



Women for One Health

Mentorship and Guidance Programme

Background

Providing early career researchers with mentors is a meaningful way to help them advance their careers. Mentors in the context of Women for One Health Network (WfOH) aim to provide women with guidance on navigating their careers, provide advice on skill development, and ongoing support. They encourage the advancement of the mentees' careers and advice on ways of maintaining good work-life balance. In workplaces or a career stage where women are a minority, women may feel isolated. Thus, developing a career-support relationship with other like-minded women, the mentees may feel more connected and supported in their career. Certain aspects of One Health are still male-dominated although gradually we see increased engagement and leadership of women in One Health research and practise. There is still a feeling that there is a kind of a "glass-ceiling" for women to access leadership positions. Within the WfOH network, there are members who have expressed interest in being part of a mentorship programme. Thus, the WfOH network has developed guidelines on developing and maintaining good and supportive mentorship relationships within the network.

Mentoring

Mentoring can be defined as a relationship between two individuals based on a mutual desire for support and development for one of those individuals. Mentors provide guidance, and advice, help to interpret events, and give feedback and ideas to their mentee – i.e. the person being mentored – about the next steps professionally, specific work situations and ideas for the future and are often considered a great source of support. Besides professional discussions, some personal issues can be shared and specific feedback given.

Mentoring is a two-way communication; the mentor can potentially benefit from new inputs, ideas and the networks of the mentees. Mentoring is not the same as coaching or counselling which requires some specific training.

In order to encourage early career professionals, particularly women, in One Health research, policy, and practice, WfOH seeks to set up a mentoring framework. This will include establishing and keeping an up-to-date list of potential mentors with their profiles and contacts on the WfOH website. The list will be accessible to potential mentees, who may select a mentor and contact them directly. The Mentoring Framework will provide general guidelines on the mentoring programme.

Purpose

To support professional development by providing advice on career development, work-life balance and navigating the complex world of One Health research, policy and practice.

Who is a Mentor?

A mentor is typically an experienced individual who can guide and support a less experienced person (the mentee) in their personal or professional development. In academic, professional, or organizational settings, mentors are often those who have demonstrated expertise and leadership in their careers and are eager to give back by fostering the development of others.

Qualifications to Be a Mentor May Include:

1. **Relevant Expertise:** A mentor should have substantial knowledge or experience in the field in which they are mentoring.
2. **Experience:** Ideally, the mentor has several years of professional experience, with a track record of success in their domain.
3. **Strong Communication Skills:** The ability to communicate clearly, offer constructive feedback, and actively listen is crucial for effective mentoring.

4. Empathy and Patience: Mentors should be approachable, understanding, and patient, offering support and encouragement.

5. Commitment: A mentor should be willing to dedicate time and effort to guide the mentee, with a genuine interest in their growth.

6. Positive Role Model: Someone who demonstrates professionalism, integrity, and strong leadership qualities, serving as a role model for the mentee.

7. Willingness to Share: A good mentor is open to sharing their own experiences, both successes and failures, to help the mentee learn

Motivations to Participate in the Mentoring Programme

For a Mentee:

- An opportunity to share professional experiences, expand networks and receive guidance and advice on how to address career-related issues.
- To get inside knowledge and advice on how to navigate the often complex world of organizations and institutions in which they work.
- Having somebody who can share first-hand experiences that are enriching and inspiring and provide guidance on ways to avoid pitfalls.

For a Mentor:

- An opportunity to share and transfer experience and knowledge, as well as support the professional development of a colleague, becoming a guide and a role model for others.
- Moving to a new phase in your own career, becoming more reflective and willing to share some of your hard-won wisdom.
- To pass on specific knowledge about the One Health world.
- Mentoring allows you to develop and strengthen your leadership and coaching skills, as you guide and support your mentee through their professional challenges. This can enhance your ability to lead and inspire others in your organization.

- Interacting with a mentee can provide you with new insights and fresh perspectives on current industry trends, challenges, or organizational issues, as you engage with someone from a different background or experience level.
- Supporting a colleague's growth and success can be deeply rewarding. Knowing that you have positively influenced someone's career and personal development brings a sense of accomplishment and fulfilment.

