

CASE STUDY

for health care providers world-wide

How HIAE Used Mentorship to Retain Early-Tenure Physicians

Mentoring physicians to drive early success

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Overview

The challenge

Newly graduated physicians were eager to work in the emergency department (ED) at HIAE (Hospital Israelita Albert Einstein). But many of them viewed the role as a short-term stepping-stone that would help them set up their own independent practices. As a result, few ED physicians went on to have careers within the HIAE system, with most leaving within five years. Poor retention was also tied to the limited “soft skill” development of early-tenure ED physicians, which hampered their ability to communicate effectively with patients and colleagues.

The organization

Hospital Israelita Albert Einstein is a multispecialty, private nonprofit hospital in São Paulo, Brazil, with Joint Commission International accreditation. It employs a workforce of 13,000 including over 1,300 physicians, of whom roughly 300 work within the emergency department (ED).

The approach

In 2017, HIAE developed a physician mentorship program for early-tenure physicians and piloted it within the ED before expanding it across the organization. The program supports new physicians within the first year of tenure and is based around monthly, one-hour meetings between mentor and mentee.

The result

The mentorship program has a 90-point Net Promoter Score¹ from participants and has been rolled out to physicians across HIAE. Altogether, 152 physicians have passed through the mentorship program since 2017. Since the start of the program, turnover rates have fallen by 36% (from 25% to 16%). Similar mentorship programs are now being considered for non-physician clinical staff.

1. Net Promoter Score (NPS) is calculated by having end users rate how much they would recommend a product on a scale of 1-10. The NPS is simply the percentage of customers who are promoters (those who scored 9 or 10) minus the percentage who are detractors (those who scored 0 to 6). In this case study, the end user is the physician mentee and the product is the physician mentorship program.

Source: Hospital Israelita Albert Einstein, São Paulo, Brazil; Advisory Board interviews and analysis.

Approach

How HIAE structured its physician mentorship program around a clearly defined set of goals

Hospital Israelita Albert Einstein's physician mentorship program was designed to maximize the expertise of tenured mentors by focusing the program on career development and teaching "soft skills" like effective communication and teamwork best practices. Both mentors and mentees understand that this program was designed to facilitate meaningful discussion about personal growth, as opposed to discussing clinical skills or workplace logistics.

The four elements

The success of HIAE's physician mentorship program came down to four main elements:

01 Create a one-stop resource hub for early-tenure physicians

02 Embed mentorship as a key responsibility for tenured staff

03 Equip tenured physicians with strong mentorship skills

04 Devise a clear mentor-mentee contract

01 Create a one-stop resource hub for early-tenure physicians

DNA Einstein Mindmap: HIAE's online resource hub for physicians

HIAE created an online resource hub in the form of a learning map, a graphical organizer that provides a visual representation of how various concepts and resources are 'mapped' together. This learning map links to existing HIAE online resources, as well as webpages dedicated to the mentorship program. (For examples of how the learning map looks, see our supporting artifacts on p.13.)

The goals of the learning map included:

- To create a single, comprehensive repository of just-in-time resources related to employment questions and professional development resources.
- To provide mentors with an easy, navigable resource they could easily refer mentees to without having to spend mentoring time on web searches.
- To provide an online repository where mentors could log and submit session reports after each mentor-mentee discussion. The human resources department (HR) can track the number of reports and make sure the required 8 to 12 sessions are completed.
- Mentees deeply appreciate the ease and accessibility of having all their online resources located in one place, especially given how many websites and portals most employees must navigate early in their career. But the most important use of the learning map is that it enables mentees to 'self-service' most knowledge-based questions about HIAE. As a result, mentor-mentee discussions can be focused on meaningful discussion about soft-skill development, career goals, and overall workplace engagement.



