

Mentorship in Psychoanalytic Training: Support, Guidance and Career Development.

With the aims of fostering candidates' professional growth and affiliation with our Center community, the Mentor Program provides mentors for candidates by means of two faculty positions: *orientation* and *training* mentors. Mentors will support, guide, and facilitate the career development of candidates during their psychoanalytic training. The goal is a mutually meaningful, professional relationship for candidate and mentor.

There are two mentoring opportunities for candidates and faculty, beginning with the *orientation mentor* in the first year and, then, transitioning to a *training mentor* for the duration of candidacy. Orientation mentors are assigned by the Chair, in the fall, since incoming candidates are not familiar with our faculty. At the beginning of the second year, each candidate submits to the Chair a list of possible choices for a training mentor. Since candidate choice of a training mentor is a priority, candidates will also have the option to choose their orientation mentors (if available) to continue on as their training mentors for the remainder of their analytic training. The Chair is always available to discuss candidate-mentor fit and/or a change in mentor if a candidate feels this may be indicated.

Contacts for mentorship pairs include meetings to welcome and orient candidates to the program, to routinely check-in throughout candidacy, and to plan for post-training Center involvement and graduation. The *minimum* contact between mentor and candidate is two in-person meetings a year (one each in fall and spring semesters) and a winter check-in taking the form preferred by the pair (in-person meeting, phone call, Zoom etc.). Some pairs, depending on the focus of their interactions, choose to meet more frequently. Should health precautions due to Covid-19 return, mentorship contacts may be remote (left up to the judgement of the pair).

A mentor may act as an "ombudsperson" providing a bridge to the training system and can also be enlisted as an advocate to intervene on a candidate's behalf. The mentor role is a non-reporting one, meaning that the discussions between mentor and candidate are confidential. The only limitations to this privacy, consistent with that of any supervisory or clinical contact, include the rare occurrence of specific issues regarding safety or ethical standards. Mentors do not directly impact decisions regarding a candidate's advancement through training or their readiness for graduation, enabling them to avoid conflict in providing support or advocacy functions. When questions or issues arise, candidates should feel free to seek out their mentors' counsel and, if felt to be warranted, to initiate their mentor's direct involvement. The Chair is also available to mentor pairs for clarification and support. An important intention of the mentor relationship is the development of a candidate's analytic identity and professionalism. As such, mentors' support and encouragement of candidates' own advocacy in getting their psychoanalytic educational needs met and in their playing an active role in pursuing their own training and networking opportunities are also key.

Beyond the minimum level of communication in the integral phases (outlined above), mentorship is an opportunity for candidates to make more or less use of depending on their interests and needs over the course of candidacy. Once pairings have been established, candidates and mentors will define the nature of their relationships. Candidates comprise a heterogeneous group of busy adult learners and licensed professionals with varied interests and career aspirations who benefit from their analytic training, and by extension their mentorship, in different ways. Some candidates may welcome a supportive "on-going conversation" about issues pertinent to candidacy. Other candidates may engage in discussions of topics or controversies in the field and matters of clinical interest or specific

scholarly pursuits, opting for less in the way of general guidance and support—and others still, may seek some combination of those possibilities.

The Mentor Program is in a continual process of developing career advancement assets. Ongoing communications from the Chair and annual group meetings facilitate mentors staying informed about Center policies and procedures, sharing useful ideas and developing resources. Mentors may be particularly helpful in empowering candidates to seek out educational and career opportunities by sharing their own particular expertise about theory, treatment modalities and clinical populations; by extending their professional networks to candidates for collaboration; by encouraging candidate involvement at the Center; and, by informing candidates about local and national/international events and opportunities.

Feedback from both candidates and mentors will be used, by the Chair, for ongoing evaluation and development of the Mentor Program. The nature and impact of these mentor relationships during candidacy, on both candidates and mentors, is a topic of future research. Mentors, as former candidates and supporters of the value and efficacy of analysis, are in a unique position to enhance a candidates' educational and community experience at the Center. Likewise, candidates may provide welcome inspiration and knowledge to their mentors.

Dr. Jane Halperin
Founding Chair, Mentor Program