



AANN/ABNN/AMWF
MENTORSHIP HANDBOOK

BACKGROUND

PURPOSE:

The American Association of Neuroscience Nurses (AANN), the American Board of Neuroscience Nursing (ABNN), and the Agnes Marshall Walker Foundation (AMWF) together are the three pillars driving neuroscience nursing excellence. AANN, ABNN, and AMWF are collaborating on a mentorship initiative to address a shortage of mentors for neuroscience nurses at all levels of development in the nursing profession. The mentoring program has been established as part of our commitment to the professional development needs of our members. The goal of this program is to provide neuroscience trainees and practice professionals the opportunity for mentoring in clinical, research, and clinician educator pathways, as well as advice regarding career development. **The typical length of a mentorship program is 1-year (from June the first year through May the next year).**

WHAT IS MENTORING?

Mentoring is a term used to describe a relationship between a less experienced individual, called a mentee or protégé, and a more experienced individual known as a mentor. Traditionally, this relationship is a dyadic, face-to-face affiliation between a supervisory adult and a novice student that fosters the mentee's professional, academic, or personal development.

The AANN/ABNN/AMWF Mentorship Program is designed to match mentors and mentees based on their strengths and weaknesses to help foster growth in both individuals.

MENTORING AREAS OF INTEREST:

- **Professional/Career Development** – A professional development mentor may help you to strategize on your short and long-term career goals. This type of mentoring may help you decide on the “next steps” in your career as a neuroscience nurse (e.g., finding/deciding on a new position, graduate school, and advice for success, networking ideas). This area of mentoring involves the proactive planning and implementation of action steps toward your career goals. A career development plan can be created with assistance from a career development coach, peers or colleagues, or even on your own using assessment tools or performance appraisals from your employer. While different institutions may offer specific templates or formats for your curriculum vitae, this mentoring service will provide some direction in revamping your CV, converting a resume to a CV, or editing your CV for a particular professional or career opportunity. This mentoring service can give the mentee an opportunity to work with their mentor to develop a well-organized relevant curriculum vitae that will match and support your goals for your professional career.
- **AANN/ABNN/AMWF Leadership** –
AANN is a membership organization which is committed to working for the highest standard of care for neuroscience patients by advancing the science and practice of neuroscience nursing. AANN supports neuroscience nurses and their patients by providing continuing education and

certification preparatory materials, disseminating information, setting standards, and advocating on behalf of neuroscience patients, families, and nurses.

ABNN is solely responsible for the development, administration, and evaluation of certification programs for professional nurses involved in the specialty practice of neuroscience nursing and its subspecialties, currently including the CNRN and SCRN certification and recertification programs. The mission of ABNN is to advance neuroscience nurses' practice and contributions to neurological health through certification of registered nurses.

AMWF is dedicated to supporting neuroscience nursing through education, research, professional development, and certification to promote excellence in patient care.

A mentor who is a current or recent AANN/ABNN/AMWF leader may facilitate the mentee's planning for/exposure to that role. Examples of how this type of relationship may work include being a contact for questions, a guide through new processes, a networking conduit at conferences, or a sound board for policy development. This type of mentorship is dynamic and evolving—specific to the mentee's needs and flexible for development. This mentorship does not have to be in one specific area and can span across the tri-board organization; for example, an AANN leader can have or request an ABNN leader as a mentor, and vice versa.

- **CNRN or SCRN Certification** – The best mentors for CNRN or SCRN certification are board certified neuroscience nurses in their specialties that are able to model excellence and commitment to the tasks and essentials for preparing for and passing the certification of choice. The mentor assists the mentee in purposeful acknowledgement of how certification will benefit them in the workplace and throughout their neuroscience nursing career.
- **Stroke Coordinator Support** – A mentor should have experience with coordinating or managing an accredited with knowledge of current practice guidelines and emerging trends in stroke care. The mentor should also be able to support the mentee with developing and presenting education to staff and patients. The mentor should have a strong understanding of administrative and leadership functions as well that assist programmatic growth and development.
- **Project dissemination** – A mentor should have experience in writing abstracts or manuscripts and understand key strategies in the development and presentation of an educational session or publishing a manuscript. The mentor can provide support, advice, and encouragement at any point along the continuum of presentation development. Projects may be disseminated as podium or poster presentations at a local, regional or national event. The mentor can read a prepared abstract or manuscripts and provide feedback, assist in writing measurable objectives, give tips on PowerPoint development, and a final critique of the presentation. A mentor can help in assuring the presentation has an introduction, slides that transition from topic to topic, and a summary slide to recap and close. Overall speaker development mentoring can also be offered to improve techniques and tips for public speaking.

