

## CRE Mentoring Program

### Aim of this paper

The aim of this paper is to describe the Safer Families CRE mentoring program for its Community of Scholars.

### Aim of CRE Mentoring Program

The CRE mentoring program aims to provide opportunities to support and mentor early to mid-career researchers in the development and advancement of their careers, and as leaders in research.

### Community of Scholars

The CRE's **Community of Scholars** network aims to facilitate the exchange of knowledge, experience and ideas to support career development and promote leadership in research. It also helps build collaborative networks across projects and streams of activity.

Self-run by the scholars, the Community aim to meet face-to-face in structured meetings 4-5 times a year. With a primary purpose of facilitating peer support and discussion, the Community of Scholar meetings focus on a common area of research process or application via a guest speaker or presentation, followed by open discussion.

A **Scholar Leadership group** comprising 3-4 scholars manages the network's communication and administration.

A **Mentoring Committee** comprising 2-3 investigators act as **Scholar Champions** and provide leadership and support to the Leadership group and broader network.

The Community of Scholars is open to all **Program** and **Associate Scholars** of the Safer Families CRE.

- **Program scholars** - those originally named on the CRE or any new scholars appointed to a paid position as either a Higher Degree Research student or a Postdoctoral scholar.
- **Associate scholars** - those participating in research associated with CRE projects, goals and aims and who wish to engage with the CRE for collaboration and networking.

### Peer mentoring

The Community of Scholar meetings facilitate the opportunity for **peer mentoring**. Dedicated time at each meeting for scholars to share experiences and learnings from the field helps promote a safe place for exchange of ideas and build a capacity for shared learning.

It is acknowledged that peer mentoring will also occur informally across the CRE collaborative networks, projects and streams of activity.

### International scholar exchanges

The CRE encourages international scholarly exchange with travel support for short-term secondments with leading international research groups in the UK, Canada, Switzerland (WHO) and New Zealand. New international collaborations will also result from the CRE activity.

### Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander mentoring

Formal and informal mentoring and support for Aboriginal scholars and strategies to ensure cultural safety in academic, health service and community settings will be guided by the CRE Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Reference Group, and incorporated within the CRE Mentoring Program.

### Mentoring offered to Program Scholars

Individual mentoring based on the dyad model is offered by the CRE to program scholars to help them navigate a path within their research focus. Interested Mentors and Mentees are matched and regularly meet one on one for an agreed term.

### Process for matching mentors with mentees

1. CRE operational group identifies those CRE investigators who indicate interest and availability for taking on a mentor role in the CRE.
2. Program scholars who opt to be mentored are assigned one mentor from the above list through the CRE's allocation process.
3. The allocation process is facilitated via a **Mentee request form**. This form is designed to seek the goals and preferences of scholars as mentees.
4. The mentee request forms are submitted to and reviewed by the CRE Mentoring Committee who match each mentee to a mentor, before sending it to the CRE operational group for approval.
5. Each proposed allocation is communicated to and discussed with both the mentor and mentee individually before confirmation of matches are made, to check each party agrees.
6. A 'meet and greet' is then be set up for the mentor and mentee to discuss and clarify goals and expectations.
7. It is recommended that each mentee develop a **Mentoring action plan** based on the mentee's short and long term goals, that can be monitored, modified and reviewed by both mentor and mentee on a regular basis.

### Mentor-Mentee commitment

The CRE mentor - mentee relationship is offered for a 9-month period initially. An option is then offered to review needs and goals, and subsequently have a different mentor allocated when goals have been achieved and/or the research focus needs to shift.

The frequency of contact is decided upon by the mentor and mentee, but as a guide, monthly contact is recommended.

### Mentor role

The mentor is a Chief or Associate Investigator on the CRE team who has identified themselves as available for one on one mentoring.

The role of the mentor is to foster the mentee in their pursuit of training opportunities and career aspirations.

Mentors will also occasionally meet and communicate as a broader group to drive the mentoring program, support each other and resolve common issues and concerns.

Mentors are most effective when they are:

- Committed to helping those earlier in their career to develop their potential and skills
- An effective listener
- Willing to share their knowledge

- Patient and encouraging
- Able to encourage reflection through 'appreciative enquiry'
- Able to support mentee's goal setting/actions to achieve goals
- Able to provide the mentee with contacts
- Able to provide feedback in a way that challenges and supports development

### Mentee

The mentee is a Program Scholar who is interested in engaging with a CRE investigator to assist them with navigating a path within a research focus. Mentees achieve more when they are:

- Interested in developing their careers
- Able to take responsibility for their own development
- Open to receiving feedback
- Willing to accept challenges
- Positive about change and growth
- Able to set goals and work towards them
- Committed to working through on-the-job issues
- Hungry for greater knowledge

### CRE Mentoring Resources

**Mentee request form**

**Mentoring action plan**

**Tips for mentoring meetings**