



NHPCO Next Generation Mentorship Toolkit



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How the toolkit works:

The toolkit works as a guide for your organization. It was developed to encourage organizations to start formal mentor-mentee relationships. However, it can be used ad-hoc to provide leadership support where needed. The toolkit is not discipline specific and can be used for leaders and non-leaders. The toolkit provides a step-by-step guide to starting a formal mentorship program.

Benefits of the toolkit:

- Formatted with practical appendices that provide the mentorship program structure
- Easy for organizations to implement
- Can be started for little cost

Limitations of the toolkit:

- Not tested on a large scale
- Does not cover disciplinary or corrective actions
- Not intended for group mentoring



If you see a lightbulb, this is a tip or a stopping point.

A mentor is often described as a teacher, role model, or support system for a mentee (APA, 2012). While mentorship has no single definition, it can be broadly described as a reciprocal and beneficial relationship between a mentor and a mentee that provides a meaningful space to grow, learn, and develop. In addition, mentorship has been “proven to improve employee retention and satisfaction” (Smith, n.d). A robust mentorship program can also improve the attitudes of employees and encourage individual growth. Mentoring promotes diversity, workplace satisfaction, and employee growth and retention. As a consequence, these satisfied employees do better in their roles, thus offering better care.

As hospices throughout the country face a workforce crisis and challenges attracting new hospice and palliative care specialists, mentoring can offer a strategy to support existing staff and grow new staff (*Guide to the Hospice Workforce Shortage* (2022)). In addition, as the culture of hospice changes and the demands on employees increase, having a system in place at your organization will help support employees as they navigate these new realities.

This toolkit can act as a resource for creating mentorship programs that grow your employee pool and create opportunities for current leaders to expand their abilities. This guide can also be used across disciplines as it is not specific to discipline-to-discipline mentorship. At the heart of this mentorship toolkit is people. It is through inspired, committed, and passionate people that we can improve care.

Objectives:

This toolkit should be used as a resource to prepare your organization to:

1. Understand the value of mentorship programs
2. Know if mentorship is the right fit for your current employee needs
3. Have a framework to implement a mentorship program (e.g., new employee integration, leadership track, clinical ladder, volunteer mentorship)
4. Understand your employees' Hospice Why?
5. Understand employee pitfalls and navigate challenges
6. Effectively identify internal mentors and mentees
7. Understand how to sustain a mentorship program
8. Define what a successful outcome looks like through mentor/mentee reporting, organizational goals, and a feedback form

Step-by-Step Guide to Creating a Mentor Program

"What is a teacher? I'll tell you: it isn't someone who teaches something, but someone who inspires the student to give of her best in order to discover what she already knows."

—Paulo Coelho, *The Witch of Portobello*

Step 1: Is mentoring a good fit for my organization? *Appendix A provides an evaluation form that should be used to determine if it is the right time to start a mentoring program.*

To launch a mentorship program, "the most critical factor is organizational support" (Grindel, 2004). It is also strongly suggested that two to three individuals own the program and manage mentor matching and selecting, as well as other operations. The following must also be considered:

- **People:** Are there people interested in the program?
- **Support:** Is there support from the leadership team and larger organization?
- **Resources:** Time, platform, leader of the program.

After using appendix A to evaluate the sustainability and possibility of the program, the organization should select a facilitator of the program. Facilitators manage mentor matching and selecting, operations, and pre-and-post evaluations of the program. This role is crucial for the success of the program. The steward can be from Human Resources (HR) but is not limited to HR and can be housed in volunteer services, social work, spiritual services, or nursing. If this program is being used for providers, it is recommended that a physician or provider (APRN, DO) becomes the steward of the program. If this program is being used for students and interns, then it is recommended that the steward work with the field office at the individual program to identify mentees. Once the steward has been identified and has demonstrated commitment, you can move to Step 2.

Step 2: You have identified that mentoring is a good fit. How do you find your mentors? *Appendix B and C: Mentor/Mentee submission forms should be completed during this step*

Mentors should be sincere, active listeners, great communicators, and committed to the development of both the mentee and the field that they are in (Sambunjak D, Straus SE, Marusic A, 2018). Other important traits include experience, professionalism, respectfulness, non-judgmental demeanor, ability to provide constructive feedback, and skilled at teaching and coaching (Indeed, 2021). The mentor's enthusiasm should match the enthusiasm of the mentee.

