

HTRS MEMBER SPOTLIGHT:

“How to Build a Mentorship Team”

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***Presented at the HTRS ConECCTOR Network Meeting on
March 30th, 2021***



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Dr. Raffini presents....

If you think about the people you admire in leadership positions and academic medicine, almost all of them would agree that they didn’t get there without a lot of support, help, and mentoring from others, so building a mentorship team is really a critical component to a successful career.

What is the role mentor(s) play in your career development?

When you begin thinking about building a team, consider that not any one person can fill all these roles for you. For those of us doing research, lab or clinical work, you’re going to need someone to mentor you – especially as you’re making that transition from fellowship to junior

faculty to independent investigator. For those of us doing clinical research, we're also going to need statistical mentors. Certainly it's easiest if your research mentor is at your own site but, as you move on, adding mentors from other sites is more common and also encouraged.

What about the role of a clinical mentor? For those of us who see patients, this is still a crucial part of the team. Usually during your fellowship, your mentor should be the attending who precepts you in clinic. But then as you take faculty positions, particularly at other institutions, you're going to need clinical mentors for those complex patients – mentors you feel comfortable talking to about challenging patients...people whose advice you respect.

When it comes to career mentors, they may take the role as division chiefs – people who are looking out for your career who will give you protected time and money...perhaps in the form of research assistance, an administrative assistant to help with scheduling and paperwork, someone who will make sure you're satisfied in your job and can offer tips on work/life balance. Perhaps if you meet in someone who has something in common with you, who has had similar work/life situations a few years ahead of you, this is a good place to start.

Finally, you're going to need mentors who will give you opportunities for career advancement. Various people can provide different parts of this puzzle.

How do you find good mentors?

Building good relationships with people is key to finding good mentors. It takes time. It's not a one-time conversation with someone. It is fine to reach out to people you don't know, and it is sometimes encouraged if they have expertise in something that's really important to you –or if you just want to ask them about your research idea. People have contacted me, asking if we could meet at ASH or HTRS for coffee between talks to discuss their ideas, and I think that's a great way to start a relationship with someone. It's probably not the best thing to reach out to someone and say "hey, will you be my mentor" without setting the stage and developing a little rapport. If you do meet somebody, it's important to follow up, assess their interests, and really cultivate that relationship.

Truly, it is unlikely that one person will be able to provide all the advice you will need. Some will be really good at the science; others will know more about funding opportunities. Some people at my institution always know which grants are coming due. Find out the strengths of the people around you and really leverage those strengths. With clinical mentoring, you're going to need someone to introduce you to other people.

How is a sponsor different than a mentor?

A mentor coaches you along in your career development; you build this relationship with someone you can trust, who you can be honest with, and it develops over years. On the other hand, a sponsor is someone who is going to introduce you to others and give you opportunities you might not otherwise get; they will help open doors for you.

- *Mentorship: “Have you tried applying to speak at conferences and meetings?”*
- *Sponsorship: “I recommended you for this speaking gig, can you do it?”*

A good mentor is also a sponsor; you don’t always have to have separate people in these roles. I see the sponsorship role as part of the mentorship gig.

A couple things to keep in mind as a mentee:

It’s important to figure out what your own goals are, short and long term. This will help guide the mentor as they try to coach you on career development. Do you want to gain experience in research so you can apply for an NIH grant and get a faculty position, which is a common pathway? Do you want your own lab? Mentoring someone who is on that trajectory is different from someone who is trying to finish their fellowship, get good clinical training, and really wants to get a clinical job. That’s an important mentorship position, too. These goals are different.

You may not always know what your long-term goals are, especially as you make that transition from fellowship to faculty, but it’s important to consider them and have conversations with your mentor.

You have to take the initiative!

If your mentor doesn’t reach out to you to schedule appointments, it doesn’t mean they don’t care. This is about developing a thick skin. Your mentor is busy, so it’s very helpful if you reach out; most of us have a very open-door policy. I may not be the most proactive in scheduling meetings but I am more than happy to meet with anyone who reaches out to me.

If someone you look up doesn’t remember you the second time you meet, don’t take it personally! Introduce yourself again, say where you’re from – that’s one more important step in that relationship.

Take advantage of the amazing resources that exist; HTRS ConECCTOR Network is one of them. In our tight hemostasis and thrombosis community, we are much better poised to meet potential experts in the field than some of our other specialists/colleagues.

Sign up for Trainee Events

Any time there is a trainee event, you may not be that interested in the topic or may have already heard the talk before, but the most valuable part is sitting around a round table for lunch with these faculty members and starting to develop these relationships. That's what's really been missing this during Covid-19; nothing beats face-to-face interaction at any time, but especially after last year.

- *Consider the ASH CRTI Institute; it is great chance to meet amazing faculty. If you go to events like these, you'll see the same people over and over, and you will start to develop relationships*
- *Check out local groups in your own institution that are organized to support fellows and junior faculty; take the opportunity to speak with faculty in the "down" times to find other people at your own institution you may be able to reach out in the future*
- *Ask to meet with invited speakers when they come to your institution; this is a really nice way to meet people you wouldn't otherwise have the chance to meet; you may identify someone with very similar interests to collaborate with or potentially identify someone as a mentor*

Final tips:

Look for a "near peer" mentor, often one to three years ahead of you, who are closer to the little things about contract negotiations and things like salary negotiations that will be coming down the pike for you. How did they get through the grant review process? Which grants did they apply for? We have a lot of fellows and junior faculty here at CHOP on the hemostasis and thrombosis ladder, and they often collaborate with each other in this way. If you don't have of these at your institution, check out the HTRS ConECCTOR Network. These members can recommend which senior mentors are more approachable and willing to provide advice.

For the full video presentation and more info on Dr. Raffini's own mentorship path, [CLICK HERE:](https://vimeo.com/manage/videos/537745347)

For information about the HTRS ConECCTOR Network, Mentor Match Program, and Grant Review Workshops, [CLICK HERE](#)