



Patient Mentor Program Training Guide



APRIL 2019

Section 1: Introduction

What is the American Alliance for Healthy Sleep?

The American Alliance for Healthy Sleep (“AAHS”) is a membership organization for patients with sleep disorders, medical providers, and others interested in sleep topics. The AAHS was launched in 2018 to improve the lives of patients with sleep disorders by partnering patients and providers to engage policymakers and the public to enhance understanding of and care for all sleep disorders, provide support services for patients with sleep disorders, and promote healthy sleep in all populations.

The AAHS accomplishes these goals through various programs and mediums. The AAHS provides educational materials on sleep topics to both members and non-members on general sleep topics, as well as resources addressing issues affecting individuals with specific sleep disorders. Advocacy for sleep patients and sleep issues is a main focus of the AAHS; the AAHS has launched awareness campaigns for sleep disorders and healthy sleep, supported positions and issues that would improve the lives of patients or improve healthy sleep habits for other populations, and partnered with other organizations to increase awareness for sleep issues. Although a newer organization, the AAHS is committed to providing education, advocacy and services for sleep patients.

More information about the AAHS can be found at the AAHS website, www.sleepallies.org.

Why did the AAHS create the AAHS Patient Mentor Program?

One of the main goals of the AAHS is to provide patients with sleep disorders with programs and services that will support them in their everyday lives. For many newly diagnosed patients, it can feel daunting to begin treatment and deal with possible lifestyle changes after diagnosis of a sleep disorder. The AAHS saw the need for a program that would provide newly diagnosed patients with all sleep disorders with mentorship from patients who have been treating their sleep disorder over a long period of time; this will allow long-term patients to provide support and guidance to newly diagnosed patients as new patients learn to live with their sleep disorder.

What is the AAHS Patient Mentor Program?

The AAHS Patient Mentor Program is a peer-to-peer mentorship program that connects patients with sleep disorders who have experience managing their disorder long-term with newly diagnosed patients. Patients seeking extra support while they learn to manage their sleep disorder are able to choose a mentor that they feel has experience that will meet their specific needs; experienced sleep disorder patients will have the opportunity to share their experience and knowledge with others to assist new patients as they learn to manage their disorder.

Section 2: Program Structure and Expectations

General Program Structure

Full program details are available in the [AAHS Patient Mentor Program - Program Guide](#).

Each individual (mentors and mentees) will apply through the [AAHS Patient Mentor Program Application](#). The AAHS will review all applicants and make a determination regarding each individual's participation in the program.

Approved mentors will be included in an online directory of available mentors on the AAHS website. Their profile will include mentor information useful to prospective mentees, including the mentor's sleep disorder, current treatment, state of residence, and gender but will not include any personal identifiable information (i.e. name, contact information, address, etc.).

Approved mentees will have the ability to search the online directory of available mentors and contact the mentor(s) through the AAHS. The AAHS will screen each mentee who wishes to contact a mentor to ensure they are approved to participate in the program and will then forward their information to the desired mentor.

The mentor will decide if they wish to mentor the individual and will notify the AAHS if they accept or deny the mentee's request. If the mentor denies the request, the AAHS will notify the mentee, who can then choose a different mentor.

The mentor/mentee relationship is not monitored by the AAHS and all communications between mentor/mentee are initiated and conducted between the two individuals. The AAHS facilitates the initial communication/relationship between mentor and mentee, but continuance of the relationship is left to the mentor and mentee.

Mentees may participate in the program for two full years, after which the individual will no longer be eligible to participate in the program as a mentee but may continue participation as a program mentor through the mentor application process.

Who are mentors and mentees?

Mentors are patients with sleep disorders who have been diagnosed with their primary sleep disorder and are treating their disorder with an evidence-based treatment for at least two years prior to their participation in the program as a mentor.

Mentors should have knowledge of different treatment options for their specific sleep disorder in order to understand the mentee's particular challenges in relation to their treatment, as well as lifestyle/non-medical management techniques beneficial to managing their sleep disorder in order to be able to relate to their mentee and provide support.