Mentoring Etiquette

Mentees should come to the process with an open mind to receive constructive feedback. They must take responsibility for their own growth and development; the mentor's job is to listen, offer advice, and support, not to manage the mentee's career.

Some basic principles are:

- Mentees should come prepared for the discussion with mentors on topics for specific advice or feedback. This ensures clarity in the mentoring relationship.
- It is important not to expect mentors to solve the mentee's problems. This may sound obvious, but mentors sometimes complain about poor (or no) follow-up from their mentees, so it is important to stay in touch, let the mentor know when his/her advice was followed and to share successes.
- The matters that are being discussed should be kept strictly confidential from both sides.

Also mentors should adhere to specific etiquette as has been nicely spelled out in https://www.nspe.org/sites/default/files/resources/pdfs/mentoring/Mentoring_Etiquette.pdf

What Does a Mentor Do in the Mentoring Relationship?

A mentor listens (using active listening skills) to his or her mentee's goals, strengths, and struggles. Based on those goals, the mentor supports the mentee in meeting his or her goals through questioning, providing guidance and feedback, sharing his or her own experiences, and possibly connecting the mentee with other individuals or groups who could help. Every mentoring relationship will unfold differently based on the individuals involved. Still, the purpose of mentoring is not to tell the mentee what to do but to help the mentee make their own informed decisions. The mentor should be supportive, not critical or negative, and remember that everyone's experiences and priorities differ.

What Does a Mentee Do in the Mentoring Relationship?

A mentee communicates their goals and professional situation clearly to the mentor. They listen critically and objectively to the feedback and guidance received, keeping in mind that the mentor is speaking from his or her specific experience and priorities. It's up to the mentee to ensure that the relationship is beneficial by keeping in contact, clearly communicating expectations, actively addressing problems, and asking for help when needed.

Setting Goals and Expectations

Both the mentor and the mentee should start by discussing their expectations for the mentoring relationship. This should be clarified as soon as possible because not understanding each other's expectations for the relationship could lead to disappointment. A mentor should ask his or her mentee about what the mentee's goals are and what he or she is looking for from the relationship. Mentees should be clear about what they hope to get out of the mentoring relationship, particularly concerning goals, which will form the foundation of their work with the mentor. Mentees are encouraged to think about measuring progress on the set goals and allocate time for this in the discussion with the mentor. Issues like frequency of meetings, availability, and modes of contact should be agreed upon from the start.

How Much Time Do I Have to Dedicate to This?

It is really up to the mentoring pair to decide the frequency which may vary based on the mentee's needs. In the beginning, it is suggested to meet once a month face to face (preferable) or virtually (most probable).

Initially schedule 3-4 meetings each 4 weeks apart, with a clear agenda for each meeting defined and communicated before the meeting.

Duration 30-45 minutes

From Day 1 set clear objectives and 1-2 achievable goals. At the end of each mentoring session discuss how it went and what could eventually be improved.

Mentorship Programme Guide

1. **Meetings:** Hold a minimum of two meetings with your mentee (in person or virtually). Mentors and mentees should aim to hold online meetings between 4 to 12 times, depending on the agreed frequency (quarterly to monthly)
2. **Attendance:** Attend scheduled meetings and inform the other party in advance if you are unable to attend a scheduled meeting.
3. **Support:** Mentor to support the mentee(s) in their career progression and provide advice to help navigate professional challenges by:
 - Acting as a sounding board.
 - Sharing lessons from your own experiences.
 - Providing constructive feedback based on trust, open communication, and empathy.
 - Identifying and developing the mentee's strengths.
 - Identifying and addressing the mentee's possible weaknesses that hinder career progression.
 - Offering technical or expert support in areas of need.
 - Sharing resources such as connections or opportunities when available

Facilitation Tips for Mentor-Mentee Meetings

- Recommend and discuss a book/topic relevant to the mentee's goals and lessons learned from it.
- Explore and discuss professional standards in the mentee's sector.
- Review current developments and research in the mentee's field.
- Provide feedback to guide future actions. Examples include:
 - "I like the way you did [specific task]. Next time, you might also try [suggestion]."
 - "This is good progress. I would also like to see more of [specific aspect]."

