide a learning relationship, which goes beyond the sharing of knowledge and experience to facilitate personal development.

To achieve this, the mentor-mentee relationship needs to have a foundation in trust, with agreed confidentiality boundaries and a clear trainee-oriented focus.

SCHEME OUTLINE

Expectations for mentors

Mentors are expected to commit to mentor a minimum of 1 returning trainee per annum. Trainee mentors may mentor a maximum of 2 returning trainees per annum.

Mentors are expected to participate in on going mentor development. This includes participation in peer supervision and attendance at mentor development and update days that will be available 6 monthly. Mentor development days will provide an opportunity to discuss challenges through group peer-supervision sessions. We will include mentor updates and provide ongoing mentor development. It will also be an opportunity to reflect on our scheme and consider plans for ongoing improvement and development of the scheme.

The supportTT Mentorship Best Practice Agreement on the next page outlines these commitments and the code of conduct and code of ethics for the scheme.

This scheme is for both the mentors and mentees. We are very open to feedback and suggestions on how to tailor our programme to best meet the needs of returning trainees. At certain intervals we will also be asking for feedback regarding how the scheme is working for you.

SupportTT Mentorship Best Practice Agreement

Our Mentoring Faculty is made up of mentors who have completed the Support Mentorship programme.

Confirming our faculty best practice agreement

Faculty members are expected to:

1. Keep their skills up to date by mentoring a minimum one mentee per annum, meeting them every 6-8 weeks. Mentors need to be independent of the mentees appraisal process and managerial structures if they are in the same organisation.
2. Keep up to date with mentoring practices through reflection, continuing professional development, supervision and/or peer supervision.
3. Contribute to the development of the SupportTT Mentoring Faculty. This may be by supporting the development of new mentors, offering supervision and/or peer supervision and mentoring individuals outside of your organisation.
4. Adhere to Global Code of Ethics for Coaches, Mentors and Supervisors
5. Adhere to GMC best practice guidelines

By attending SupportTT funded Mentoring training, CPD events and being part of the SupportTT Mentoring register you undertake to adhere to this Best Practice Agreement.

Pairing

In order to pair mentees with mentors each mentor will be asked to write a brief 'biography' which will be added to a mentor database.

Returning trainees who have requested mentorship will be given access to the database and will be able to choose to contact their preferred mentor.

When writing your 'bio', consider the following:

- Be concise and relevant
- Introduce yourself as a person
- Tell your story – why do you mentor people?
- Share indications of your style – your background, experience, characteristics or values
- Include a photo – mentees are much more likely to select a real person.
- Consider including your preferred way of working, for example face to face.
- Include your preferred method of contact.

When you are at your maximum capacity for mentees please inform the Mentorship Team by contacting supportt.wx@hee.nhs.uk.

A note will be attached to your bio informing the potential mentee that you are currently at full capacity. Please remember to update the Mentorship Team when you are able to accept new mentees.

Mentor Supervision

The European Mentoring and coaching council defines supervision as the:

*'...interaction that occurs when a mentor or coach brings their coaching or mentoring work experiences to a supervisor in order to be supported and to engage in reflective dialogue and collaborative learning for the development and benefit of the mentor or coach, their clients and their organisations.'*¹²

Peer supervision is a process whereby mentors:

*'seek to assist each other in reflecting on their practice including both case-specific and (mentor) specific reflection.'*¹³

We will be addressing peer supervision further in our mentor development sessions. These sessions will allow time for group peer supervision. In addition to this we encourage you to stay in contact with a small group of your mentor peers from the training course (for example groups of 2/3). In this way you may confidentially discuss and reflect on how your mentoring sessions have progressed between the mentor development sessions. These groups will lay the foundation for the peer supervision and will often be the first port of call to air challenges and reflect on difficulties and successes that you may encounter in your mentor journey.

Mentor Support

Should you feel that the mentee brings something to you which is beyond your remit as a mentor, then we would suggest you should re-visit what you can and can't offer as a mentor and sign post them to the relevant services. For example it may be more appropriate for the mentee to seek help from a councilor, coach or even their GP although it may be beneficial for the individual to continue mentoring alongside this additional support.

If a mentee brings a return-to-training concern to the mentoring session (for example needing to change a working pattern during their return) then throughout the mentoring session your aim should be to empower the trainee to make their own plan to address these concerns directly themselves through their usual supervisory / managerial pathways. If, despite this, the trainee is unable to resolve this himself or herself, then please encourage them to escalate these concerns themselves directly by contacting the SupportTT team via the supportt.wx@hee.nhs.uk e-mail address.

For support with your mentoring, the first tier of help should be your peer mentor colleagues to discuss any challenge which may arise. If you need further support then please contact the supportt.wx@hee.nhs.uk e-mail and you will be put in touch with someone who is best equipped to help you. For example, for mentoring challenges we may put you in contact with a more experienced mentor to work help work through any challenges. For other trainee concerns or needs we may direct you to other SupportTT Services.

Please forward any queries regarding the scheme to supportt.wx@hee.nhs.uk.

Should you feel that you would benefit from coaching or mentoring yourself then we would encourage you to make use of local trust mentorship schemes or approach the Thames Valley and Wessex Leadership Academy, which has an established Coaching and Mentoring program.

References

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- 12 Europeans Mentoring and Coaching Council. Supervision. [online]. Available at: <https://www.emccouncil.org/quality/supervision/>

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