1. CREATE A ONE-STOP RESOURCE HUB FOR EARLY-TENURE PHYSICIANS

Examples of topics covered in the DNA Einstein Mindmap

- HIAE organizational goals and strategic mission
- Organizational compensation and benefits
- Doctor career mapping, both in ED and overall system
- Links to continuing professional education requirements
- Learning and development offerings within HIAE
- Resources to address clinical skill competencies and protocols
- Resources to understand the patient experience at HIAE
- Overview of the mentorship program guidelines and structure
- Mentorship feedback portal for mentors to file session reports

02 Embed mentorship as a key responsibility for tenured staff

For any organization attempting to create a physician mentorship program, a challenge is getting tenured physicians to find the time to act as mentors. At HIAE, the job descriptions of medical coordinators¹ in the emergency department were changed to reflect the official expectation of providing mentorship and coaching to more junior colleagues. As a result, medical coordinators viewed participation in the mentorship program not as an additional, optional ask, but as a requisite part of their jobs.

Excerpt from HIAE Medical Coordinator Job Description (translated)

Job responsibilities

Responsibilities

- “...that you will counsel and help train newer doctors...”
- “...you will act as a resource and point of contact for new doctors.”

1. In Brazil, the position ‘coordenador medico’ or medical coordinator denotes a senior physician with responsibilities that correspond to those of a medical director in the United States.

Source: Hospital Israelita Albert Einstein, São Paulo, Brazil; Advisory Board interviews and analysis.



2. EMBED MENTORSHIP AS A KEY RESPONSIBILITY FOR TENURED STAFF

Secure physician buy-in by having executives set mentorship expectation

Prior to rollout of the mentorship program, the president/CEO of HIAE sent regular communications to senior physicians emphasizing the importance of the mentorship program. This reinforced the expectation that senior staff would actively participate as mentors. Additionally, at the end of the first round of the mentorship program, HIAE's president/CEO recognized each mentor at a public ceremony. This form of recognition continues, with the CEO presiding over quarterly ceremonies for mentors and mentees. Former participants in the mentorship program may attend as well, helping to create a lasting community of program participants.

Lastly, a major part in securing buy-in to the mentorship program was that the overall time commitment would be manageable. Mentors are expected to devote roughly one hour a month during work hours to meet with their mentee over the first 8 to 12 months of tenure. The ideal goal is to meet for roughly 10 to 12 sessions, with 8 being the bare minimum for completion. The range was set up deliberately to build flexibility into the scheduling of the sessions and recognize that mentee and mentor physicians have busy, unpredictable schedules.

8-12

Total number of hours spread across one year that a tenured physician is expected to devote to mentorship duties¹

1. Mentor physicians often report sessions lasting longer than an hour based on mutual agreement between mentor and mentee. This flexibility allows for fruitful discussion to continue without arbitrary time constraints when necessary.

Source: Hospital Israelita Albert Einstein, São Paulo, Brazil; Advisory Board interviews and analysis.

03 Equip tenured physicians with strong mentoring skills

New mentors go through two training sessions to help them build their mentorship skills. The sessions are run by HR colleagues and former physician mentors, under a model called “mentors training mentors.” The classes focus on:

- Knowing how to navigate mentorship tools and resources
- Understanding the mentor-mentee contractual agreement and being able to explain its various provisions to mentees
- Developing a personal mentorship style that enables mentors to speak about their own personal growth and past experiences

The training sessions cover both mentorship/coaching theory and personal testimonials and tips from former mentors. The testimonial part of the training is effective at teaching mentors how to navigate conflict, provide affirmation to early-tenure physicians, and approach mentorship sessions with vulnerability.

Additionally, mentors fill out a Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI) test¹ and develop a personal profile. The goal of this exercise is to better understand how personality interplays with professional development. It helps to equip mentors with the self-awareness needed to navigate their mentor-mentee relationships.

Overall, the training sessions are designed to prepare mentors for several goals:

- Understand how to share personal experiences of career challenges and development in a mentorship setting
- Ensure that the mentorship session represents a conversation between mentor and mentee, rather than a presentation by the mentor
- Provide mentors with an understanding of the most common difficulties that early-tenure physicians report facing and how mentors can help address them

1. The Myers-Briggs Type Indicator is a personality test that helps individuals understand how they respond to the world around them and how these responses influence their decision-making processes.