Mentees are patients newly diagnosed with a sleep disorder (within the last two years) that want additional support and feel they would benefit from a mentorship relationship.

Choosing your mentorship partner

Choosing a mentorship partner is one of the most important decisions a mentor or mentee makes. The AAHS Patient Mentor Program allows prospective mentees to choose a mentor from the available list of mentors; the mentor will then decide if they would like to mentor that individual and will accept or deny the mentorship request.

After being approved for participation in the AAHS Patient Mentor Program, mentees should access the Patient Mentor Database on the AAHS website, located at (web address). The mentee can browse each profile and decide on a potential mentor that they would like to work with; the mentee will then email the AAHS with the Mentor ID number of the individual they wish to partner with.

It is extremely important that a mentee chooses a mentor that will be able to assist and support them, which requires previous experience and knowledge of the particular sleep disorder and treatment, strategies to improve everyday life and resources available to assist in living with a particular sleep disorder. The mentee should also choose someone who they believe they will be comfortable talking and working with long-term; mentees should thoroughly review and consider each potential mentor's profile information to determine the best choice to fit the mentee's particular needs.

Once the AAHS has received a mentee communication regarding a chosen mentor, the AAHS will contact the potential mentor regarding the match. The mentor will then have 10 days to decide if they will accept or deny the mentorship match. If accepted, the AAHS will confirm with both parties and provide contact information so that the mentor and mentee may begin their partnership. If the mentor does not accept the match, the AAHS will notify the mentee and allow them to choose a different mentor.

Mentors must be careful to choose a mentee that they believe they can provide valuable assistance and support to, based on the particular sleep disorder, treatment, lifestyle, etc. of the mentee and should not accept a mentorship match if they feel that they do not have the time, knowledge or inclination to work with a certain individual.

Meetings

All meetings are arranged by and between the mentor and mentee. Frequency, schedule, length, agenda, etc. are all set by and between the mentorship pair. Meetings should focus on addressing issues identified by the mentee in relation to management of their sleep disorder and achieving agreed upon goals. See more regarding goal setting in Section 5.

Program Surveys

Mentors and mentees participating in the program will be asked to complete biannual surveys regarding their satisfaction with the AAHS Patient Mentor Program, which will provide the AAHS with valuable feedback to improve the mentor program for the success of all members. The results of the survey will not be shared with the mentorship partner, unless specifically requested by the individual completing the survey in order to address an issue that has arisen during the mentorship period.

Goals of the Program

Each mentorship pair will establish their own goals for their partnership; however, the AAHS Patient Mentor Program has several general goals for which the program was established that each pair should keep in mind when determining individual goals.

Goal 1: Provide an opportunity for patients living with similar sleep disorders to connect on an individual level

Goal 2: Provide the opportunity for newly diagnosed patients to receive support and encouragement from patients who have experience managing similar sleep disorders long-term

Goal 3: Assist newly diagnosed patients to successfully navigate initial treatment and long-term management of their sleep disorder(s)

Section 3: Mentor Roles and Tasks

What is mentoring?

Mentoring is:

- *Providing support and encouragement to a mentee through the sharing of personal experiences and resources that address the needs of the mentee
- *Listening to the mentee's concerns and issues
- *Assisting in setting and meeting realistic goals
- *Promoting and encouraging positive and productive behavior
- *Helping the mentee grow and work through their own issues

Mentoring is **NOT**:

- *Providing medical advice to the mentee
- *Acting as a spokesperson for the mentee with others
- *Solving all the mentee's issues singlehandedly
- *Having all the answers
- *Requiring the mentee to take all advice given or setting mentor driven goals

Important Note: *The mentor relationship does not circumvent or replace the relationship between the mentee and their physician and/or other medical professionals. Mentors MUST NOT provide medical advice to mentees. All mentors within the AAHS Patient Mentor Program are patients with sleep disorders; however, these individuals may also be medical professionals or have professional experience addressing issues of concern brought forth by mentees. If this is the case, the mentor must recognize that they are not the mentee's medical provider and must not provide medical advice as this is the job of the mentee's medical providers. Any questions regarding the diagnosis and treatment of the disorder should be directed to the mentee's medical provider.*

Providing medical advice within the mentorship relationship may result in a mentor's removal from the AAHS Patient Mentor Program.