Mentees drive the relationship between themselves and the mentor. Mentees should be honest and enthusiastic, and committed to their own personal and professional growth. Their goals should be growth minded but obtainable and realistic.

Examples:

Mark has been in his current role for the last five years. He is regarded as someone that "listens well" and provides supportive and constructive feedback. He enjoys nursing but is looking to expand his skillset and offer support to new nurses through skills training and ongoing teaching.

Kelly is looking to grow her social work career in hospice. She has been in the field for three years but wants to obtain her LCSW and gain new skill sets in the field of social work. She is doing well at her job and enthusiastic about growth.



Start with two to three mentor/mentee relationships. This will provide information for your program without overwhelming staff.

Step 3: You have identified two to three mentors and two to three mentees. Now time to move on to the matching phase!

After receiving the Mentor/Mentee Submission Form, the leader of the program should spend time evaluating the submissions. Matching is crucial to the success of the program and is a two-way process that requires both the mentee and the mentor to agree that the match is a good fit.

The most important thing when matching mentors to mentees is that the goals and enthusiasm appear to be a good fit. This can be identified through the questions provided in the submission forms.



If there is no match for one mentor or mentee at the time of submission, forms can be saved for future use.

Step 4: This is where the mentorship relationship begins. Mentors and mentees have been matched. Now the stages begin. Appendix D through F are to be used in this phase

Four Stages of Mentorship

"According to the American Psychological Association (2012), there are four stages to the mentoring process including initiation, cultivation, separation (or closure), and redefinition."

Initiation: The goal in this phase is to get acquainted, find common interests, discuss goals and dreams, and establish an agreed-on form of communication. In addition, understand the "Hospice Why" for the individual mentee and mentor (Appendix D).

The following questions are examples that can be used during this phase to initiate a relationship.

■ Mentors: Support this phase by discussing the following:

1. What brought you (as a mentor) to palliative and hospice care?
2. What is your why? Why do you choose to advance the field of hospice and palliative care?

3. What are some of your notable work experiences and accomplishments?
4. What is the best way to communicate with you?
5. Conduct an icebreaker activity.

■ Mentees: This is your opportunity to find out what makes your mentor a good fit for you.

1. What are you proud of in your career?
2. Why did you choose to become a mentor?
3. What are your expectations of me as a mentee?



Before moving on to the next stage, have the following been completed?

- Communication style agreed on
- First meeting date/time set
- Mentee motivation confirmed

Cultivation: In this phase, the relationship is cultivated between the mentor and mentee. The focus of this phase is to establish goals and define ways to work toward achieving them. This is often referred to as the “work phase.”

The goals should follow the SMART Goals framework (See Appendix E): Specific (S), Measurable (M), Action-Oriented (A), Realistic (R), and Timely (T). This phase can be over several interactions but is foundational to the relationship.

Example:

Kelly is a hospice social worker that is working on obtaining her LCSW. Kelly wants to be in leadership one day, but she lacks experience and has no formal path there. She has been told to work on obtaining certifications and to “gain” experience. She is motivated and her goals align with her mentor. You are in the goal setting phase with Kelly and need to help her establish goals. Kelly and her mentor have had their first meeting and have sat down to start working on SMART goals.

Specific: *Kelly will attend networking events where she can meet other social workers and leaders in hospice and palliative care.*

Measurable: *Kelly will be attend two networking events*

Action-Oriented: *Mentor will find and seek two events that are appropriate for Kelly to attend and work with her schedule.*

Realistic: *The events will result in new contacts and positive interactions with others in the field that can provide guidance and support.*

Timely: *The mentor will find these events over the next three to six months and Kelly will have attended these two events over the next six months.*

Frequency: Frequency should be at minimum once per month with a six-month commitment.

Agreement: (See Appendix F) The contract that was established should include the following:

- Meeting frequency and method
- Mentorship responsibilities from the goals
- Mentee responsibilities
- Closure plan if one or both decides to discontinue the relationship before the established timeline
- Closure plan for the end of the relationship



Before moving on from this stage, have the following been completed?

- Have one to two goals with measurable outcomes been established?
- Has the contract been completed?
- Have the SMART Goals been completed and met to relative satisfaction?
- Has the contract been met, and the timeline been fulfilled?

Closure: In this phase, the formal relationship is separated. The mentee and mentor have met all or most of their goals and an evaluation is done to assess the mentor and mentee. This phase can include a formal end meeting (refer to evaluation in toolkit).