Source: Hospital Israelita Albert Einstein, São Paulo, Brazil; Advisory Board interviews and analysis.

04 Devise a clear mentor-mentee contract

The first mentorship session is scheduled when a newly hired physician finishes clinical onboarding. During this session, both parties sign a mentorship contract. There are several important components of the contract:

- **Confidentiality clause**

Both parties agree that all discussions during mentorship sessions will be entirely confidential and may not be divulged. Mentors and mentees are not allowed to serve in the same workstream, and the confidentiality clause is designed to reinforce a safe learning environment that will not impact performance evaluation for mentees.

- **Acknowledgement of program schedule**

The mentee and mentor acknowledge the mentorship program schedule of one hour each month for 8 to 12 months and agree to prioritize these sessions.

- **Mentorship guidelines agreement**

This agreement asks mentees to acknowledge mentorship guidelines, including the recognition that the focus of mentorship is on professional development and not behavioral health support.

- **Results of values assessment**

Each mentee is presented with a self-assessment of 20 professional values and chooses the three that most define them. These values are then shared with the mentor during the first session as a way of creating a “common language” around professional development.

Results

HIAE’s physician mentorship program has produced strong results directly tied to the value early-tenure physicians received from their participation in mentorship.

- **Mentees give overwhelmingly positive feedback on program:** The physician mentorship program has a Net Promoter Score (NPS) of 90, meaning that a net 90% of participants valued the program positively.
- **Boost in physician retention:** In 2017, the turnover rate for early-tenure physicians was 25%. By 2019, this figure had been reduced to 16%.
- **Pipeline for physician leaders:** Across the four years of the program, 23 mentees have been promoted into leadership positions across the HIAE health system.
- **Continuous interest in development of the program:** Since 2017, 42 physicians at HIAE have participated as mentors within the program. Notably, 16 mentees have transitioned into the role of mentor.
- **Strong impact on patient outcomes:** Since the start of the mentorship program, the patient Net Promoter Score reported in the emergency department has increased from 63 to 71.

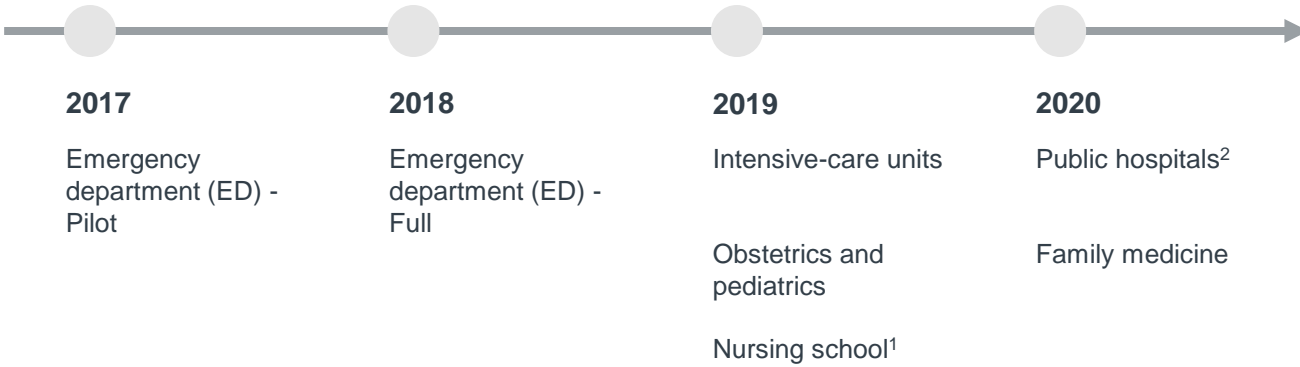
164

Total number of mentees who have participated in the program since 2017



RESULTS

Expansion of the program across the HIAE system



The mentor-mentee relationship has developed over time into an invisible support network, especially during the pandemic. My mentees and I have all moved into different positions across the system, but even now we still routinely reach out to one another for support and advice. In effect, **our mentorship has transformed into partnership.**”

Dr. Fernando Ramos de Mattos, mentor of first cohort, 2017
Hospital Israelita Albert Einstein



1. HIAE runs a nursing school within their system.
2. While Hospital Israelita Albert Einstein is a private system, it oversees and works in tandem with several public hospitals in the São Paulo area.

