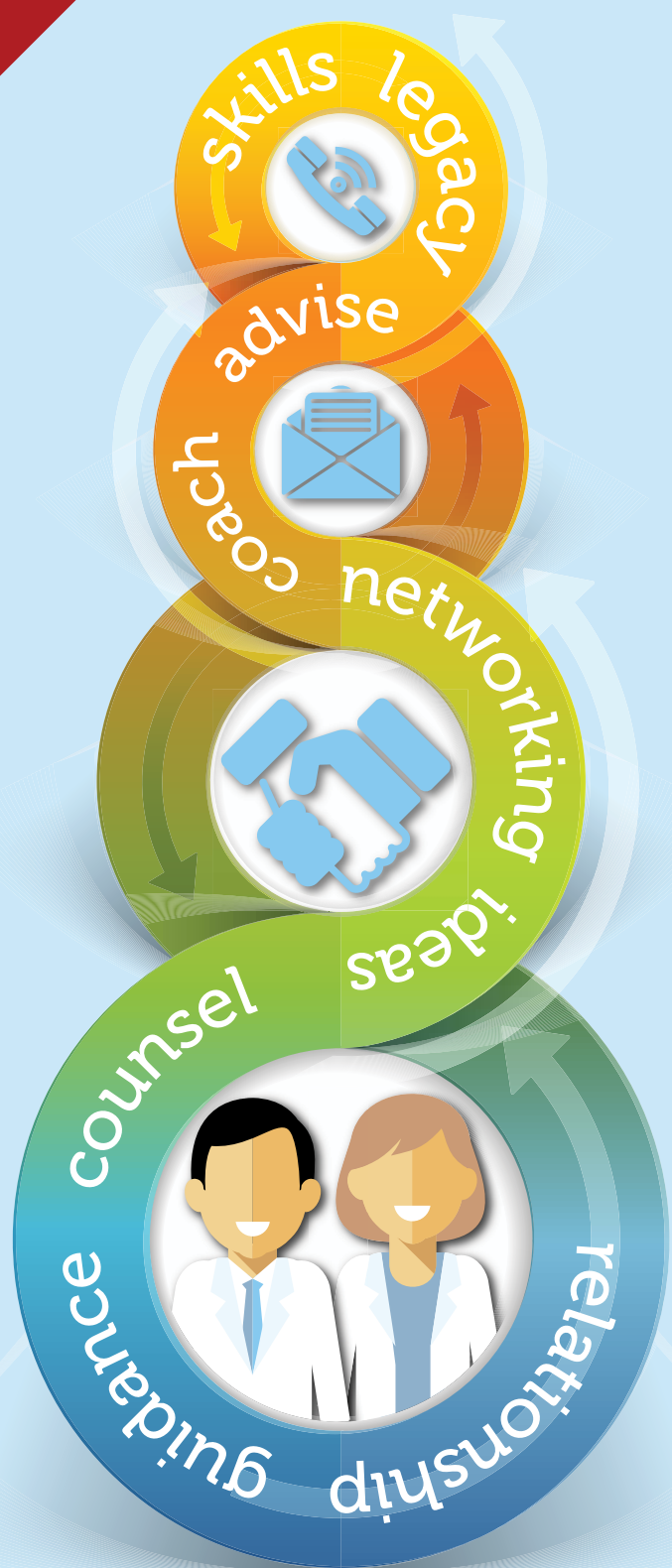




mentorship program

NEW!
NOW RECRUITING
MEMBER DENTISTS
TO MENTOR.



What is the FDA Mentorship Program?

The Florida Dental Association (FDA) Mentorship Program was developed by the FDA Council on the New Dentist as a resource to help dental students gain a practical and professional perspective from established member dentists.

Who Participates?

The mentors are FDA member dentists who volunteer their time and experience to provide professional guidance to dental students. All member dentists are encouraged to participate as mentors. A select number of dental students (depending on the number of mentors available) from each Florida dental school (LECOM, Nova and UFCD) will be able to participate as mentees.

