

# Understanding Different Mentoring Styles

Insights into mentoring approaches to suit diverse needs and preferences

---





# ISAPS® Mentor Program

Mentorship is not “one size fits all.” This resource helps ISAPS mentors and mentees explore **different styles of mentoring**, so they can tailor their approach to suit their goals, personalities, and learning preferences. While the ISAPS Mentor Program currently supports specific formats, we also encourage members to make the most of informal and peer learning opportunities.

## WHY MENTORING STYLE MATTERS

- Improves alignment between mentor and mentee
- Enhances engagement and comfort in the relationship
- Ensures that mentoring is flexible and dynamic

## COMMON MENTORING STYLES:

| Style                        | Description  | Best For                                       | ISAPS Program Status  | Example in Plastic Surgery  |
|------------------------------|--|--|---|---|
| <b>Traditional Mentoring</b> | One experienced surgeon guides a less-experienced colleague                | Early-career mentees, structured relationships | Available via ISAPS Mentor Program  | A senior ISAPS surgeon coaches a resident on aesthetic practice setup           |
| <b>Group Mentoring</b>       | One mentor works with several mentees at once                              | Shared learning environments, webinars         | Coming soon via ISAPS Mentor Program  | A mentor leads case review sessions with 3 mentees across different countries   |
| <b>Peer Mentoring</b>        | Two colleagues at a similar level support each other’s development         | Recently qualified surgeons or fellows         | Not currently formally part of the ISAPS Mentor Program. Possible informally via ISAPS Members Directory  | Two mentees meet monthly to review techniques, challenges, and literature       |
| <b>Reverse Mentoring</b>     | A junior mentee mentors a senior on new topics (e.g., technology, culture) | Digital tools, social media, generational gaps | Not currently a standalone model in ISAPS Mentor Program. Can be integrated into traditional mentorships. | A mentee teaches their mentor how to use Instagram to communicate with patients |

## CHOOSING A MENTORING STYLE

- When participating in the ISAPS Mentor Program, you will be matched with a traditional 1:1 relationship. Beyond that, you can build informal connections through:
  - Collaborative learning with peers
  - Exploring reverse mentoring within your existing mentorship
  - Networking via the ISAPS Member Directory to connect with others

### Ask yourself:

- What are my mentorship goals?
  - Are they clinical? Professional? Personal growth?
- What are my learning preferences?
  - Do I thrive with structure and formality, or prefer a more conversational, flexible approach?
- How much time can I realistically commit?
  - Would shorter, group-style interactions fit better with my current schedule?
- Would I benefit more from an in-depth 1:1 relationship, or a broader group setting?
- Am I open to both learning and teaching (e.g., technology or cross-cultural insight)?
  - Could I contribute insights in areas like digital tools, communication, or cross-cultural practice?
- Could I benefit from peer connections alongside my mentor relationship?
  - Have I explored connections and opportunities through the ISAPS Member Directory?

## TIPS FOR ADAPTING MENTORING STYLE

- **Mix and match styles** – Combine approaches over time
- **Review what's working** – Use check-ins to adjust mentoring method
- **Involve others** – Invite guest mentors or peers to add dimension
- **Stay open** – Reverse mentoring moments can emerge organically

**ACTIVITIES TO EXPLORE MENTORING STYLES:**

| <b>Activity</b>  | <b>Purpose</b>   | <b>Who Leads</b> |
|--|--|------------------|
| Mentoring Style Discussion – Mentee and mentor share experiences with different formats and agree on a style               | Build shared expectations                                    | Both             |
| Peer Collaboration – Mentees connect with another mentee via ISAPS Member Directory for shared learning                    | Expand support and shared learning. Encourages peer support. | Mentee           |
| Reverse Mentoring Moment– Mentee leads a short teaching session on a modern topic (e.g., AI in surgery, digital platforms) | Builds mutual respect, confidence and knowledge-sharing.     | Mentee           |

**FINAL THOUGHTS**

There’s no single “correct” mentoring style - only what works for each relationship. Stay open, adapt often, and create the structure that fits your mentorship. As the ISAPS Mentor Program evolves, we’re excited to explore new mentoring formats – but even now, you can take advantage of the full global ISAPS network to build supportive, inspiring, and lasting professional relationships.