

Society of Pediatric Pathology

Mentor Handbook

Introduction

Mentorship in academic and clinical pathology represents a vital tradition where experienced individuals dedicate themselves to cultivating excellence in emerging pathologists by personal investing their time, sharing experiences, and with intentional guidance. As a mentor in pediatric pathology, you have the unique opportunity to shape the future of our field by nurturing the next generation of specialists who will diagnose and study pediatric diseases.

Contents

1. Role of the Mentor
2. Getting Started
3. Communication Guidelines
4. Goal Setting and Support
5. Essential Mentor Traits
6. Pediatric Pathology-Specific Guidance
7. Networking in Pediatric Pathology
8. Program Completion
9. Feedback and Evaluation

1. Role of the Mentor

As a pediatric pathology mentor, you will:

- Share diagnostic expertise and practical knowledge
- Guide professional development
- Support research initiatives
- Foster leadership skills
- Facilitate networking within the pediatric pathology community
- Provide career guidance and support

2. Getting Started

Initial Meeting Guidelines

Note: This is a living document that will be regularly updated to reflect evolving mentorship guidelines, new SPP initiatives, and feedback from program participants. Please ensure you are referring to the most current version available through the SPP website.

- Review your mentee's CV and background
- Share your expertise and practice setting
- Discuss expectations and boundaries
- Establish communication preferences
- Set preliminary goals

Assessing Compatibility

Consider:

- Alignment of subspecialty interests
- Communication styles
- Time availability
- Career path alignment
- Research interests
- Teaching/learning styles

If you sense this match is not conducive to productive mentoring, address this early with your mentee.

3. Communication Guidelines

Communication Methods

- Virtual meetings (Zoom, Teams)
- Email correspondence
- Phone calls
- In-person meetings at SPP / PPS / USCAP conferences
- Site visits when feasible

Effective Communication Practices

- Maintain regular contact (monthly recommended)
- Use clear subject lines in emails
- Provide concise, constructive feedback
- Document key discussion points
- Confirm mutual understanding

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- Respect scheduled meeting times
- Provide advanced notice for any changes in the agreed schedule

4. Goal Setting and Support

Help your mentee develop:

- Diagnostic expertise in pediatric pathology
- Research skills and scholarly activity
- Teaching abilities
- Leadership capabilities
- Professional network

Goal-Setting Process

1. Review mentee's current position and skills
2. Identify areas for growth
3. Set specific goals and timeframe for achievement
4. Create actionable plans
5. Establish regular progress reviews
6. Adjust goals as needed

5. Essential Mentor Traits

Be Inspiring

- Share your career journey
- Discuss how you overcame challenges
- Model professional behavior
- Demonstrate passion for pediatric pathology

Show Engagement

- Maintain active interest
- Remember personal details
- Practice active listening
- Provide undivided attention during meetings

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Offer Constructive Feedback

- Focus on growth opportunities
- Maintain a positive tone
- Be specific and actionable
- Follow up on progress

Demonstrate Empathy

- Share relevant experiences
- Acknowledge challenges
- Provide with resources that foster well-being, if requested
- Show understanding

6. Pediatric Pathology-Specific Guidance**Diagnostic Expertise**

- Share diagnostic approaches
- Discuss challenging cases
- Review quality assurance practices
- Address subspecialty areas

Research Development

- Provide guidance on project selection and administration
- Assist with study design or provide tips for research ideas
- Review manuscript preparation and writing skills
- Discuss presentation skills

Professional Development

- Discuss the process of board certification
- Review career options that align with mentee
- Address practice management, especially for early years
- Share quality initiatives

7. Networking in Pediatric Pathology

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Facilitate Connections and Networking

- Introduce to colleagues
- Recommend SPP task forces and volunteering opportunities
- Discuss conference participation
- Facilitate collaborative opportunities

8. Program Completion

Transition Strategy

- Review goal achievement and celebrate achievements of your mentee
- Discuss ongoing development needs
- Plan future collaboration that will help your mentee
- Define potential ongoing relationship (method of contact etc.)
- Share final feedback
- Plan to meet in a future in-person conference

9. Feedback and Evaluation

- Complete program evaluations
- Provide constructive feedback
- Document successes and challenges
- Suggest program improvements
- Share best practices

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