Opportunities for Mentors

Mentorship is often assumed to be one-way; in reality, it is often a reciprocal and mutually beneficial opportunity. The mentors will get an opportunity to:

- Interact and learn from global health leaders in One Health.
- Collaborate with mentee(s) from a different fields of expertise.

- Connect with people from different cultural backgrounds thereby getting an opportunity to experience and learn from them.
- Share knowledge and skills acquired from years of experience with the mentees.

What Makes an Effective Mentee?

An effective mentee is proactive and maintains the mentoring relationship professionally by:

- Identifying and prioritizing areas of need.
- Communicating consistently to schedule meetings and follow up on action items.
- Working towards agreed-upon goals and demonstrating progress.

A mentee should recognize that one mentor cannot address all their professional and personal needs. It's important to focus on specific areas of need and engage with the mentor's expertise accordingly while being open to revisiting and reassessing these areas as needed.

Mentee Expectations

As a mentee, you are primarily responsible for maintaining the mentorship relationship. To fulfil this role, you should be prepared to:

- Develop a work plan outlining your short-term, medium-term and long-term goals, with agreed-upon deadlines for each.
- Refine your goals regularly and as needed, in consultation with your mentor.
- Schedule and attend meetings with the mentor.
- Take meeting minutes and share them with your mentor, emphasising action items and next steps.
- Clearly specify areas where you need feedback and demonstrate how you have implemented previous feedback.
- Read any recommended books or articles from your mentor and provide your thoughts on them.
- If you need to cancel a meeting, do so well in advance, and ensure your message reaches your mentor effectively (e.g., by cc'ing their assistant).
- Clarify when you should expect specific feedback.
- When submitting a draft for research, ensure it is well-presented. Proofread it and consider having a peer review it first.

- If you disagree with feedback, show that you have considered it thoughtfully. If you still disagree, be prepared to defend your ideas professionally and with well-reasoned arguments.

Opportunities for Mentees

While mentorship offers numerous benefits, some key opportunities for mentees include:

- Engaging with and learning from accomplished experts.
- Receiving tailored feedback and encouragement.
- Developing and enhancing skills, knowledge, and attitudes.
- Saving time by adopting strategies that might otherwise take years of trial and error to discover.
- Asking targeted, specific questions.
- Accessing practical resources and tools.
- Expanding their professional network through interactions with mentors and fellow mentees.
- Exploring and understanding professional standards within their field.
- Staying informed about ongoing developments and research in the relevant area.

Structuring Mentorship Meetings

How to Become a Mentor or a Mentee

Mentorship is a valuable personal development tool for both mentors and mentees, requiring preparation, structure, and dedicated time. Here are some guidelines for structuring your initial and subsequent meetings:

- **First Email Correspondence:** The first email should be from the potential mentee to the community manager (initiated by filling in the mentee application form on the website), indicating that they are looking for mentors and giving 2 - 3 potential mentors they have identified from the list provided (in the expert database). Second email from the community manager to the potential mentor. If any of the potential mentors accept to mentor the mentee, an email made by the community manager introducing the mentee to the mentor.

- The initial email will be initiated by WfOH community managers. In this email, the mentees should make themselves available for a meeting with their mentor and propose or inquire about convenient times for the mentor.
- **First Meeting:** The first meeting is intended for the mentee and mentor to get acquainted. A helpful way to start is by reviewing and completing the WfOH Mentor-Mentee Agreement.
- **Additional Tips for the First Meeting Include:**
 - **Introduce Yourself:** Prepare to share relevant information about yourself that will help your mentor understand your background and aspirations. Consider preparing or updating a CV or resume to share.
 - **Identify Mutual Interests:** Discover common interests, whether in research, activism, academics, creativity, philanthropy, etc. This will help in setting goals and defining the mentor's role in achieving them.
 - **Discuss Your Goals:** Outline your goals, keeping in mind that they can evolve over time. Ensure they are SMART (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Results-oriented, and Time-based) or at least measurable by the end of the programme.
 - **Clarify the Mentor's Role:** Understand how the mentor will assist you in achieving your goals. For instance, if the goal is career networking, determine how many professionals the mentor will introduce you to and the expected level of interaction. If it's research, clarify the mentor's expectations for drafts (e.g. rough or near-final versions).
 - **Define Confidentiality:** Agree on what confidentiality entails and how it will be upheld.
 - **Communication Between Meetings:** Establish how you will maintain communication between meetings.
 - **Discuss Roles and Responsibilities:** Clearly outline the roles and responsibilities of both the mentor and mentee.