Who is the ideal mentor?

The ideal mentor is one who:

- *Is willing to share their experiences and knowledge with their mentee. Mentors should remember how they felt and what they experienced when first learning to manage their sleep disorder. The

mentor must be willing to share their struggles, as well as successes, to provide a well-rounded perspective to their mentee.

*Takes the mentorship relationship seriously. The mentor must make time to connect with their mentee and put in effort to compile resources that will assist the mentee in meeting their goals or addressing issues that arise.

*Fosters a balanced relationship. The mentor should provide guidance to the mentee while allowing them to set and meet their own goals. The mentor should provide feedback and helpful resources when needed and encourage the mentee to find solutions that work for them.

*Understands their mentee. The mentor must understand their mentee's life, challenges, and personality to determine the types of strategies and solutions that may address the needs of the mentee.

SECTION 4: THE MENTOR/MENTEE RELATIONSHIP

Ground Rules

Boundaries

During the first initial meetings between the mentor and mentee, the mentorship pair must establish and mutually agree upon boundaries for their relationship (beyond the stipulations described in the section above and the AAHS Patient Mentor Program Guide). This may include but may not be limited to:

- *Determining how the mentorship pair will communicate and appropriate means of communication (i.e. phone, email, social media, etc.)
- *Whether the pair wants to allow communication outside regularly scheduled meetings
- *Determining topics or information which the mentorship pair agrees not to discuss
- *Deciding if advice will be given freely or only when asked for

Trust and Confidentiality

To have a successful mentorship relationship, trust must be established and maintained between the mentor and mentee.

Over the course of the mentorship relationship, the mentorship pair will most likely exchange sensitive information regarding their sleep disorder and general issues or topics related to their life in general, which may contain not only medical information but also other sensitive topics. It is extremely important and expected that mentors and mentees keep any and all shared information confidential.

Mentees must feel comfortable with their mentor and trust that the mentor has their best interest in mind when providing advice and resources. The mentor must be comfortable providing honest feedback and advice to issues that the mentee may bring forth.

The AAHS Patient Mentor Program Participation Agreement requires every participant to agree to the confidentiality of their mentorship partner's information. If a breach of confidentiality occurs, this should be reported to the AAHS as soon as possible.

Relationship Building

Setting Expectations

Establish a clear time frame for the relationship. The mentorship pair should determine their own time frame for their specific relationship, such as one or two years (or open-ended). The AAHS Patient Mentor Program allows patients to participate as mentees in the program for two

years; after this time, the mentorship pair will no longer be a recognized pair within the program. It is the decision of each pair to continue (or discontinue) their relationship beyond the official end of their partnership within the formal program. Each individual will be invited to continue their participation in the program through pairing with new mentees.

Collectively determine the specific purpose and goals of the mentorship relationship. Although the AAHS Patient Mentor Program has specific program goals, the individual goals of each mentor and mentee will be different and specific to their situation. The mentorship pair should share their reasons for participating in the mentorship program with their partner. It is important for each member of the pair to understand the intentions and motivations of their partner to begin building a foundation for the mentorship relationship.

Developing a Rapport

Begin by sharing information that you feel is important for your partner to know as you enter the mentorship. Ask general questions about your mentorship partner's life to learn more about them as a person and as a patient living with a sleep disorder.

Recognize and communicate that the mentoring relationship provides an opportunity for both individuals to learn and grow. Find areas where you can connect shared experiences and areas where you may learn from each other. Each member of the mentor pair must feel comfortable with the other in order to have a functioning, beneficial relationship.

Meetings

Scheduling

In initial conversations, the mentorship pair should determine a long-term schedule that works for both parties but should be flexible to reschedule if needed. It is suggested that the pair minimally meets at least once every quarter (three months).

The mentor should take the lead in logistically setting the meeting (i.e. sending the agenda, confirming meeting time/phone #, etc.).

