

MENTORSHIP GUIDE FOR INTERN PHARMACISTS AND REGISTERED PHARMACISTS IN UGANDA



THE PHARMACEUTICAL SOCIETY OF UGANDA

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JUNE 2024

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1.0 Introduction

The Pharmaceutical Society of Uganda is the national professional body of Pharmacists in Uganda. Its governing body is the Council of the Pharmaceutical Society of Uganda (PSU) which is mandated to “secure the highest practicable standards in the practice of Pharmacy”. The societies’ vision is “to be the leader in ensuring professional excellence and securing the highest standards of pharmacy practice in the region.” The publication of this mentorship guide for the Intern pharmacists and Registered pharmacists in Uganda is one of the several strategic efforts by the Council of PSU towards attaining this vision.

2.0 Pharmacy practice areas

The profession of Pharmacy is a health profession that links the health sciences with the chemical sciences and it is charged with ensuring the safe and effective use of drugs and other health care supplies. The word “pharmacy” is derived from the Greek: φάρμακον (pharmakon), meaning "drug" or "medicine" (the earliest form of the word is the Mycenaean Greek pa-ma-ko). The scope of pharmacy practice includes more traditional roles such as compounding and dispensing medications, and it also includes more modern services related to health care, including clinical services, reviewing medications for safety and efficacy, and providing drug information. Pharmacists, therefore, are the experts on drug therapy and are the primary health professionals who optimize medication use to provide patients with positive health outcomes.

Pharmacy practice generally includes Manufacture of quality, safe and efficacious medicines; Interpretation and evaluation of prescriptions; Dispensing and labeling of drugs ; Proper and safe storage of drugs and medical devices and maintenance of required storage records; Drug selection and drug administration; Promotion of rational drug use in the public , Provision of pharmaceutical care, Drug research and development among other practice fields.

3.0 Why mentorship of pharmacists is important.

Caffarella (1992) defined mentoring as an “intense caring relationship in which persons with more experience work with less experienced persons to promote both professional and personal

development” . Daloz (1986) was more expressive in his description of mentors as guides who “lead us along the journey of our lives ... they cast light on the way ahead, interpret arcane signs, warn us of lurking dangers, and point out unexpected delights along the way” .

Mentoring can therefore be defined as a developmental relationship between a more experienced mentor and a less experienced mentee focused on enhancing the mentee’s growth and skill development. Mentoring is an intentional process. Mentoring is a nurturing process that fosters the development of the protégé towards his full potential. Mentoring is an insightful process in which the wisdom of the mentor is acquired and applied by the beneficiary.

Many experienced people in pharmacy are presented with opportunities to mentor others who are relatively new to the profession; for example, an experienced pharmacist practitioner can help younger colleagues develop their practice, or a senior member can advise a less experienced member about career issues. Another common mentoring opportunity is registered pharmacists working with Pharmacy students and interns. Though these occasions can be common, effective mentorship does not occur frequently enough. One obstacle to better mentoring could be the limited value placed on mentorship by potential mentors. What is the value of mentorship to mentees, mentors, and the pharmacy profession?

Pharmacy mentees can benefit from mentorship in a number of ways. One advantage is that a mentor can provide helpful advice about job opportunities and career paths; for example, a pharmacy mentor might help a mentee recognize the tradeoffs associated with taking an administrative position. In addition, a mentor can assist with career opportunities by serving as a reference when a mentee is seeking a specific job opportunity.

Pharmacy mentees also can gain better understanding of difficult job issues during discussions with a mentor. A mentor might help a junior colleague work through an ethical challenge faced in practice, for example. Such a process can move the mentee to refine principles used in his or her practice. Developing principles used to guide practice behavior can make pharmacists more effective at resolving difficult issues with their clients, work mates and superiors.

Mentorship has value to pharmacy mentors in the areas of learning and intrinsic rewards. A pharmacy mentor can learn from his or her mentees when new questions or information is raised

by the mentee. Responding to situations such as these can increase a mentor's professional knowledge and/or self-knowledge. A mentor might learn about a new pharmacy care activity through dealings with a mentee. Such discussions can prompt a mentor to get up to speed on an evolving area of pharmacy practice or research in order to be able to contribute in an informed manner.

Similarly, a mentor's conversations with a colleague could lead the mentor to examine his or her own beliefs about a new issue; for example, a senior pharmacist may be questioned by a newly registered pharmacist about the value of a pharmacy internship training. Responding to this question could get the a senior member to think thoroughly about the costs and benefits of internship training for tomorrow's pharmacy profession. Such reflection can improve a mentor's understanding of the changes facing pharmacists as individuals and as a profession.

A mentor also can gain intrinsic rewards by performing mentorship. In this case, a mentor gets a positive feeling from assisting a professional colleague or student pharmacist. Perhaps the mentor views his or her participation as payback for assistance that he or she received from a past mentor. As a professional, a pharmacy mentor can feel satisfaction in supporting the development of fellow pharmacists and in strengthening the profession.