What Does It Involve?

The online mentoring program has been designed with the needs of the student and busy dentist in mind.

Connecting is easy:

1. Member dentists can volunteer by completing a quick and easy online form at floridadental.org/mentors.
2. The mentee will select a mentor from the bios available floridadental.org.
3. The mentee will contact the mentor directly via email.
4. The mentor will contact the FDA Director of Member Relations, Kerry Gomez-Rios, to inform the FDA that he/she has accepted a mentee.

If at any time a change in the mentor/mentee relationship is needed, please contact Kerry Gomez-Rios at membership@floridadental.org.

Questions?

For more information, contact Kerry Gomez-Rios at membership@floridadental.org.

Be a Part of FDA's New Mentorship Program

By Dr. C.J. Henley



This month, the Florida Dental Association is rolling out an ambitious new mentorship program. The program's goal is to help dental students and

new dentists gain practical and professional exposure to dentistry through experienced member dentists. In order for it to be successful, it will require the participation of experienced dentists who are willing to donate their time and expertise.

Because the landscape of our health care system is changing at a rapid pace, it is imperative that experienced dentists help foster a generation of clinicians who will not only protect our future and prosperity, but also help provide our communities with the best that dentistry has to offer.

Sharing advice, experience and skills with a young protégé can provide great personal satisfaction. However, mentoring is much more than that. The relationship offers other tangible benefits for mentors who are willing to contribute to the development of the next generation of dentists.

Mentoring can:

- enhance your own professional growth.
- inspire new ideas. By stepping out of your normal circle of referrals and friends, you may find new inspiration.

- challenge you to stay abreast of the latest technology. Younger dentists who have had exposure to newer techniques and technology may be the catalyst you need to incorporate new technology into your practice.

- provide insight to your own actions. In our private offices, most of us do not question our own rationale for our actions and treatment decisions on a regular basis. The question, "Why?" from a protégé can promote the opportunity for internal reflection and thought.

- increase the mentor's sense of self-worth.
- foster a sense of community and collaboration.

- develop personal leadership.

- leave a legacy.

- invigorate passion in our careers.

Mentors are less likely to "burn out" or plateau when compared to colleagues who are not mentors.¹

A study conducted in 2010 asked current mentors what they perceived as the benefits of being a mentor. The majority of respondents stated that being a mentor led to an increased interest in their career and increased reflections regarding their own values and work practices.²

So much more goes in to practicing dentistry than simply practicing dentistry. Managing a staff, marketing your practice, navigating insurance plans, finding work-life balance and accepting complications are all a part of what we do on a daily basis. Most of these lessons were never taught in dental school, but I think we would all agree they are critical to the success of our practices.

One aspect of dentistry that I find most challenging is the ability to understand that complications are part of what we do. As dentists, we are perfectionists. We want to provide an ideal, functional and aesthetic result on every patient every time. But, we are human, and part of being human is learning to cope with failures. A mentor of mine in dental school, Dr. Jim Green, always reminded me, "If you are not having complications, then you are not doing enough cases." As dentists, we should always strive for perfection but accept excellence. It takes experience to understand that failures can and will happen in one's career. A great mentor can help a new dentist both understand and accept this truth.

Philosophically, being a mentor is an altruistic endeavor. It takes an investment of time and emotion. Being a mentor could provide you with a new and exciting challenge in nearly any stage in your career. Your legacy in dentistry just might be helping a new dentist start their profession. In summary, if you still need a reason to be a mentor, you'll find it the moment you start.

Dr. Henley is a general dentist in Jacksonville and can be reached at DrHenley@HenleyandKelly.com.

Endnotes

1. Bozionelos N. Mentoring provided: relation to mentor's career success, personality, and mentoring received. *J Vocat Behav.* 2004; 64:24-46.
2. Ramani S, Gruppen L, Kachur EK. Twelve tips for developing effective mentors. *Med Teach.* 2006; 28:404-8.