Expectations

Expectations regarding communications outside of established meeting times should be clearly established at the beginning of the relationship.

Strategies

The mentorship pair should determine a structure/agenda for each meeting that will allow the pair to address any issues or topics of interest but also focus on long-term goals.

The AAHS has developed optional [initial meeting](#) and [general meeting](#) template agendas, which can also be accessed in your member area.

Addressing Challenges

Match Issues

Sometimes a mentorship relationship just doesn't work for a variety of reasons.

How can this challenge be addressed? If this occurs, the mentor or mentee should contact the AAHS, who will facilitate the dissolution of the match. The mentor will then be listed as available for future matches, and the mentee may choose another match.

Inappropriate Behavior

Both mentors and mentees are expected to participate in the program according to the AAHS Patient Mentor Program Guide and participation agreement as well as any established schedule/means of communication established between the mentor and mentee. Inappropriate behavior could include but not be limited to: angry or aggressive communications, harassment, inappropriate physical behavior, or violence.

How can this challenge be addressed? If either individual exhibit behavior contrary to the program, the other member of the mentorship pair should report this behavior to the AAHS, who will intervene by reiterating the rules of the program with the offending party. If the behavior continues, the individual may be removed from the mentorship match and/or the mentorship program entirely. If the behavior warrants, local authorities may need to be alerted.

Dependence

As the relationship matures, the mentee may become emotionally dependent on the mentor over time, or the mentor may come to rely on the mentee as the pair becomes more comfortable with one another. It is important for both parties to remember that the mentorship is meant to support the mentee but that ultimately mentees must make their own decisions and are responsible for their own care. The goal of the program should be for mentees to gain resources and encouragement while beginning management of their sleep disorder so that they are able to successfully manage their disorder independently long-term.

How can this challenge be addressed?

If this seems to become an issue, maintain the strict meeting schedule with limited interaction outside the set meetings; establish an agenda before your meetings to focus on specific goals and tasks so that conversation and activities remain focused on achieving the mentee's identified goals instead of veering onto unrelated topics. If either party becomes uncomfortable with the level of dependence or the strategies for addressing the issue have not resulted in improved behavior, this should be reported to the AAHS.

Time Commitment

The mentorship relationship is a voluntary relationship that both parties have agreed to enter into. As such, each individual is agreeing to the time commitment associated with the meeting schedule

set and activities agreed upon in relation to the mentoring relationship. If a member of the mentorship pair does not attend meetings as set or spend time addressing set tasks outside of meeting times, this can negatively affect the relationship and halt progress.

How can this challenge be addressed?

Set a realistic meeting schedule that works for both individuals in the mentorship pair and provides the level of support the mentee needs. Everyone has commitments and responsibilities outside of the mentoring relationship, so the mentorship pair should take this into account when setting the schedule in order to set realistic meetings that both members can attend regularly.

Unrealistic Expectations

The AAHS Program Guide states the purpose of the AAHS Patient Mentor Program. Mentees should not have unrealistic expectations regarding the support provided by mentors. This support and encouragement should take the form of discussion, sharing of personal experiences and information and resources the mentor has amassed while managing their own sleep disorder. The mentee should not expect the mentor to take action on behalf of the mentee or provide any type of medical advice or direction to the mentee.

How can this challenge be addressed?

Review the AAHS Program Guide to reinforce the purpose of the program. Clearly identify goals of the mentorship and the responsibilities of each individual during your initial meetings to start the relationship with clearly established expectations and goals. Encourage the mentee to take responsibility for any follow-up actions identified during meeting and/or communications.

Bias

Through conversation, a mentor or mentee may recognize that their mentorship partner has a personal bias toward a specific topic that makes it difficult to address an issue from an impartial or neutral perspective.

How can this challenge be addressed?

Sometimes it is best to address a bias head-on so that it doesn't taint an entire conversation or the long-term relationship. The mentor or mentee should address the issue directly with their mentorship partner in a calm manner using examples or specific instances to back up the claim. If the individual persists despite understanding that a bias may be present or if you are not comfortable addressing this with your mentorship partner, this should be reported to the AAHS.