The pharmacy profession receives value from mentorship through a higher level of engagement by mentors and mentees, as well as enhanced diffusion of new ideas. Because mentoring requires active involvement by both mentors and mentees, those engaged in mentorship tend to be active in their pharmacy practices. By its nature, developing junior colleagues and trainees can be considered a type of leadership. That is, mentors help lead their mentees toward success, which often comes through positive contributions to the pharmacy profession.

In addition, participation in mentorship often raises emerging issues that spark discussions needed to create shared visions for pharmacy practice among pharmacists. Interactions between mentors and their mentees can facilitate the profession wide discussion of a particular topic that can enhance good pharmacy practice. Similarly, mentorship can contribute to the diffusion of pharmacy services and support the gradual adoption of such services as a standard of pharmacy practice.

Pharmacists are in a position to actively participate in mentorship, which provides value to mentees, mentors, and the profession as a whole. By serving as a mentor, a pharmacist can help others develop their professional knowledge and practice principles. In return, mentors learn and often reap intrinsic rewards from assisting their current and future pharmacy colleagues. Finally, the pharmacy profession as a whole benefits from mentorship because emerging issues are discussed and needed visions of practice evolve.

4.0 Mentor Requirements

The PSU Mentor should have the following characteristics:

- a) Be a registered pharmacist in Uganda or pharmacist registered as a member of a society with equivalent status as the pharmaceutical society of Uganda. Any other professional accomplished in his/ her field can be appointed as a mentor for pharmacists in a specific field.
- b) Has strong interpersonal skills, is a good listener, and is able to establish a respectful, confidential mentoring relationship.
- c) Sets high expectations for himself/herself and others.
- d) Committed to being a mentor and to making the mentoring relationship work.
- e) Committed to the pharmacy profession or their respective area of specialization, vocation and to professional growth.
- f) For pharmacist mentor, He/she must be competent, experienced, and able to apply best pharmacy practices.

5.0 Mentee Requirements

All intern pharmacists and registered pharmacists shall be eligible for mentorship as mentees irrespective of the years of practice. The mentee should have the following characteristics:

- a) Desire to be a mentee.
- b) He/she should be receptive to learning
- c) Committed to developing a learning relationship with a mentor.
- d) Be receptive to the advice and counsel of the mentor.

6.0 The Mentoring Process

The mentoring process for newly registered pharmacists shall start with the selection and approval of PSU mentor and then matching him/ her with a mentee. The next step in the mentoring process shall involve the preparation and implementation of key stages of the mentorship by the mentor and mentored pharmacist as outlined below:

Stage 1: Preparing for the mentorship

Mentors shall be senior members of the Pharmaceutical Society of Uganda or persons specialized in their profession or vocation and are encouraged to familiarize themselves with the qualities and competencies expected of a mentor and to continuously self-assess themselves in preparation for the mentorship. In conducting a self-assessment, mentors can explore the following areas:

- i. Exploring their personal motivation to be a mentor
- ii. Becoming clear about the expectations and role of a mentor
- iii. Determining readiness to become a mentor

Stage 2: Negotiating the mentorship relationship

Negotiation is the phase of the mentorship relationship when mentoring partners reach agreement on learning goals and define the content and process of the relationship.

A key component of this negotiation phase involves the development of the learning plan.

- i. What is our plan for addressing the goals of the mentorship?
- ii. What are our criteria for success?
- iii. What is the learner's preferred learning style?
- iv. Is there mutual understanding of the roles of the mentor and learner?
- v. What are the responsibilities of each partner?
- vi. How often should we meet in person?

- vii. How often should we communicate and how? Who should take the initiative for the communication?
- viii. What is our agreement?
- ix. What are our operating assumptions about confidentiality?
- x. What is a workable strategy for dealing with obstacles to the relationship if they arise?
- xi. How and when will the relationship be brought to a close?

Stage 3: Facilitating learning, advocacy and professional networking

This is the phase that takes longer to complete because it is when the greatest learning and benefits of mentoring take place. The success of this phase depends on maintaining a climate of mutual trust and respect. Facilitating learning and professional networking will be the focus of review sessions that are held on a regular basis. The Mentor must have an understanding of their role as facilitators of learning and advocates for professional networking.

Mentors are facilitators of learning and therefore must be resources for learning, rather than didactic instructors who provide all the answers. To do this, mentors should:

- i. Establish a supportive climate conducive to learning.
- ii. Involve learners in planning how and what they will learn.
- iii. Encourage learners to identify and use a variety of resources to accomplish their objectives.
- iv. Help learners implement and evaluate their goals and aspirations for the mentorship.

Preparation in this phase involves the readiness of the mentor to provide learning opportunities and general guidelines for key issues to be discussed during feedback / review sessions.

To address these issues, the mentor can:

1. Generate a list of learning opportunities by posing some of the following questions:

- a) What opportunities are available to provide exposure to new learning?

- b) What opportunities are available for professional networking?

These may include Conferences, Continuing Professional Development activities, Professional/social gatherings.