- **Research** – The best research mentors are advisors, coaches, counselors, and supporters all at the same time. These experienced scientists may help to guide your research and challenge you to develop your independence. A good mentor will help you define your research goals, and then support you in your quest to achieve them. He or she will share knowledge, provide encouragement, and hopefully inspire you. In addition to promoting your research, your mentor should help you to develop your career goals and construct a scientific network. A mentor may help to advise you about paper submission, career plans, and strategy.
- **Quality Improvement** - The mentor should have experience with performing rapid PDSA cycles of change to improve neurological patient outcomes. The mentors should also be able to support the mentee with developing, monitoring, and analyzing a practice change using QI methods. The mentor should have a strong understanding of the basic steps of quality improvement methods, tools, and interpreting data over time. The mentor should be experienced in Lean and Six Sigma skills, understanding fundamental of behavior change, and creating run and control charts.

MENTOR

WHO SHOULD BECOME A MENTOR:

Any experienced neuroscience nurse that is an AANN member may apply to serve as a mentor. Those in either academic or private practice from all training backgrounds are encouraged to apply. The experienced mentor should be a source of support for nurses/student nurses, available to answer questions, provide insight, and encourage involvement within AANN, ABNN or AMWF. As a mentor, you will directly support our shared mission to advance your fellow neuroscience nurses.

Mentors should be willing and committed to assist in the developmental growth of the mentee. The mentor's primary purpose is to help the mentee with the mutually agreed upon goal, their role, the political environment, and the culture of the unit or organization in a formal, yet informal way. Frequent communication offering affirmation and support will help the mentee progress through the program.

The mentor may act as a teacher, supporter, facilitator, counselor, guide, etc. These roles demonstrate the importance of the mentor role. They create an accepting environment that allows the mentees to control the relationship, while at the same time permitting the mentees to be themselves and voice relevant concerns and needs. Effective mentors provide their mentees with insights that would otherwise have been gained only through trial and error. Mentors try to look at the bigger picture and the future.

WHAT MENTORS ARE ASKED TO COMMIT TO:

- Time.
- Building a relationship with the students, nurses, or members you mentor.
- Being available by phone/email (within reason).
- Communicating openly.
- Facilitating the mentee's learning.
- Actively listening and giving feedback without judgment.
- Working through any issues that arise in the mentoring relationship.
- Keep information confidential.
- Evaluation of the process.
- Learning about yourself.

WHAT MENTORS CAN EXPECT TO GAIN:

- A relationship with a fellow nurse.
- Pride in being a part of someone else's growth and development in the nursing profession.
- Insights on how others struggle with issues and make choices.
- Practice in listening and giving feedback.
- Practice working through issues with others.
- A chance to inspire others to be mentors while practicing your mentoring skills.
- Feedback on how you facilitate growth for others.
- Growth and development for yourself.
- Satisfaction of sharing your knowledge and experiences.

MENTEE

WHO SHOULD BECOME A MENTEE:

Mentee applicants must be AANN members and nurses with an interest in mentorship in the furthering of their neuroscience career. Successful mentees are willing to assume responsibility for their own learning and growth. They seek challenging assignments and responsibilities. While they are receptive to feedback and coaching by the mentor, they also are willing to constructively give feedback. Mentees will learn to achieve a balance between their own independence and reliance on the mentor. Over time, the independence will most likely dominate and the relationship will change. After spending time with a mentor, mentees may feel refueled and inspired to make a difference in their practice.

WHAT MENTEES ARE ASKED TO COMMIT TO:

- Bringing forth professional and career issues for discussion.
- Being prepared to take risks.
- Scheduling and attending mentor appointments.
- Developing a personal action plan and goals.
- Asking for suggestions and advice early in the relationship. When advice is given, listen to the mentor, apply some of their recommendations, and let him/her know the results
- Giving time to practice skills in decision making.
- Taking initiative to drive the relationship and being responsible for your own career development and planning.
- Accepting constructive criticism and using feedback wisely.
- Evaluating the success of the mentoring relationship at various points.
- Being open to different mentorship styles.
- Providing feedback about the mentoring relationship and being open to receiving feedback.
 - When providing feedback, be honest, yet tactful

WHAT MENTEES CAN EXPECT TO GAIN:

- Increased self-confidence
- Enhanced leadership skills
- Stress reduction
- A relationship with a fellow nurse
- Knowledge from an experienced AANN member who specializes in your medical field
- A strengthened network from acquiring the skills and guidance needed to excel in the neuroscience profession

PROCESS

MATCHING MENTORS AND MENTEES

All mentors and mentees are required to complete and submit their application and CV/Resume available on the AANN Members Only site. Mentee and mentor applications will be reviewed by staff and members of the Mentorship Task Force. Mentor matches will be established through a confidential process. Each mentor/mentee match will constitute an agreement between the mentor and mentee, and AANN/ABNN/AMWF will ask participants to evaluate their mentoring engagement throughout the relationship.