All mentees must submit the signed agreement to the community managers at info@wfoh.org within one month of being introduced to the mentor to remain in the programme.

Subsequent Meetings

During the initial meeting and all following meetings, both mentors and mentees are encouraged to take notes. The mentee is responsible for taking minutes, summarizing key takeaways from each session, and noting areas where they need further guidance. A shared Google or OneDrive folder, or a collaborative document, can be used to organize and store these notes.

Wrapping up the Mentorship Programme

The mentorship programme is designed to span one year, during which mentors and mentees should aim to hold online meetings between 4 to 12 times, depending on the agreed frequency (quarterly to monthly). At the six-month mark and again at the programme's conclusion (one year), mentors are expected to:

- Request a report or summary from the mentee outlining what they have learned during that period, encouraging them to reflect on what went well and what could have been improved.
- Discuss plans for maintaining the relationship beyond the programme's duration.
- Motivate the mentee to create a plan for paying it forward by mentoring another One health professional.

Safeguarding in the WfOH Network's Mentorship Programme

All conversations between a mentor and a mentee should be kept confidential unless both parties agree otherwise for a specific topic of discussion. Note that confidentiality cannot be maintained in situations requiring mentors/mentees to report possible incidents of sexual harassment, discrimination, or other activities that violate the WfOH network sexual exploitation abuse and harassment policy. If any such issues arise, please reach out to the WfOH community manager at info@wfoh.org.

Sexual Exploitation, Abuse, and Harassment (SEAH) Policy

Women for One Health Network (WfOH)

The WfOH Network has established a comprehensive Sexual Exploitation, Abuse, and Harassment (SEAH) Policy to ensure a safe, respectful, and inclusive environment for all participants, members, and partners. The policy emphasizes a zero-tolerance stance towards SEAH, holding all individuals associated with the network to high standards of conduct. Key components of the policy include: **1. Definitions:** Clarification of what constitutes sexual exploitation, abuse, and harassment, emphasizing the seriousness of these issues. **2. Scope:** The policy applies to everyone involved with the network, reflecting its commitment to safety in both in-person and virtual environments. **3. Prevention Measures:** Training and awareness sessions for members and staff, a code of conduct that promotes respect, and clear reporting mechanisms to encourage individuals to speak out against incidents. **4. Reporting and Response:** Established procedures for reporting SEAH incidents, ensuring thorough and confidential investigations, and protections for those who report in good faith. **5. Disciplinary Actions:** Clear consequences for confirmed SEAH cases, which may include termination of involvement with the network and potential legal action. **6. Monitoring and Evaluation:** Ongoing assessments of the policy and processes to maintain effectiveness and relevance. **7. Confidentiality:** A strong commitment to handling all reports with discretion, protecting the privacy of those involved. For more information or to report an incident, individuals are encouraged to reach out through the designated contact email provided by the network.

Objective:

To create a safe, respectful, and inclusive environment within the WfOH Network, protecting all participants, members, and partners from sexual exploitation, abuse, and harassment.

1. Policy Statement

The WfOH Network maintains a zero-tolerance policy toward any form of SEAH. All members, staff, contractors, volunteers, and partners are expected to act professionally and uphold the highest standards of conduct.

2. Definitions

- **Sexual Exploitation:** Any actual or attempted abuse of a position of vulnerability, differential power, or trust for sexual purposes.
- **Sexual Abuse:** The actual or threatened physical intrusion of a sexual nature, whether by force or under unequal conditions.
- **Sexual Harassment:** Any unwelcome sexual advance, request for sexual favours, or other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature that creates a hostile or intimidating environment.