Crisis Intervention

Mentors participating in the AAHS Patient Mentor Program are not mental health professionals and should NOT provide counseling to their mentees. If a crisis situation arises, the mentor should alert the proper authorities (911).

SECTION 5: GOAL SETTING

One of the most important pieces of a successful mentorship relationship is setting goals.

Mentee Goals

One of the main goals of the AAHS Patient Mentorship Program is to assist mentees with meeting their goals in relation to their sleep disorder. Examples of individual goals may include improving treatment adherence, decreasing costs of treatment, or talking with family and friends regarding their disorder. The mentorship pair should spend the first few mentorship sessions formulating goals for the mentorship period.

It is important that mentees drive the goal setting process by initially developing their goals based on what they would like to accomplish so that they have ownership of the goals. The mentor should help the mentee refine their goals and provide resources and expertise to help the mentee meet those goals but should not set separate goals that the mentee has not had input into or consented to. If the mentee wants to focus on a goal that the mentor feels they cannot provide perspective on, this should be clearly communicated; the pair can choose to either remove the goal (with the mentee focusing on this themselves outside the mentorship relationship) or work through the issue together to serve as a learning experience for both individuals.

Ultimately, the mentorship pair should mutually accept the goals upon which they will focus the majority of their mentorship time.

SMART Goals

The mentorship pair should set goals that are realistic and achievable; following a SMART goal structure will help to ensure the mentee is setting valuable goals. SMART goals are those that are specific, measurable, achievable, relevant and timely.

Specific

What does the mentee want to accomplish? Goals should focus on aspects of the mentee's life affected by or associated to their sleep disorder. Goals should be detailed and concise to ensure there is no confusion regarding their meaning.

Measurable

How can you tell when the goal has been met? Goals should be able to be assessed to see if the mentee is making progress and ultimately meeting their goal. There must be some way to measure that the goal has been met.

Achievable

Can you meet this goal? Goals should be difficult or challenging to meet but attainable in the long run. Goals are something to strive for over a period of time, not something that can be addressed in one meeting.

Relevant

Does this goal make sense? Goals should be related to improving the mentee's life through management of their sleep disorder.

Timely

When should this goal be achieved? Goals should have a set timeframe for completion.

Example SMART Goal

The mentee has been diagnosed with Narcolepsy and has found that their treatment is too expensive to afford long-term. They work with their mentor to set a goal to address this issue.

Specific: To bring down the cost of their narcolepsy medication by 50%

Measurable: New cost/Original cost should be equal to or less than 50%

Achievable: Through general review of available resources, the mentorship pair has determined that while the goal will take work, it is achievable.

Relevant: The goal addresses the mentee's financial situation, which has been affected by the narcolepsy diagnosis and treatment.

Timely: The mentee wants to meet their goal within the next 6 months.

Example Goal: To lower the cost of the mentee's narcolepsy medication by 50% within the next 6 months.

Meeting Goals

Once a goal has been set the mentee should work towards achieving those goals with the mentor's assistance. The mentorship pair should work together to determine how the mentee can work to achieve the set goals and map a path to successfully achieving their goal. If applicable, the mentor can provide resources that may assist the mentee in meeting their goals.

Follow the progress of the goals to ensure the mentee stays on task and focused on activities that will help them to achieve their goals. Tracking progress can help to motivate the mentee when they can see how close or far they are from a goal and specific steps that will get them to their end goal. The mentor should provide support and encouragement to the mentee as well as help troubleshoot or problem-solve if needed, but the majority of the work towards meeting the goal should rest with the mentee.

Every goal is different so the strategies, resources and paths to success will be different for every goal and individual.

Example Goal: In the example above, the mentee wants to lower the cost of their medication by 50% in the next 6 months. To accomplish this, the mentee compiles a list of resources they believe may be able to assist in prescription cost assistance, which they provide to their mentor ahead of their scheduled meeting. The mentor reviews the list and at their next meeting discusses the list with the mentee and provides additional resources and points of contact that the patient could look into to help address the goal. The mentorship pair devises a timeline for each step of the process to begin moving the mentee towards meeting the goal; they decide that the mentee will contact each organization on their list, research pharmacy discount programs, and speak to their doctor about their concern by their next meeting. At that next meeting, the pair will review the results of each of those actions to determine next steps.