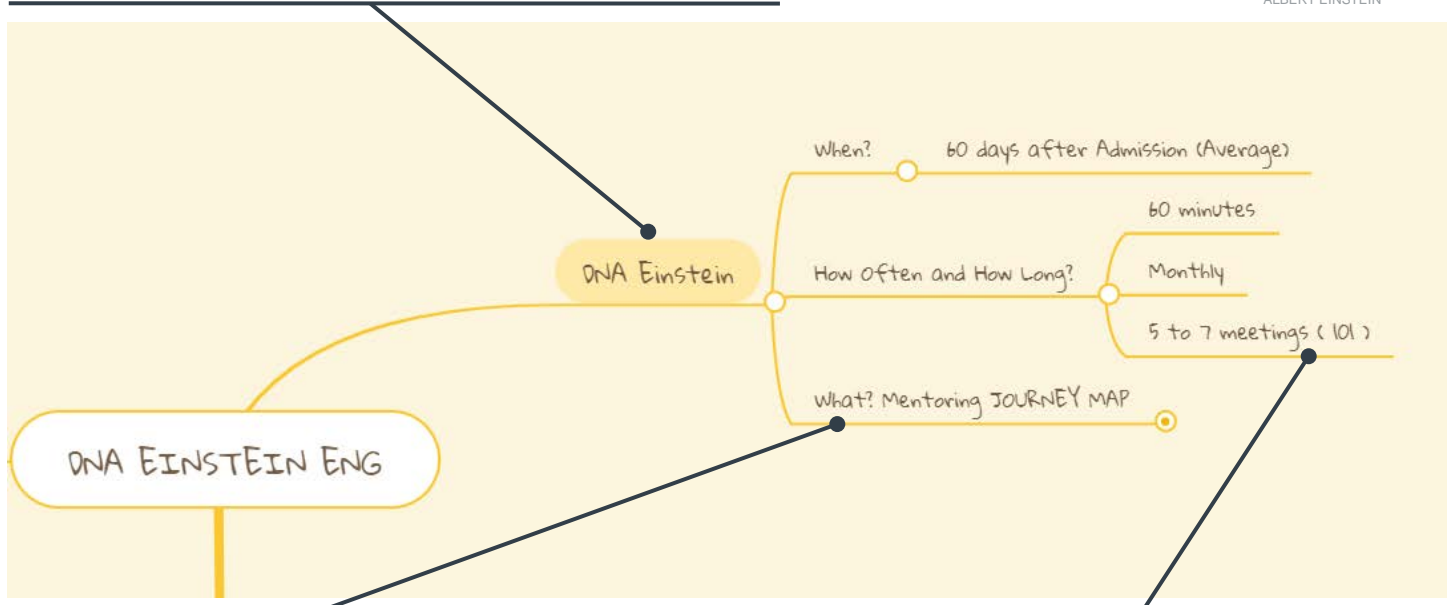
Source: Hospital Israelita Albert Einstein, São Paulo, Brazil; Advisory Board interviews and analysis.

Supporting artifacts

DNA Einstein Mindmap: The overall structure

The mindmap is developed through and housed in mindmeister.com, an online mindmapping application. It creates a map that branches out from the title bubble, "DNA Einstein."

