



## MENTORING HEALTH PROFESSIONS STUDENTS: SCHOLAR'S GUIDE

Use this guide to help you engage in the mentoring process and provide structure to the relationship you form with your mentor. This guide will provide numerous suggestions on topics to cover and will give you a place to start.

### At the Outset

When you first meet your mentor, you can get started by collecting some basic information. You may already have information about your mentor, but at a minimum, it may be helpful to be aware of the following information as you begin your mentoring relationship.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Discipline/Specialty: \_\_\_\_\_

Graduate/Health Professional School: \_\_\_\_\_

Year of Graduation: \_\_\_\_\_

Current Employer: \_\_\_\_\_

Professional Affiliations: \_\_\_\_\_

Hobbies/Outside Interests: \_\_\_\_\_

### Session One: Core Questions

At the beginning of your relationship, work with your mentor to identify your expectations for the exchange. Topics you may discuss include:

- Your vision of a mentoring relationship
- The areas in which you feel you might need particular support

You have the power to pilot the most successful mentoring relationship. Learn about your mentor's background and history and be prepared to share your background and interest in serving as a primary care practitioner in a community in need.

Your mentor will also want to know about you and what motivated you to join the NHSC. Be prepared to talk about:

- What experiences impacted your decision to pursue a career in primary care?
- When did you first become aware of health disparities in America, and why did you choose to devote your career to addressing them?
- What do you hope to gain from working in a community with limited access to health care?
- What do you hope to achieve personally and professionally through your NHSC experience?



Once you've learned a bit about your mentor, use this opportunity to discuss your new surroundings and goals for your education. You might want to ask questions about routine things such as the geography of the area and departmental procedures, such as:

- Is there any NHSC-related paperwork that I need to file with the Financial Aid Department?
- What tax forms do I need for deducting my NHSC Scholarship award?
- How does the NHSC keep track of my progress?
- Where can I be assigned? Do I have a role in choosing my assignment?
- What can I expect when I go into a clinical rotation?
- What is the academic review process like?
- What are the unspoken rules of the campus?

You might also want to discuss more substantive topics such as:

- What are the challenges associated with working in a Health Professional Shortage Area (HPSA)?
- How can I make the most of this opportunity so that it benefits my career?
- How can I best contribute to the team of health practitioners working in a HPSA?

### Session Two: Prepare to Work in a Culturally Diverse Community

Your job may be in a community that is very different from anything you have experienced, and your mentor will help prepare you to meet the challenges you face as a result. Use this session to learn about the many facets of your new community and explore how your community service history will influence you when you begin your job.

This is an opportunity for you to learn from your mentor's experience. Here are some questions you can ask your mentor to get the conversation going:

- What can I expect when I start working in an NHSC-approved site?
- In your experience, how do patients expect us to interact with them?
- Have you faced any cultural challenges in your career? How can I learn from your experiences?

Your mentor will also want to know about the experiences you bring to the NHSC and your current assignment. Be prepared to answer questions such as:

- What multicultural experiences have you had in the past? What did you learn from these experiences that will be useful when you begin your job?
- What kind of community do you hope to work in and why?
- Do you know of any primary care trends that may be pertinent to this kind of community? What are your thoughts about these trends? How will your thoughts affect the service you provide?
- Do you have any apprehension about your job?

### Session Three: Career Goals

Although your service commitment with the NHSC may be as short as two years, we hope this experience will launch you into a meaningful career as a health care practitioner, and you will continue to offer primary care to communities in need.

Let your mentor's experience help to guide your career with the NHSC and beyond. In this session you may wish to discuss your career goals with your mentor. Ask yourself these questions before the session—they will help you to think about your goals and ambitions and prepare you for a rich discussion with your mentor.



- What do you hope to learn from your experience with the NHSC?
- How do you plan to prepare yourself for this experience over the next few years?
- What are your long-term career goals? What do you hope to do when you have completed your service commitment?
- How will this experience help you to pursue your career goals and identify future opportunities in primary care, especially in communities with a shortage of health professionals?
- Do you have any apprehension about the job search process?

By the end of the session you should have a sense of the steps you need to take to apply for a job at an NHSC-approved site. You should also have an idea of various ways in which your mentor can guide you through the application process and help you achieve your career goals.

Ask your mentor how you can leverage professional networks to support your learning experiences. Inquire about opportunities to shadow a provider, participate in clinical rotations, and join health professional associations that might provide you with networking opportunities, professional development opportunities, and other resources.



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