Addressing Setbacks

Ultimately, there will be setbacks. Mentees and mentors must recognize that failures or setbacks may happen, but they must be addressed in order to move forward. The mentorship pair should review the actions that led to the setback, as well as the associated goal. Determining why the setback occurred will allow the mentorship pair to learn strategies that worked and those that didn't. It can also help the pair to evaluate the mentee's goals to decide if they are still achievable going forward; goals may need to be revised in light of information gained through this experience.

It can be easy to become frustrated if a strategy does not work or a goal is not met; mentees should recognize that some things are out of their control. Mentees should determine how their actions may have contributed to the setback but also recognize what was out of their control; mentors can assist by providing an outside perspective and providing encouragement to move forward.

If possible and needed, the pair can take a break from the specific goal or topic. Mentors can encourage their mentee to take part in activities that will boost their mood or provide an outlet for any frustration the mentee may still be feeling and then come back to the goal at a later time.

Example Goal: In the above example, the mentee is working towards lowering their medication cost. Through their work, the mentee has applied for a medication discount program through their medication's pharmaceutical company, enrolled in a pharmacy prescription program, and found a new pharmacy where they can get their medication at a lower cost. The mentee has just received notification that they do not qualify for the medication discount program; as a result, the mentee has only seen a 30% reduction in their medication cost—instead of their 50% goal.

As a result, the mentee and mentor discuss the steps taken to bring the cost down; the mentor helps the mentee to understand that their ineligibility for the discount program is no fault of the mentee. They retrace the actions the mentee took to bring down the cost of the medication. They find that the mentee never spoke to their physician to see if there was either a lower cost option or a discount/prescription help program through the health system. The mentee recognizes that they could take this additional step to meet their goal.

The mentee speaks to their physician regarding this issue, and the physician discusses other treatment options but ultimately refers them to a prescription program of a regional patient organization that neither mentor or mentee was aware of; through this program, the mentee is able

to further bring their cost to a 40% reduction of their original cost. At their next meeting, the mentor pair discusses the actions again, review the goal and decide that although they did not achieve the 50% goal, that there are no additional actions available to address the goal and decide to consider the goal met and move forward to another goal.

Celebrating Achievements

Working toward goals and addressing issues in a mentee's life can be a lot of work. It is important to celebrate the achievements that come along with all of that hard work.

Because the AAHS Patient Mentor Program is primarily phone/email based, this may limit the ways that a mentorship pair can celebrate achievements together; however, there are ways to acknowledge the mentee has meet a goal or has had some sort of achievement. A simple "Good job" or encouraging remark can go a long way to show the mentee you recognize and are proud of their accomplishment. Mentors can also encourage the mentee to celebrate the achievement on their own, outside of the mentorship meeting.

Review the steps that led to the positive outcome so that you can incorporate the successful strategies into future goals.

SECTION 6: COMMUNICATION SKILLS

To have a successful mentorship relationship, the mentorship pair must be able to effectively communicate. This requires both individuals to employ listening and conversation skills that will foster open, honest and evolving communication that helps to achieve the mentee's goals.

Listening

Throughout the mentorship relationship, the mentor (and mentee) will need to use different listening skills that will foster mutual understanding of issues and solutions.

Active Listening

Active listening is when listeners engage with what another person is saying rather than focusing on their own thoughts/emotions or formulating a response before the individual has finished speaking. This type of listening is good for situations where you are providing advice or solving a conflict and requires the mentor to fully listen and comprehend the mentee's issues before responding, and the mentee to fully listen to the mentor's advice or experience before making a judgement on the advice or moving to the next point in the conversation.

Active listening should lead to shared knowledge; this means that the mentee and mentor develop a shared understanding regarding a topic being discussed through concentrating on the whole of what each individual is saying and taking the time to understand and retain the information before responding. To ensure there is mutual agreement, the listening party should then paraphrase the speaker's point before moving forward.