2. Design a framework for discussion during the regular review sessions. Key points can include:

- a) Identifying the main focus of the meeting.
- b) Reflecting on the successes since the last meeting
- c) Asking what problems or difficulties have been encountered since the last meeting.
- d) Discussing how these were resolved or addressed.
- e) Reviewing specific goals or aspects of the learning plan that were addressed since last meeting.
- f) Identifying a date, time and location for the next meeting / review session.
- g) Identifying several outcomes to be addressed by the next meeting when possible and relevant.

Stage 4: Closure of the mentoring relationship

Closure of the mentorship relationship may be determined by a pre-set schedule; however, this short phase remains a significant step in the learning process. This phase can be both challenging and rewarding. It offers a rich opportunity for both partners in the mentorship to evaluate and reflect on their learning and take this new learning forward.

A good exit strategy and process can answer the following three questions:

1. Have we followed a helpful approach for reflecting on learning outcomes and discussed a process for integrating what was learned?
2. Have we decided on a meaningful way to celebrate the successes within the mentorship?
3. Have we had a conversation to redefine our relationship and to acknowledge this transition? Has our conversation included a focus on talking about whether it will move

from a professional mentoring relationship to colleagues, friendship, to staying in contact, etc. and where to go from here?

7.0 Developing a positive mentoring relationship:

1. Logistics and timing of meetings: Mentor and mentee should set aside at least half an hour every two months and an hour every six months (for the formal review) during working hours to formally meet and discuss.

2. Prepare for the first meeting: Mentor and Mentee need to make a list of things that are important in their opinion. The list might include:

- **For the mentor**, what it was like to be starting out, what it was like to make the decision for his/her career path, or about expectations concerning the mentoring relationship.
- **For the mentee**, factors leading to the decision to become a pharmacist, or any areas of concern.

3. Be clear about purpose and boundaries: Gift-giving, loaning money, or becoming involved in dispute resolution are all out-of bounds. May discuss ethical or moral issues. Mentor should advocate for career advancement as appropriate.

4. Create an agenda for each meeting: Mentee should be responsible to create an agenda. List two or three and then ask the mentor if they have any items they would like to add. Send an electronic version to the mentor prior to the meeting.

5. Listen deeply and ask questions - Two essential skills for both Mentor and Mentee are:

- In-depth listening, that is, suspending judgment, listening for understanding and
- Asking powerful questions, that is, questions that are challenging in a friendly way and questions that help the other person talk about what is important to them.

6. End of the Meeting Review and Plan for the next meeting: The mentor and mentee would review the mutually developed goals to determine progress. Then each should solicit any ideas about what might be discussed at the next meeting.

7. Both Mentor and Mentee are expected to maintain and respect privacy, honesty, and integrity.

8. Both Mentor and Mentee are expected to be responsive: It is critically important that both mentor and mentee establish expectations about when things will be finished – and most importantly that they complete these on time. Both should respond to calls and emails in a timely fashion.

9. Both mentor and Mentee are expected to encourage open communication in this relationship: The focus of most successful mentoring is mutual learning.

Mentees are encouraged to do the following:

- i. **Take the initiative for the first meeting:** Take the initiative to make the first call, but as part of the Mentoring Agreement, determine who will organize meetings moving forward.
- ii. **Bring ideas and “a plan of action” to all of your meetings:** Bring ideas to your meetings, in particular to your initial planning meetings. Be prepared to tell your mentor what you think, why it is important, and what your ideas about developing your ideas are. Be prepared, and expect, to give an update on what you have accomplished at each meeting.
- iii. **Demonstrate initiative, leadership, and self-reliance.**
- iv. **Actively seek feedback:** Look at what you have accomplished. Ask how you are doing, acknowledge that you would like to improve and ask how you can accomplish this.

- v. **Reassess your goals frequently:** Ask yourself if you have accomplished what you set out to at the beginning of the process. If you are meeting your goals, communicate this to your mentor. If you are not meeting your goals, also communicate this, and think about how you might meet your goals. Your mentor should be able to strategize with you.
- vi. **Communicate your wishes openly and honestly:** If your needs are not being met, discuss this with your mentor and if need be contact the Secretary PSU. Terminating a mentoring relationship or switching to a different mentor is not a sign of failure by either party. Recognizing your changing needs and finding a respectful way to meet your learning goals are critical.

APPENDIX I : PHARMACEUTICAL SOCIETY OF UGANDA Mentoring Agreement

This agreement outlines how the mentoring relationship will proceed and the commitment of both parties to the relationship.

1. How often will we meet formally?

☐ Once a Month

☐ Once every two months

☐ Other _____

2. Who will schedule the formal meetings?

☐ Mentor

☐ Mentee

3. Goals for the mentoring relationship:

a. Mentee

i. _____

ii. _____

iii. _____

b. Mentor

i. _____

ii. _____

iii. _____

4. Confidentiality agreement. I agree to maintain and respect each other's privacy, honesty, and integrity.

Declaration:

I have read the entire PSU mentorship guide and I agree to put my best effort forth to create a successful mentoring relationship and to achieve the goals and standards set forth above.

Mentor's Signature

Mentee's Signature

Mentor's Name

Mentee's Name

Date

Date