HOSPITAL ISRAELITA
ALBERT EINSTEIN



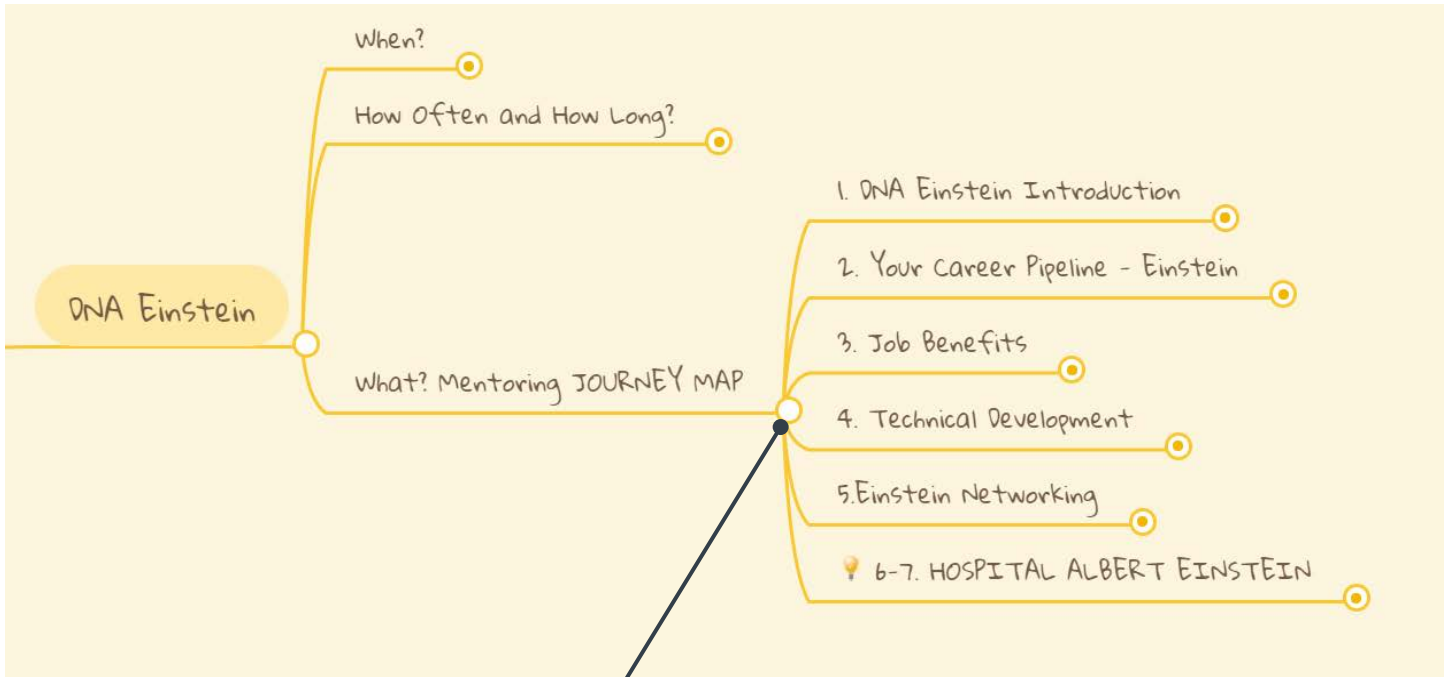
The "Mentoring JOURNEY Map" includes links to all online resources housed within DNA Einstein.

DNA Einstein includes a summary of the mentorship program, including frequency and duration. The 5-7 meeting figure refers to the fact that this mindmap is introduced on Meeting 1, making for a total of eight mentorship meetings.

