



AHLA Leadership & Career Development Program (2026)

Mentoring, Sponsorship, and Championing Emerging Professionals

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What is Mentorship?



Mentorship

- Mentorship: The influence, guidance or direction typically provided in a structured relationship between an experienced individual (mentor) who guides the professional growth of a less experienced person (mentee), and which relies on mutual agreements, defined goals, and a set meeting schedule.

A New Paradigm for Mentorship

- Engaging with multiple colleagues who are knowledgeable in different facets of health law and in different stages of their legal careers to obtain varying perspectives through participation in a myriad of continuous learning activities which engage both mentors and mentees.

Mentorship Opportunities Engaging both Mentors and Mentees

- Reinforce adaptability in a constantly evolving field of law through ‘learning exchanges.’
- Participate in interdisciplinary teams to translate legal and regulatory compliance into practical guidance that clients can use as well as to understand operational realities.

Mentorship Opportunities Engaging both Mentors and Mentees, Con't

- Model ethical decision-making utilizing roundtables where participants bring anonymized dilemmas to demonstrate how to balance business pressures with patient welfare and professional responsibility.
- Emphasize precision in communication by exchanging documents (redacted of client identifying information) with a colleague for review or through 'redline workshops' where one lawyer drafts and another critiques - - then they switch roles.

What is Sponsorship/Championing Emerging Professionals:



Sponsorship/Championing Emerging Professionals?

- Sponsoring and championing emerging professionals involves actively using your influence, network, and resources to accelerate the career trajectory of individuals who are in the first decade of their career or working toward professional licensure.
- Unlike mentorship, which primarily focuses on private advice and career guidance, sponsorship is action-oriented and requires a senior leader to advocate for a junior professional in rooms they cannot yet access.

Examples?

COACHING: What is Coaching?



Coaching

- Collaborative, development-focused relationship where a Coach guides to unlock potential, improve performance, and drive systemic excellence.
- Unlike traditional training, which is often directive and instructional, coaching relies on inquiry, reflection, and accountability.
- Lawyers are trained as analytical thinkers, legal researchers, and risk mitigators but rarely trained in practical business skills (soft skills) required to succeed in a law firm or legal department.
- The historic stigma of a “punitive” coach is no longer remedial.
- Coaching is about moving away from “command and control” and moving toward “partner and empower”.

Core Characteristics of Coaching

- Inquiry Over Instruction - The coach is a trained listener and observer and asks powerful open-ended questions. This helps the lawyer discover their own solutions and build critical thinking skills.
- Strengths-Based Development - Focuses on identifying and leveraging an individual's unique strengths, rather than just fixing performance deficits.

Strength Finder is an excellent tool.

- Dual Focus - balance the personal development of the professional with the strategic goals of the organization.

Why Coaching Matters?

- Combats Burnout and Builds Resilience
- Transitions Lawyers to Leaders
- Fosters a Culture of Psychological Safety

QUESTIONS?



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