It is important to have shared understanding especially when identifying goals, problems or issues the pairs chooses to focus on, as well as developing solutions to address those goals or issues; therefore, active listening should be used during initial conversations between the mentee and mentor as they learn more about each other, set goals, and identify issues to focus on throughout the mentorship relationship. This will help to avoid conflict due to misunderstanding in the future.

Active listening works best when both parties speak plainly regarding their position on a topic instead of using ambiguous language; it also requires that each individual ensure there are little to no outside distractions that will shift their focus from the other individual who is speaking.

Tips for Active Listening

- *Find a quiet place with minimal distractions to connect during your meetings.
- *Take notes on main points while your mentorship partner speaks to help you retain the information they give.
- *Take a moment to process the information given and collect your thoughts before responding.

*In your own words, reiterate the main points to your mentorship partner to ensure mutual understanding before offering your next thought.

Empathetic Listening

Empathetic listening is when listeners connect emotionally to a speaker and respond to the emotions or feelings of the speaker. The listener may need to further discern the speaker's feelings on a subject or clarify facts of a situation through their response. This type of listening is good in situations where your mentorship partner has strong feelings (anger, pain, sadness) on a specific topic or issue.

Empathy is the ability to put yourself in another person's place in order to better understand the person's emotions. When appropriate, the mentor should communicate their understanding of an issue, and the feelings associated with that, without judgement. This is especially effective when the mentor has been in a similar situation to the mentee and can draw from personal experience.

Empathetic listening should lead to increased trust and openness between the mentorship pair. It will allow the mentee to feel that the mentor has a greater understanding of the mentee's problems, beyond just the facts of a situation. Mentoring may bring forth a host of issues that trigger varying emotional responses from both individuals in the mentorship pair; each individual should be prepared to be a confidant that your mentorship partner can speak to in a non-judgmental, positive way.

The purpose of empathetic listening is not to offer solutions but to provide your partner with the security to openly discuss their issues and feelings and the trust that you value and understand their feelings and can relate as a person. This can help your mentorship partner to recognize and work through their feelings to eventually move on to look at the situation objectively and find solutions.

Tips for Empathetic Listening

*Actively listen while your mentorship partner speaks; don't interrupt or discount what the person says.

*Acknowledge your partner in an open way that invites continued discussion of the issue.

*Give an encouraging response that conveys your understanding of the situation but offers new information, such as, "I understand how you feel and want you to know that I am a resource for you on this."

Dialogic Listening

Dialogic listening looks at listening as a shared activity that encourages open, creative conversation and dialogue between two people that focuses on the present (instead of addressing past issues or formulating future goals). Essentially, this is a free-flowing conversation where each person is an active participant who isn't focused on actively listening during the entire

conversation. This type of listening is good when you are getting to know each other, focusing on a current issue that benefits from creative problem-solving, or trying to form consensus on an issue.

Dialogic listening should lead to a more open and engaged relationship between the mentor and mentee through a better understanding of each other's thinking patterns, experiences and mutually created and understood meaning.

It is important to have an open, engaged attitude when engaging in dialogic listening as this requires each person to be fully present in the conversation and create a shared understanding through the course of a conversation.

Tips for Dialogic Listening

*Think of dialogic listening as an open conversation with your mentorship partner.

*Recognize that you may not have a solution at the end of the conversation.

*Focus on building your relationship through conversation, instead of reaching a specific goal for the conversation.

Discussion

Beyond listening, mentors and mentees should also develop skills that drive conversation and discussion to further the goals of the mentee, as well as address other concerns.

Paraphrasing

Paraphrasing is important for conversations between the mentor and mentee to be successful. Paraphrasing is the act of restating a person's point in your own words. This allows your partner to know that you have heard and understand their point so that you have a mutually agreed upon understanding to then continue your conversation.

Tips for Paraphrasing

*Paraphrase as a question so that your partner can provide additional clarification or thoughts if needed

*Use some of the same words the individual used, if the meaning is clear; substitute with alternatives that provide additional clarity when needed.

