

An Update on the EHPS Ari Haukkala Mentoring Programme

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Mentoring is increasingly recognised as an essential element of professional and personal development in many contexts where health psychologists work. Broadly speaking, it refers to a socially supportive process with a professional colleague that facilitates such development. Many academics and practitioners have limited access to high quality mentoring relationships because of the inconsistent, informal, and often ad-hoc nature of mentorship. The Ari Haukkala Mentoring Programme is an initiative of the EHPS which aims to support the professional and personal development of members by formally establishing professional connections across career stages. Such an international mentoring programme within the EHPS was first proposed by Wendy Hardeman, Jan

Keller, Anne van Dongen, and Milou Fredrix in 2021, and was supported by the EHPS Executive Committee.

A “Task & Finish” group was formed to develop the mentoring programme and to evaluate a pilot version. This pilot programme was launched in December 2022, when EHPS members were invited to sign-up as a mentor or mentee, or both. The programme is underpinned by a developmental style of mentoring, in which the mentor supports the mentee to find solutions to challenges they are encountering, as opposed to providing solutions or opportunities directly. The style encourages mutual learning and understanding, rather than upholding a hierarchical system (Iversen, Eady & Wessely, 2014). To ensure mentors and mentees feel confident in this approach to mentoring, a virtual training session was offered. This provided guidance on the developmental mentoring style and opportunities to practice communicating within this approach.

How were mentors and mentees matched?

Those signing up as a mentor were asked to highlight their reason(s) for doing so and the specific areas in which they could provide mentoring. Those signing up as a mentee were asked to outline what they hoped to attain from the programme, their motivation for taking part, and the skills, qualities and experience they sought in a mentor. This information, together with a biography from each individual, was carefully considered by members of the Task & Finish

Matching Sub-group when matching mentees with a mentor. The thorough matching process took account of several factors to maximise the suitability of the pairings, striving to link the knowledge and expertise of the mentor with the specific needs of the mentee. With an initial goal of establishing ten mentor-mentee pairs, the recruitment and matching phases were considered a success by the Task & Finish group, with sixteen pairs currently taking part in the pilot programme.

How is the pilot programme being evaluated?

To ensure any future iterations of the mentoring programme are directly informed by EHPS members, the pilot includes an integral evaluation element. Participation involves a series of surveys during the first year of mentoring and a focus group discussion at the end of the first year. A full report will be generated at the conclusion of data collection. Ethical approval for the evaluation study was received from the University of Sheffield Research Ethics Committee (Ref: 047473).

What have we learned from the evaluation so far?

Preliminary insights from the data collected to date are included in the remaining sections of this update. Of the 14 mentors and 16 mentees in the pilot, a total of 13 people agreed to take part in the evaluation study and completed one or both of the surveys shared to date. Participants live in Ireland, Germany, the UK and the Netherlands and include professors, lecturers, and research staff (note, this detail represents those who completed the first survey in the evaluation, which is a subset of those taking part in the mentoring programme). The majority of participants responded positively

to the survey items about the developmental mentoring training session, with responses summarised in Figure 1 below. Qualitative feedback from participants highlighted that the interactive nature of the training was appreciated, and that the session helped to clarify roles. Suggestions for improvements in the future included hosting separate tailored training events for mentors and mentees, increasing the numbers attending for greater diversity of experience, and offering further applied guidance on putting the learning into practice during mentoring sessions.

Following one month of mentoring, nine participants reported their experiences to date. All had completed their first mentoring meeting, with plans for future meetings ranging from monthly to quarterly. Responses to questions about the mentoring experience were overwhelmingly positive, summarised in Figure 2. Additional feedback from mentors suggested that mentoring provided an opportunity to give back, reflect, network, listen, and provide objective support, while feedback from mentees indicated that mentoring offered new perspectives, accountability, new research capacities, and a feeling of being supported.

What are the next steps for the evaluation and for the mentoring programme?

As mentioned earlier, the mentors and mentees who consented to take part in the evaluation will be invited to participate in a focus group discussion after one year of mentoring. The discussion will ask participants to reflect on the mentoring programme, including their motivation for signing up, their ideas about the programme, their experiences engaging with the programme throughout the first year, and their perspectives on the future implementation of the programme.

