Mentoring in healthcare

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Recently I’ve been giving more thought to the idea of mentorship and why there’s such a need for it! I see it not only in my workspace but in the Society as well. We have such a rich resource in members with knowledge and experience in various fields, anything from Constitution, laws and even social media and editing. It would be a terrible loss if we don’t take the opportunity to learn from our mentors.

What is the definition of a mentor and why would there be a need for mentoring in our profession? The purpose of mentoring is to connect an individual who has a lot of knowledge and experience with someone who hasn’t gained the same knowledge or experience yet.

By having someone who knows more than you do share advice, offer guidance and be a sounding board for your thoughts, you stand to benefit from experience beyond your own. Whether in your career or life, having a mentor is crucial to all our continued growth and development. Each mentorship programme can be beneficial to each organisation and member.

Benefits of healthcare mentoring

- Departments within organisations are given the opportunity to check flaws in their practices and to improve their services significantly.
- Newbies in the industry are able to develop the necessary skills to work and thrive in the healthcare environment more quickly and efficiently.
- Future leaders within the organisation will be identified and developed.
- Mentors within the organisation can also develop their own skills and become highly valued employees.
- The organisation may offer a nurturing form of practice to its staff and employees.
- Compliance in the industry will be achieved through the improvement of services.
- Management of hospitals, clinics and other healthcare institutions will be improved.
- Staff and employees are given the opportunity to develop and increase their intellectual capital.

Having mentoring practices in place is also an excellent recruitment tool for healthcare institutions and a way to increase positive feedback. It is also a way for institutions to share their knowledge and other important information to help other hospitals improve their own practices and services. Mentoring is also an excellent means to keep updated about the latest practices and developments in the healthcare sector. It is also a way of retaining the wealth of knowledge gained over the past years.

Implementing mentoring in an organisation can be seen as a daunting task. Mentoring may seem like a set of procedures that are simple to implement, but it is, in fact, a process that might be problematic and counter-productive if not used properly.

Some factors to consider

1. Proper understanding of the goals of the organisation, its resources, facilities and manpower.
2. Proper understanding of the interests, goals, expectations and values of the staff.
3. Proper knowledge in the implementation of mentoring activities and procedures that will fit the needs of the organisation and those of the staff concerned.
4. Adequate information about the most successful techniques and methods in mentoring that will help an organisation meet its goals.
5. Sufficient knowledge in matching mentors and mentees in order to take advantage of the perfect mentoring relationship.

In conclusion

We as a Society have a wealth of knowledge and expertise with the likes of Andy Gray, Gary Black, Dr Sybil Seoka and Lorraine Osman, to name just a few. We can learn a lot from them and they are eager to teach us. The question is, are we willing to learn, are we eager to avail ourselves and take over from them? They are always willing to teach and guide, but it is time for each and every one of us to step up to the plate and grow!