*Paraphrase for informational purposes, not to provide judgment of the statement.

*Use short statements.

Open-Ended Questions

Open-ended questions are questions that do not have a "yes" or "no" answer but rather require the individual to provide a more thoughtful answer; open-ended questions allow the conversation to continue and flow based on responses to questions. These types of questions allow you to have a

more thorough understanding of an individual's thinking on a specific topic and can address the facts of a situation, emotions, perception, and next steps. For example: "How did that make you feel?", "Why is that important to you?", or "Where do we go from here?".

Tips for Open-ended Questions

- *Ask who, what, where, why and how questions.
- *Follow the flow of conversation and ask questions related to your mentorship partner's responses.
- *Have several open-ended questions prepared to drive conversation if needed.
- *Be an active listener and take notes of important details.

Mutual Exchange

Although the general goal of the mentorship program is to provide support to mentees, both mentors and mentees must learn from each other for discussions, and relationships, to be successful. Information and experiences should be exchanged by both the mentor and mentee in order for both individuals to gain from the experience; this also creates a stronger bond between the pair and increases trust within the relationship.

Tips for Mutual Exchange

- *When appropriate during conversation, share personal experiences that correlate to points brought up by your mentorship partner.
- *Ask follow-up questions on topics that resonate to create opportunity for additional information exchange.

Other General Discussion Tips

- *Stay Calm; the conversation will not benefit from abrupt, negative reactions.
- *Don't make assumptions about your mentee/mentor.

Problem Solving

Problem solving involves being able to understand the underlying causes of problems and developing creative solutions to address those causes. Problem solving involves a number of different skills, which the mentorship pair may need to employ to solve the mentee's problems and reach their goals; this includes:

Identification

Problem solving should begin with a conversation between mentor and mentee to define the specific problem the mentee would like to address; problems may consist of several separate issues that the mentorship pair can tackle separately. A helpful exercise may be to write down all facts you have on the issue to establish what you already know and more fully realize and detail the issue.

Creativity

The mentorship pair can brainstorm different tactics that may address an issue without criticism and then review all possibilities before making decisions regarding how to tackle a problem. The pair can use creative means of expression to bring about new ideas or make connections, such as mapping ideas or role playing.

The more ideas the pair is able to generate, the more likely a solution will arise out of the collective ideas that were put forth.

Researching

Many problems require extensive research to find solutions, which will most likely include finding resources that assist patients with specific problems they may be having or literature on different treatment options or other topics. While the internet is a great place to start, there are other avenues that might be helpful, such as local assistance organizations. If you aren't sure where to start or how to research effectively, most public libraries have individuals or departments that will assist patrons with researching topics.

Weighing Risk

Each strategy or decision that you make carries some type of risk; when making decisions, the mentee, with the mentor's assistance, should review all risks associated with any given decision to make an informed decision.

Making a Decision

After the mentee has all pertinent information, a decision must be made. The mentor can assist the mentee by providing feedback and resources and helping the mentee determine the steps needed to put the decision into action.

SECTION 7: CONCLUSIONS

The mentor/mentee relationship is a partnership. If both the mentor and mentee are invested in the mentorship relationship and willing to be open and communicative, the mentorship will most likely succeed. It is important for both members of the pair to be equally engaged in the partnership. Employing the strategies outlined in this guide, in relation to the mentee/mentor relationship and roles, communication, goal setting and problem solving, should assist each pair in cultivating a successful mentorship relationship.

The AAHS Patient Mentor Program is designed so that the mentorship pair has sole responsibility for the pair's schedule, activities and goals, as well as, the long-term success or failure of the mentorship relationship.

At the end of this program, mentees should feel prepared to independently manage their sleep disorder long-term through learned strategies and resources that improve their everyday lives. Mentors will have shared their expertise and experiences and hopefully learned more about themselves and managing their disorder(s) as well.

Contact

If you have any issues or questions during the mentorship period, contact the AAHS at mentor@sleepallies.org or (888) 787-2247 for assistance.