DEVELOPING EXPECTATIONS

Each mentoring relationship is unique. Both the mentor and mentee must prepare individually to ensure a successful mentoring experience.

Once mentors and mentees have been matched, they should initiate and discuss their relationship and goals. The Task Force will attempt to match mentors and mentees in the same geographical area, however, based on availability, mentors and mentees may need to communicate virtually through conference call, email, Skype, etc. Mentors and mentees should discuss their preferred communication method while establishing their expectations of the program.

Formulating expectations of the relationship and of each other will be the best way to ensure a successful relationship. Expectations are statements of expected behaviors that are observable and achievable to both parties. Together, the mentor and mentee should create a shared understanding of their assumptions, expectations, goals, and confidentiality boundaries. The mentor and mentee will determine how and when to meet, roles and responsibilities, criteria for success, and accountability during and after the relationship.

Sample agenda items for the first meeting include:

- Introductions
 - Review each other's bio in advance
 - Current professional and personal demands of mentor and mentee
- Preferred learning and communication styles
- Frequency of communications
- Review Mentoring Handbook and Program
- Develop and discuss goals and expectations (short term or long term)
- Develop timeline for the program (3-months, 6-months, on-going, etc.)
- Confidentiality boundaries

MENTORING RELATIONSHIP ISSUES

Mentoring is a relationship and process where partners work together on mutually agreed upon goals. This relationship and process should be carefully monitored on a regular basis to ensure its effectiveness or to resolve conflicts before they are harmful to the relationship. If there are issues that cannot be resolved, the Task Force may need to reassign mentors and mentees in order to best serve both

participants. Both parties will be required to complete evaluations at the 6-month point and at the 12-month point of their program to monitor any potential issues. The evaluations will be emailed to matches 1-month before they are due.

FACILITATING GROWTH

In order to facilitate learning, the mentor's approach to the relationship should enable the mentee to move through the stages of growth through learning and networking. The mentor and mentee should work in partnership to make the mentoring relationship a success. Both the mentor and mentee need to be aware of how the mentor will fulfill the mentor role so that the mentee understands that it is a partnership that they must fully participate in to be able to grow and develop.

The purpose of the meetings with your mentee is to provide an environment of open communication where you can discuss any and all aspects of your mentee's transition to a new position. Encourage your mentee to make the most of these meetings by sharing her/his thoughts, concerns, and questions.

Tips for Successful Mentoring:

- Present mentoring relationship as a growth and development opportunity.
- Exhibit exemplary/role model behavior.
- Be interested. Don't appear rushed.
- Be clear about the necessity of meeting on a regular basis.
- Make appointments in advance and keep them.
- Recognize and encourage potential.
- Monitor your mentee's progress.
- Assist in making decisions through listening, support, and feedback.
- Allow and encourage independence when ready, while continuing to provide the proper amount of guidance.
- Share appropriate life experiences to personalize and enrich the mentoring experience.
- Encourage the mentee to take risks and learn from mistakes.

EVALUATING AND CLOSING THE PROGRAM

Once the mentoring relationship has come to a close in the program, both the mentor and mentee must complete a reflection and final evaluation that will be emailed to you. Mentors and mentees should complete the forms together to provide feedback on the program to help improve the process. Both mentors and mentees should reflect on what they have learned from the mentorship program experience

The mentoring relationship does not need to end once the formal mentoring program goals are achieved. The relationship will hopefully continue for as long as both individuals agree it is of value.

MENTORING PROGRAM PLAN

Mentor Initials: _____ Mentee Initials: _____ Date: _____

The purpose of this plan is to provide continued direction for the mentoring program. The plan is developed collaboratively by the mentor and mentee. This tool serves as a guide to develop goals and expectations, and a method for communication. Please complete your responses in each section.

GOALS:

What do you both want to achieve with this mentoring program?

What do you want your outcomes to be?

EXPECTATIONS:

I expect my mentor to:

I expect my mentee to:

COMMUNICATION AGREEMENT: What method(s) of communication will you use? How often will you communicate with each other?

EVALUATION: Staff will send out a 6-month evaluation in December 2024 and the final evaluation in May 2025.