

Facilitating Mentorships for Oncology Clinical Research Staff Through Mentorship Academy

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1. Background

Mentorship Academy (MA) started in response to the COVID-19 pandemic and the shift to remote work. MA was created to promote job satisfaction, self-advocacy, and to support professional guidance for oncology clinical research staff. Roles participating in MA include research nurses, data managers, study coordinators, regulatory project managers, and leadership.

2. Goals

The goals of MA include:

1. Train staff on how to have a successful mentorship relationship
2. Facilitate mentorship pairing to provide support in a current career path or exposure to a desired career path
3. Improve employee engagement, job performance, and satisfaction

3. Solutions and Methods

In May 2021, Knight leadership approved the MA concept with a \$1,000 annual grant used to purchase books (*10 Steps to Successful Mentoring* by Wendy Axelrod, PhD) that guide academy sessions. The oncology research nurse (who received the grant) utilized department meetings, posted flyers, and email to recruit participants. Enrollees received a mentorship resource book and completed four monthly sessions prior to mentor and mentee pairings. The sessions focused on mentorship concepts, effective communication, equity and inclusion, how to foster independence, and professional development. Once paired, the mentors and mentees met either in-person or virtually bi-monthly to foster and build the mentorship relationship.

Since its inception, participant recruitment has been updated to utilize virtual flyers and Smartsheet forms, in addition to email communication. Participant interest is documented in Smartsheet, and all participants are required to obtain manager approval to ensure participation does not conflict with existing team responsibilities. MA now incorporates a mentorship panel of individuals from across OHSU to share their experiences with the upcoming cohort. Academy sessions are held every other week, allowing time for participants to complete homework while keeping information fresh in their mind. In addition to a post-survey, MA organizers aim to check in with pairings within two months after academy completion to ensure the relationship was successful and address any lingering questions or concerns.

4. Outcomes

MA has completed six cohorts since 2021 with a total of 94 staff completing the academy. MA is now held twice a year and facilitated by two research nurses and two clinical research trainers with

assistance from the senior operations manager. Knight leadership recognized the importance of the academy and purchased 24 books for participants to borrow.

MA participants receive a survey upon completion to elicit feedback and to quantify perceived program usefulness. The survey includes Likert scale and free form response questions. Responses have been overwhelmingly positive, and the program continues to receive departmental support.

5. Lessons Learned and Future Directions

Employee confidence, job satisfaction, and retention are all important characteristics of a well-functioning organization. Our oncology research teams understand the benefits of collaboration between disciplines and sharing experiences and resources to support their colleagues. MA has been successful in validating and empowering staff during and after a challenging pandemic.

Over time we have improved communication with participants before, during, and after the academy. We expanded our network of potential mentors to provide mentees with the most appropriate pairings for their career goals.