3. Scope

This policy applies to all network members, partners, employees, contractors, volunteers, and anyone affiliated with the organization, both in-person and in virtual environments.

4. Prevention Measures

- **Code of Conduct:** Everyone associated with the network must commit to a code of conduct that emphasizes respectful interactions and prohibits SEAH.
- **Clear Reporting Mechanisms:** We will provide accessible, confidential, and safe channels for reporting SEAH incidents without fear of reprisal.

5. Reporting and Response

- **Reporting Procedures:** Any member experiencing or witnessing SEAH should report it to the designated WfOH Community Manager.
- **Investigation:** All reported incidents will be promptly, thoroughly, and confidentially investigated by trained staff or external investigators as needed.
- **Protection for Reporters and Victims:** Individuals reporting SEAH in good faith will be protected from retaliation.

6. Disciplinary Actions

Confirmed cases of SEAH will result in disciplinary action, which may include termination of membership, employment, or partnerships, along with potential legal action.

7. Monitoring and Evaluation

Regular reviews of this policy, reporting procedures, and training materials will be conducted to ensure relevance, effectiveness, and alignment with current best practices.

8. Confidentiality

All SEAH reports and investigations will be handled with strict confidentiality, protecting the privacy of all parties involved to the fullest extent possible.

Contact Information: For more information or to report an incident, contact
[info@wfoh.org]

Sexual Harassment Policy for Mentorship Programmes within the Women for One Health Network (WfOH)

At our mentorship programme, we are committed to creating a safe, respectful, and empowering environment for everyone involved, including both mentors and mentees.

Purpose

This policy is all about establishing a zero-tolerance stance on sexual harassment. We want to ensure that every participant can engage freely and confidently, without fear of inappropriate conduct or harm.

Scope

This policy applies to everyone in the mentorship programme: mentors, mentees, and programme administrators. It covers all forms of interaction, whether they happen in person, online, or through written communication.

What is Sexual Harassment?

Sexual harassment can take many forms, including:

- **Verbal Misconduct:** This includes inappropriate comments, jokes, or any conversation of a sexual nature.
- **Non-Verbal Misconduct:** This can involve gestures, sharing explicit materials, or unwanted physical closeness.

- **Physical Misconduct:** Any unwanted touching, advances, or physical interactions contact.
- **Digital Harassment:** Sending inappropriate messages, images, or other materials through electronic communication platforms.

Expectations and Responsibilities

Mentors and Mentees: Keep your relationship professional at all times. Be mindful of your words and actions; avoid anything that could be seen as harassment. Respect each other's boundaries and report any concerns right away.

The WfOH Secretariat: We will facilitate safe communication and interactions. Regular training on preventing sexual harassment will be provided. We'll monitor the mentorship process and offer support if any issues come up.

Reporting Mechanisms

If you encounter or witness any sexual harassment, both mentors and mentees can report it confidentially to the programme's secretariat. We promise to address all reports quickly and fairly. Retaliation against anyone who reports harassment is strictly prohibited.

Investigation Process

1. **Initial Assessment:** We will acknowledge your complaint within 72 hours.
2. **Investigation:** We will conduct a fair and thorough investigation while ensuring confidentiality and due process.
3. **Resolution:** If the complaint is found to be valid, appropriate corrective actions will be taken, which could include suspension or termination from the mentorship programme.

Consequences of Misconduct

Any form of sexual harassment can lead to immediate removal from the mentorship programme. In some cases, further legal action may be necessary.

Annual Review

This policy will be reviewed every year to make sure it stays relevant and effective, incorporating feedback from those involved.

Acknowledgement

Everyone participating in the programme will need to sign an acknowledgment form agreeing to adhere to this policy as part of their mentorship agreement. Together, let's foster a positive and safe mentorship experience for all! @WfOH Mentorship Programme Agreement

References

A. T. Wong & K. Premkumar 2007. An Introduction to Mentoring Principles, Processes and Strategies for Facilitating Mentoring Relationships at a Distance.

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