Suggested activities for separation:

- Closing meeting with review of goals met and evaluation of the mentor and mentee
- Evaluations turned into organization
- Follow up completed within the organization to assess the viability of the program

Refer to Appendix G for closing questions.

Redefinition: After the formal relationship has been separated and closed, the mentor relationship needs to be redefined. Most relationships continue, but in a less formal fashion. It is up to the mentor and mentee to decide what the relationship will be.

Step 5: Evaluate the relationship. After the commitment has ended, it is vital to evaluate the effectiveness of the relationship and program. This can be used to guide future mentor and mentee relationships. Appendix H should be used to complete this step.

Navigating Pitfalls – Frequently Asked Questions:

- **A mentor and mentee relationship are not launching. At what time do you call it “quits”?**
 - If the relationship has not launched after the match in two months, reevaluate if the pairing should end.
- **The mentor or mentee left the company. What now?**
 - If one party left the company, and the other party is still interested in a mentoring relationship, the remaining party should have the opportunity to be rematched. If this is not possible, aim to create an opportunity for career growth through a peer-to-peer relationship for the mentee.
- **I have people interested in mentoring but no mentees?**
 - If there is a strong mentor pool but no mentee interest, the organization should consider advertising the benefits of mentorship and working with department heads and discipline-specific managers to identify potential leads. Mentees can also be found in students (i.e., MSW, nursing) for a short period of time.

■ **The mentor and mentee did not work out. What now?**

- If the relationship did not work out, evaluate why the relationship did not work out. What was the most critical thing. Was it not beneficial? Was it too time intensive?

■ **Do the mentee and mentor want to continue their relationship outside of the constraints of the program?**

- This will depend on the program. If the organization has strict program guidelines, then the mentee and mentor will need to take their relationship outside of the workday.

■ **The mentor and mentee did not meet any of the SMART Goals but want to continue to achieve them?**

- If this is the case, the most important thing is to evaluate capacity. Can the mentor continue and take on more mentees?

Appendix A: Is mentoring a good fit for our organization?

When answering the survey below, consider your workforce, its culture, and its potential to successfully sustain a mentorship program. It is important that all key stakeholders involved in implementing this mentorship program, such as HR and operations, take this survey. Once you are done taking the survey, finalize your score. It is suggested that if one area is low scoring that you do not move on until it is strengthened.

Low score range of 0-8 in any area indicates that there needs to be more work done and there is room for growth. It is suggested that you do not move on with the program if a score is this low.

Medium score range of 9-12 indicates that this area is good, but there could be some improvements. If you obtain this score in any area it can be ok to proceed with the program if there is an improvement plan in place for that area.

High score range of 13-20 indicates a strong possibility of the program being successful and that there are the appropriate supports in place.

Troubleshooting:

What if I got a 13-20 in one area and low scores in other areas should I proceed? Most likely you can hold off until the other areas have bumped up to mid-range.

What if I got all medium scores, but my facilitator does not want to move forward? Then it would be good to have a follow up conversation(s) with the facilitator to see what areas they need to see improved prior to moving forward.

Rating scale: "5 - Highly Confident" to "0 – Not Confident"

People	0	1	2	3	4	5
Are you able to find enough mentors within your organization to make this a successful program?						
Would the mentors be able to manage well on their own?						
Do the mentees interested show a general commitment to their own growth?						
Is there a workplace culture that allows for supportive relationships?						
Subtotal: _____ / 20						

Support	0	1	2	3	4	5
Is the leadership supportive of a formal mentorship program?						
Is the mentor's availability for support reasonable?						
Is there a safe place for the mentee to share any concerns?						
Could the mentor and mentee meet during the workday?						
Subtotal _____ / 20						

Resources	0	1	2	3	4	5
Do the mentors and mentees have the time to meet at minimum one time per month?						
Is there a physical space that can be used for regular meetings?						
Alternatively, is there a virtual platform that can be used for regular meetings?						
Subtotal _____ / 15						
Total _____ / 55						

Appendix B: Mentor Submission Form

Name: _____

What is your current role?

Why are you interested in becoming a mentor?

What can you offer your mentee?

How many years of experience in the hospice and palliative care field do you have?

What are your career goals?

What drives your work?

What are you passionate about and how can you share that with someone?

What are you looking for in a mentee?

