



Exploring the Impact of Interprofessional Mentoring



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Background

Support for interprofessional development had been identified as a priority by the American Interprofessional Health Collaborative and the National Center for Interprofessional Practice and Education, based on repeated inquiries from constituents and attendee comments at previous meetings.

Introduction

- With the help of Josiah Macy, Jr. Foundation, a mentoring program was piloted in 2017 to help support faculty with diverse IPE-related needs in areas such as leadership, curriculum design, teaching methods, classroom-clinical experiences, and evaluation.
- Applicants for mentors and mentees were solicited through organizational email lists and newsletters in early spring.
- Twenty-six faculty representing almost a dozen health-related professions and institutions cross all regions of the United States applied.
- Six mentor-mentee pairs were selected, based on alignment of stated needs and experience.

Purpose

This research study aimed to explore and interpret the perceptions of mentors and mentees who participated in the pilot program.

Methods

- A semi-structured, open-ended interview was used in this qualitative research design.
- Eight participants from five unique pairs agreed to participate. These participants represent the following professions: Education, Medicine, Nursing, Occupational Therapy, Physical Therapy, and Sociology.

Results

Relationship is central to mentoring, and you need to build it



Learning is a 2-way street.

Mentees seek affirmation, advice; Mentors love to learn, new opportunities

"But I think the fact that we were able to really hash out to stuff that we both were struggling with, and really learn from each other in a very authentic not the best word, but we were able to really bounce off ideas."

"I still consider myself so junior in the field. So she seems very comfortable in her own skin and is just competent enough to say, 'I don't know'. I think sometimes when you're in a mentor role you feel like you have to have all the answers... That she didn't have all the answers and was ready and willing [to ask and get back to me]."

IPECP is a new frontier.

Charting our own course—both mentees and mentors



Need structure yet flexibility.

Cross discipline/professional work is messy and complex

"So, knowing ahead of time what the mentee is really looking for and making sure that that's communicated to the mentor you know so that there's a good fit and then they can mentor in that type of thing."

"But I also wouldn't want to, you know constrain anyone moving forward by that."

Solid ideas for path forward.

Strong commitment to build on this formative work



"...I think peer to peer mentoring would be interesting too. I would love to have to be paired with someone who would be considered a peer in professional development."

"If you have the luxury of having enough people participate, you may want to sort of categorized initially based on people's needs like is your need really, you know, more high level leadership program building or is your need more you know, technical or specific a specific projects, for example, an assessment..."

"...the one thing that came to my mind for that was to have some sort of a mentor-mentee agreement."

"...she and I really clicked and could discuss things openly and honestly, and I didn't necessarily expect that part of it."

"Being forced into having this longitudinal relationship with somebody over time has been really beneficial and I appreciate that as an opportunity of how this was set up and so, I really enjoyed that."

"[My mentor was] incredibly kind-hearted in letting me switch gears, run things by him with little notice – he never acted like I was putting him out. Moreover, his style and personality was extremely calming and often made me feel as though I was indeed moving forward in positive directions."

"I think I was hoping I would get paired with some enthusiastic junior faculty member ready to take the world on fire and it would maybe spark me and push me to find my fire a little bit more, because sometimes I get a little bit, you know, beaten down by some of those challenges"

"You know it's so hard because the reason why I love inter-professional education is because it's breaking down hierarchy. But then the question about qualification reinforces hierarchy. You know, that achievement and accomplishment and or rank level."

Discussion

- Participants perceived a mutually beneficial, positive experience, even when fit wasn't perfect.
- They confirmed the need for mentoring to help interprofessional leaders navigate their way.
- They desired additional opportunities and methods to connect with their mentor/mentee to develop a more fruitful relationship.

Next Steps

- Based on participant feedback, enhancements have been made for the next iteration of the mentoring program.
- The AIHC Program Committee will explore opportunities for funding to ensure sustainability.
- The working group will continue to gather qualitative data through program evaluation to understand needs, expectations, and outcomes.
- Applicants are being recruited for the second cohort. Visit the AIHC website for more information: <https://aihc-us.org/>