

Ethics & Confidentiality in Mentoring



Mentorship in aesthetic plastic surgery requires trust, professionalism, and ethical responsibility. This guide outlines key ethical principles and confidentiality guidelines to ensure a respectful, professional, and productive mentoring relationship.

ETHICAL RESPONSIBILITIES IN MENTORSHIP

For Mentors:

- Professional Integrity
 - Serve as a role model by upholding ethical standards in surgery, research, and patient care.
- Commitment to Mentee Development
 - Prioritize the mentee's growth, avoiding conflicts of interest.
- Respect & Fair Treatment
 - Treat all mentees with equal respect, regardless of gender, nationality, or professional background.

For Mentees:

- Respect Mentor's Time & Expertise
 - Value the mentor's guidance and maintain professionalism.
- Honesty & Transparency
 - Be upfront about challenges, goals, and professional limitations.
- Commitment to Ethical Practice
 - Apply ethical standards in training and future surgical practice.

CONFIDENTIALITY IN MENTORSHIP

Confidentiality is essential in building trust. Mentors and mentees are encouraged to have open, honest discussions about various professional and personal topics, but they must also ensure that all shared information remains private, unless both parties explicitly agree otherwise.

Confidential Topics Include:

- Personal experiences, challenges, or career struggles
 - These discussions should take place in a trusted, private space.

- Professional insights, research findings, or unpublished work
 - If sharing unpublished research or insights, both parties should clarify expectations on confidentiality.
- Patient cases or surgical experiences
 - When discussing cases for educational purposes, patient details should be fully anonymized, unless clinical observation is part of the mentorship.
 - If the mentor-mentee relationship involves clinical training, or direct patient interaction, confidentiality must follow local regulations and institutional policies of the relevant clinic/hospital.
 - Any case discussions outside the clinic must be anonymized unless explicit patient consent is obtained.
- Discussions about career progression, training, or work environments
 - These conversations should remain private and not be disclosed outside the mentorship relationship, unless agreed upon.


“Upholding ethics and confidentiality in a mentor program is essential to build trust, ensure psychological safety, and promote meaningful professional development.”

Best Practices for Maintaining Confidentiality:


- Clarify Boundaries Early
 - Agree on what information stays private.
- Follow Institutional & Legal Guidelines
 - Ensure compliance with hospital, clinic, and national regulations
- Avoid Discussing Sensitive Topics in Public Spaces
 - Ensure all conversations remain private and secure.
- Use Discretion in Digital Communication
 - Be mindful when sharing messages, emails, or recorded discussions.
- Report Ethical Concerns Properly
 - If a serious ethical issue arises, report to ISAPS at residentsandfellows@isaps.org

COMMON ETHICAL CHALLENGES AND SOLUTIONS


Scenario 1: Mentee Seeks Career Opportunities from the Mentor

-  Solution: Mentors should offer guidance and recommendations but avoid favouritism or conflicts of interest.

Scenario 2: Mentor Shares Patient Cases as Learning Examples

-  Solution: All cases must be anonymized to protect patient confidentiality, following ethical guidelines.

Scenario 3: Mentor and Mentee Have a Personal Friendship

-  Solution: Keep professional boundaries clear to maintain the integrity of the mentoring relationship.
- Commitment to Mentee Development
 - Prioritize the mentee's growth, avoiding conflicts of interest.
- Respect & Fair Treatment
 - Treat all mentees with equal respect, regardless of gender, nationality, or professional background.

ADDRESSING ETHICAL CONCERNS

If an ethical issue arises, mentees and mentors should:

- Address the concern directly and professionally.
- Seek guidance from ISAPS if needed.
- Maintain transparency while upholding confidentiality.

FINAL THOUGHTS

By following ethical principles and confidentiality guidelines, mentors and mentees contribute to a strong, professional ISAPS mentoring community.



Reminder: Mentors and mentees should regularly revisit these ethical and confidentiality principles to maintain trust and professionalism throughout the program.