Are you willing to commit for six months? Yes or No

Will this impact your ability to perform your normal job duties? Yes or No

If you need support during your mentorship, do you feel confident it will be available? Yes or No

— Please submit this form to your mentorship program leader. —

Appendix C: Mentee Submission Form

Name: _____

What is your current role?

Why are you interested in a mentorship program?

What are your career goals?

What drives your work? What are you passionate about?

Are you willing to commit for six months? Yes or No

Will this impact your ability to perform your normal job duties? Yes or No

If you need support during your mentorship, do you feel confident it will be available? Yes or No

Appendix D: What is your “Hospice Why”?

What brought you to hospice and what is your hospice story?

What are your visions for the hospice and palliative care field?

What drives your work and what motivates you on hard days?

How would you like to connect with your mentor/mentee on your “Hospice Why?”

Appendix E: SMART Goals Worksheet

This worksheet can be printed out multiple times. SMART Goals are intended to serve as a tool to assist in recognizing what the mentee wants to work on. SMART Goals can be altered throughout the program. It is advisable to start with two goals when initiating the relationship.

Goal 1

S (Specific) _____

M (Measurable) _____

A (Action-Oriented) _____

R (Realistic) _____

T (Timely) _____

Goal 2

S (Specific) _____

M (Measurable) _____

A (Action-Oriented) _____

R (Realistic) _____

T (Timely) _____

Appendix F: Mentor and Mentee Agreement

The mentor and mentee have been matched! The following can be used as a "contract" for the mentee and mentor.

Mentor: As a mentor, I understand that I am partaking in a mutual relationship for _____ months. This relationship will start on _____ and close formally on _____. This relationship will be guided by myself and the mentee. As a mentor, I am responsible for the following:

- Committing to the agreed-on timeframe
- Maintaining records of the mentee and mentor meetings
- Showing up for regular meetings
- Communicating with my mentee if I am unable to meet my duties.
- Providing ongoing support and embodying the qualities of a good mentor in the field of hospice and palliative care:
 - Supportive
 - Professional
 - Kind
 - Passionate about hospice and palliative Care
 - Respectful
 - Active listener
 - Able to provide constructive feedback
 - Able to create opportunities for networking and engagement
 - Can provide education in the field

Mentee: As a mentee, I understand that I am partaking in a mutual relationship for _____ months. As a mentee, I am responsible for the following:

- Committing to the agreed-on timeframe
- Maintaining records of the Mentee and Mentor meetings
- I will show up for regular meetings
- I will communicate with the Mentor if I am unable to meet my duties
- I will strive to provide ongoing feedback to my mentor, remain engaged and enthusiastic about the relationship, and strive to embody the following:
 - Enthusiasm
 - Professional growth
 - Goal oriented work
 - Respect
 - Kindness
 - Passion for hospice and palliative care
 - Willing to provide feedback if something is not going well
 - Active listening

Mentor Name: _____ **Mentee Name:** _____

Mentor Signature: _____ **Mentee Signature:** _____

Appendix G: Reviewing and Closing Your Relationship

As the mentor/mentee, I was able to get what I wanted out of the relationship?

Were the goals of the mentee met? If not, will the relationship continue formally?

How did I grow professionally out of this relationship?

What was the most beneficial part of this mentoring relationship, both professionally and personally?

What were things that I learned from the relationship?

What feedback would I give to improve this program in the future?

Appendix H: Evaluation for Closure Phase

Rating scale: (1) Strongly- Disagree - (2) Disagree – (3) Undecided – (4) Agree – (5) Strongly-Agree (0) NA

Scoring: Top Box Percent of Score 5 Responses

Mentee Questions	0	1	2	3	4	5
Did the mentor meet my expectations?						
Was the mentor professional (attended meetings, finished contract)?						
Was the mentor respectful of my needs?						
Did the mentor actively listen and provide constructive feedback?						
Total: _____/20						

Mentor Questions	0	1	2	3	4	5
Was the mentee professional?						
Did the mentee work towards their goals in a timely manner?						
Was the mentee enthusiastic to learn and regularly interested in professional growth?						
Did the mentee provide constructive feedback as needed?						
Total _____/20						

Mentor and Mentee Questions	0	1	2	3	4	5
Would I recommend this mentor/mentee?						
Will I continue this relationship in an informal professional capacity?						
Were my goals and needs met during this program?						
Would I recommend this program?						
Total _____/20						

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