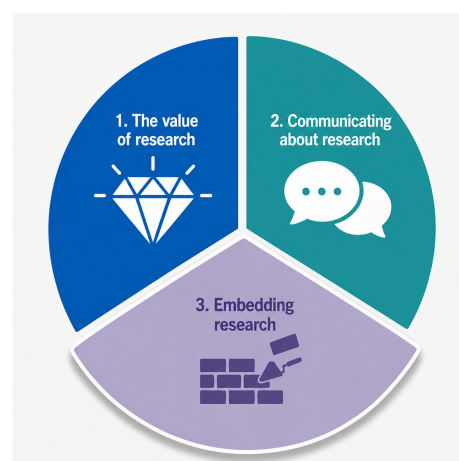


Developing and maintaining research mentorship



Embedding research

This resource provides leaders with information about the benefits of a research mentor, how to find one and tips for maximising the mentoring relationship.

Benefits of a research mentor

Research mentors support research capability and capacity building by providing guidance across all stages of the research process. They can help both leaders and novice researchers navigate unfamiliar research activities, while also supporting professional development, career growth, and research leadership development.

Benefits for the leader

Leaders play a key role in creating and sustaining mentoring opportunities for staff engaged in research. Leaders who are new to research benefit from guidance from an experienced research mentor to better understand research processes and build confidence in leading a research-active team culture.

Access to a research mentor can also reduce the pressure on leaders who may have limited research experience by providing practical advice and support related to research activities. Leaders still play an important role in helping staff allocate time for research activities, monitoring progress, and considering implications for local practice and service delivery.

Benefits for your staff

Research mentors can provide novice clinician researchers with guidance and practical support as they develop their research skills and experience. Mentoring can help staff navigate unfamiliar processes, build confidence, maintain momentum with research activities, and access professional development and career guidance.

Where do I find a research mentor?

- Contact your local health service research office.
- Contact active research teams within your local health service.
- Connect with local university academics in your field (most university academics will have research profiles online that can be found via a Google search and are typically keen to connect with health service staff).
- Reach out to your local Health Practitioner Research Fellow, Rural Research Coordinator or Research Development Officer.
- Approach presenters at conferences.
- Ask colleagues working in the area in other teams and health services.
- Email researchers who have published in your field by contacting the corresponding author in a relevant manuscript.

Tips for successful mentoring

Mentorships may thrive or fail for reasons that are not always well understood.

To optimise the sustainability of research mentorships, leaders can:

- Establish clear expectations for both mentors and mentees around the purpose of the mentorships so that you (as the leader), the mentors and mentees have a shared understanding of what they will contribute and achieve throughout the mentorship.
- Ask the mentor and mentee to discuss and document the terms of the mentorship (e.g., how long the mentorship will last or what milestones they aim to meet, how frequently and in what forum they will meet, etc.) so they both understand what is involved and what they are accountable for during the mentorship.

To support staff members with mentoring, leaders can:

- Provide uninterrupted, dedicated time for mentees to meet with their mentor (e.g., one hour per month) so they can participate in mentored learning in a meaningful and non-distracted way.
- Invite mentors to present their work at health service or team meetings so that other team members can benefit from the mentor's knowledge and experience and the mentor has the opportunity to expand their network and share their work.
- Check in with your staff member (mentee) about how the mentorship is progressing and encourage them to discuss and address any challenges or concerns proactively so that the time they spend learning with and from their mentor is optimised. Where appropriate, mentorships can be discontinued if they are not productive.

Note

Research mentoring needs may change over time as staff progress with their research skills and projects. Different projects may require support from different mentors. It is important to regularly review the mentoring relationship over time and to recognise that the mentoring relationship may change and end over time.

Additional resources

Beginning the mentoring relationship, National Institute for Health and Care Research.

Provides useful information about the mentoring contract, how to maximise the mentoring relationship, and how to prepare for your first mentoring meeting.

<https://www.nihr.ac.uk/beginning-mentoring-relationship>

Mentoring matters, Primary Health Care Research and Information Service.

Provides information about mentoring, the benefits, and the roles of the mentee and mentor.

https://www.apna.asn.au/files/DAM/8.%20Nursing%20Tools/Small%20Group%20Learning%20Toolkit/p_hcris_pub_364.pdf