Figure 1
Summary of responses to post-training survey (n=8)

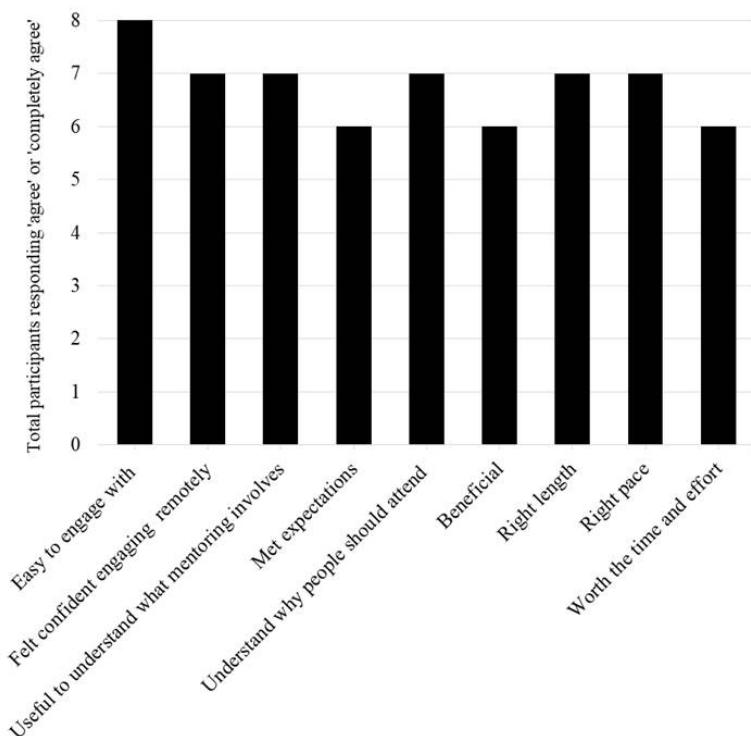
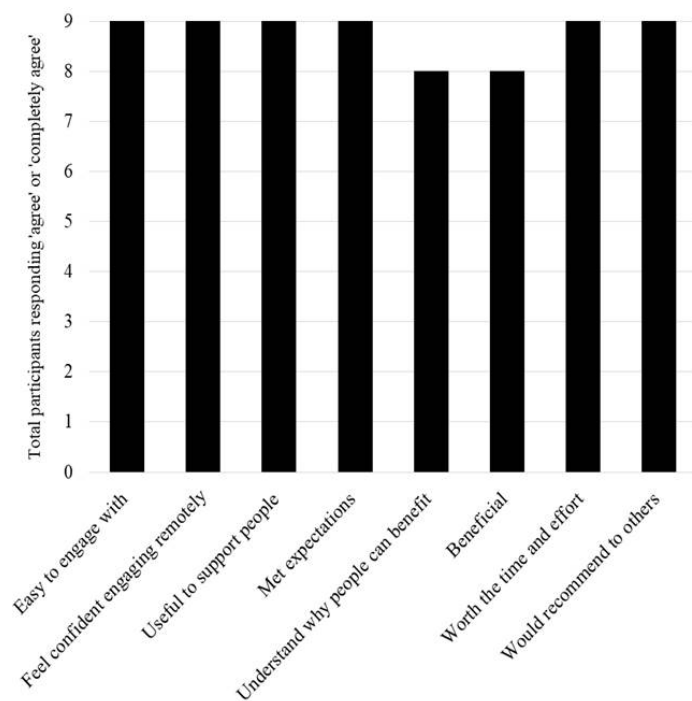


Figure 2
Summary of responses to one-month survey (n=9)



How can you get involved?

All participants agreed that they would recommend the mentoring programme to others. Given this, discussions are ongoing about how to turn the pilot Ari Haukkala mentoring scheme into an integral part of EHPS routine practice. It is likely that it will become a sub-committee of the EHPS, with rolling recruitment. Evidence from the pilot will inform the continuous development and refinement of the EHPS Ari Haukkala Mentoring Programme, in order to deliver an initiative that is of most value to the EHPS community. Updates will be shared on usual EHPS communication channels when recruitment opens.

To stay up-to-date on the EHPS Ari Haukkala Mentoring Programme, you can visit the website <https://ehps.net/mentoring/> and keep an eye on the EHPS newsletter and twitter channel @EHPSociety.

References

Iversen, A. C., Eady, N. A., & Wessely, S. C. (2014). The role of mentoring in academic career progression: a cross-sectional survey of the Academy of Medical Sciences mentoring scheme. *Journal of the Royal Society of Medicine*, 107(8), 308-317. 10.1177/0141076814530685



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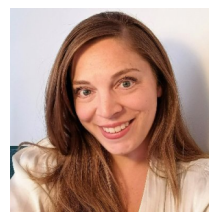
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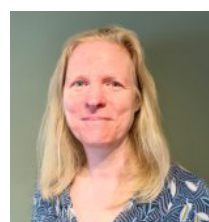
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