Most professionals have a common understanding of the term "mentor" when it is used in thank-you notes, interviews, networking events or business meetings. The precise definition of mentoring, however, varies depending on the situation and to whom one is speaking. In researching this issue, I found two distinct definitions of mentoring. On the one hand, mentoring is a relationship between a senior person and a junior person to provide advice, emotional support or other assistance to achieve career advancement for the novice as well as the leader. The other definition suggests that actions leaders take to support the long-term growth of their direct reports falls under the auspices of mentoring.

While both definitions describe the intricate relationship between a mentor and a protégé, the first description focuses on the intentional decision to enter a mentoring relationship with another individual. As someone who has served as both a mentor and a protégé, I have found that participating in a "deliberate" relationship brings more benefit to the involved parties. My mentoring experiences (as a mentor and as a protégé) have provided me opportunities to work closely with other individuals, enhancing our personal and professional goals. These relationships accomplished different goals and crossed boundaries in terms of career phase, gender and ethnicity. But the success of my experience has led me to encourage others to embark on similar relationships. I have found that skill building in the areas of servant-leadership and emotional intelligence is the ultimate reward as well as a powerful motivator for previous protégés to become future mentors.

### The Benefits of a Mentoring Relationship

Mentoring relationships can take on many forms. They may be informal or formal; one-on-one or multiple; or internal or external to the organization. No matter what form a relationship may take, most know when a mentoring relationship has been of optimal or marginal value. Both professional and personal development must occur to make mentoring relationships beneficial.

One might assume that the primary beneficiary of a mentoring relationship is the protégé. However, it has been my experience that both the mentor and the protégé receive value from the relationship. A protégé may obtain assistance professionally as well as personally. Professional topics include career development and advancement, discipline or competency-related transfer of knowledge, and professional development such as leadership development or organizational development. Personal topics include work/life balance, professional presence and issues related to gender or race.

I believe the role of giving back to the profession and investing in the next generation not only "raises the performance bar of the profession" but also develops and retains talent in the organization and profession.

Sharing of wisdom and transfer of knowledge from mentor to protégé sharpens a mentor's servant-leadership skills. In the same way that teaching a specific topic takes learning to a new level and makes one even more knowledgeable, mentoring takes learning to a new level and makes one even more knowledgeable in the areas of servant-leadership. While a seasoned executive may already have strong executive leadership skills, the sharing of wisdom and transfer...
of knowledge promotes collaboration, trust and insight. As professional and personal discussions occur, listening skills are refined and the ethical use of power and empowerment become better understood.

To be an effective role model to others, I believe that a mentor is obligated to look more critically at oneself from every angle, including emotional intelligence. Confirmed as a distinguished feature of outstanding leaders and strong performers, emotional intelligence contains the components of self-awareness, self-regulation, motivation, empathy and social skills. A mentoring relationship provides an exceptional opportunity for leaders to examine and understand their own sensitivities, emotions and aspirations as well as their influence on others. By avoiding premature judgment, reflecting on career development decisions, finding common ground and building rapport, mentors often will find they benefit as much if not more than their protégés. Furthermore, "passing the mentoring torch" is perhaps the ultimate standard of emotional intelligence as an indicator of one's commitment to the field of healthcare management.

ACHE's Leadership Mentoring Network
The American College of Healthcare Executives (ACHE) advocates that members lead through example and mentoring. The organization created the Leadership Mentoring Network to expand opportunities for learning and development for experienced healthcare executives seeking growth as leaders and professionals.

Prospective protégés are matched to mentors based on:

- The two types of organizations they would most like to work in next

Tools To Make The Most Out Of Your Mentoring Relationship

ACHE values mentoring as an important developmental approach that brings about professional growth when conducted with thoughtful, consistent effort. Therefore, ACHE introduces a new tool to help develop these relationships.

The ACHE Leadership Mentoring Network supports mentoring by bringing two geographically separated partners together for the purpose of strong developmental returns with relatively modest investments of time. The network was created to expand opportunities for learning and development exclusively for ACHE affiliates. It is designed for experienced healthcare executives seeking growth as leaders and professionals.

Blueprint of a Mentoring Partnership Lifecycle
To aid in building an effective mentoring partnership, ACHE created a blueprint of a mentoring partnership lifecycle. These phases, which should be experienced within a relatively compressed time-frame, follow the evolving relationship's stage of development, and each has a purpose and timetable. The five sequential phases are:

1. Conception and prototype building
2. Working model
3. Tried and true
4. Peak performance
5. Phase out/New destination

After examining the overall blueprint of a mentoring partnership lifecycle, each phase discusses:

- How the phase fits into the overall lifecycle
- Themes to consider and outcomes to seek for meetings during the phase
- Suggested ranges of time involved for the phase
- Suggested checklists of events and agenda items to cover during the phase. (Checklist items are designated as mentor responsibilities, protégé responsibilities or shared responsibilities.)

You can find this new information at [ACHE.org](http://ACHE.org) in the Career Services area in the Affiliates Only section.
The Importance of Mentoring
As Richard D. Cordova, president and CEO of Children’s Hospital in Los Angeles, says, “It takes commitment and a willingness to be open and candid about yourself and your career experiences—and to provide honest feedback to those you mentor. Mentoring, coaching and role modeling are all absolutely vital activities in the growth and development of individuals. But it is also critical to the collective we know as ‘healthcare,’ one of the most difficult-to-manage industries.” That being said, Cordova believes all executive leaders need to mentor/coach all of their direct reports. “It’s our job,” he says. “It’s our responsibility. And, it makes good business sense.”

Mary Katherine Krause, FACHE, is associate vice president for Rush University Medical Affairs at Rush University Medical Center, Chicago. She can be reached at Mary_K_Krause@rush.edu. Ms. Krause is grateful to Dara Web and Paul B. Hofmann, DrPH, FACHE, for their participation in the mentoring process and contribution to this article.

EPMG Understands Emergency Departments

Your ED has challenges.
Overcrowding...
Physician Satisfaction....
Throughput Time...
Patient Satisfaction...

EPMG has solutions.
EPMG is a physician practice management company dedicated to patient care and the needs of your hospital and community.

To learn more call 800-466-3764 or visit www.epmgpc.com.
Copyright of Healthcare Executive is the property of American College of Healthcare Executives and its content may not be copied or emailed to multiple sites or posted to a listserv without the copyright holder's express written permission. However, users may print, download, or email articles for individual use.