SUPPORTING ARTIFACTS

DNA Einstein Mindmap: The Mentoring JOURNEY Map

HOSPITAL ISRAELITA
ALBERT EINSTEIN



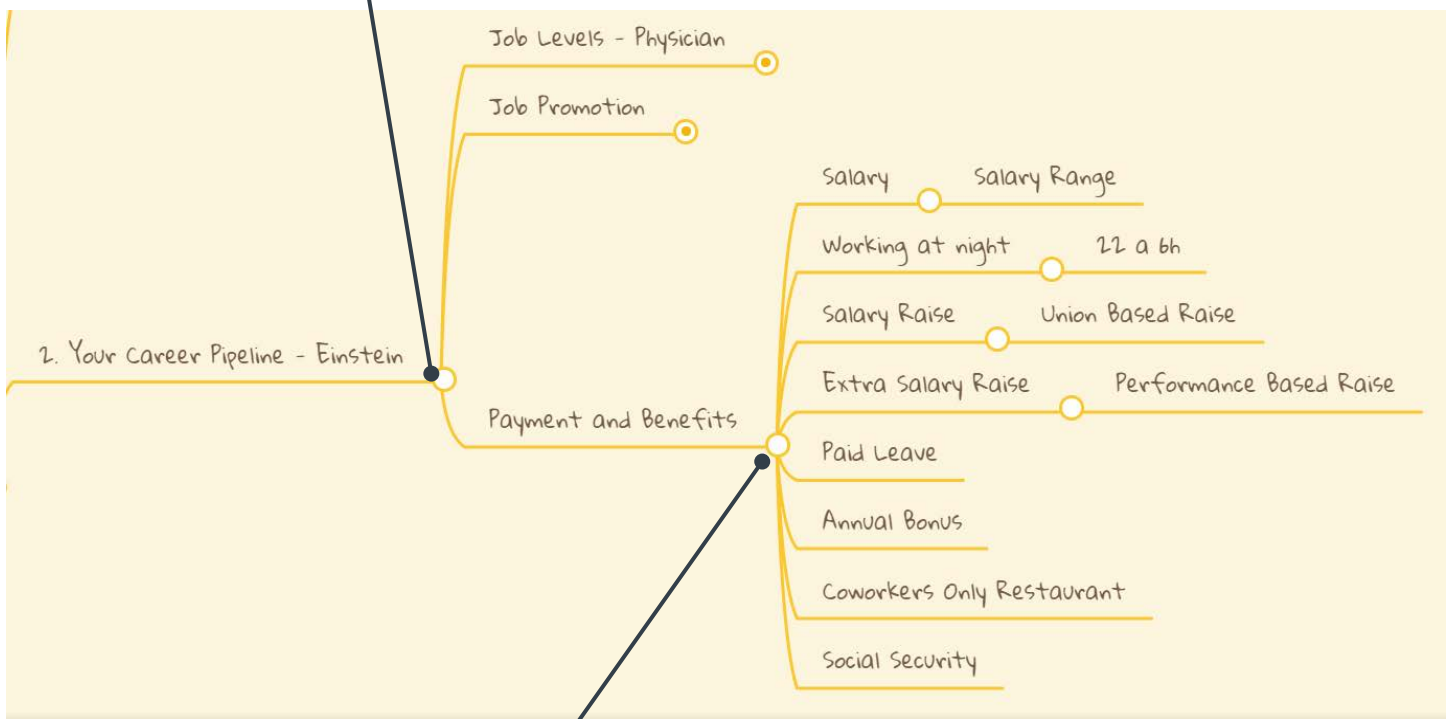
The MENTORING Journey Map links to seven key areas related to a doctor's career at Albert Einstein, ranging from technical, to clinical, to networking information. Each section expands to include the specific links and information needed to enable 'self-service' answering of questions.

SUPPORTING ARTIFACTS

DNA Einstein Mindmap: The Mentoring JOURNEY Map continued

Each one of the seven key areas expands to reveal additional levels of information.


HOSPITAL ISRAELITA
ALBERT EINSTEIN



The mindmap continues to expand to reveal further information as necessary.

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Project director

Alex Polyak

polyakal@advisory.com

Research team

Serena Bernthal-Jones

Solomon Banjo, MPP

Sydney Moondra

Program leadership

Micha'le Simmons, MPH

Contributors to our work

Sociedade Beneficente Israelita Brasileira Albert Einstein

Sidney Klajner
President

Hospital Israelita Albert Einstein

Caroline Arrozio Alves
L&D Analyst

Simone Azevedo
L&D Director

Miriam Branco
HR Director

Dr. Nam Jin Kim
Head of Surgery, Robotic Surgery

Dr. Fernando Ramos de Mattos
Medical Coordinator

Dr. Eduardo Segalla de Mello
Medical Manager

Dr. Miguel Cendoroglo Neto
Medical Director/COO

Aline Pamella Ribeiro
L&D Coordinator

Dr. Eliezer Silva
Medical Director – Diagnostic Medicine

Dr. Jose Leão de Souza Jr.
Head of ER Department

Dr. Paulo Zimmer
Medical Director

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