

# HOW TO GET MORE OUT OF HAVING A BUDDY

## DO's

- Think about what you want to get from participating in the buddy scheme. Before you meet/speak, note down a few things you want to talk about - concerns, things you want to ask your buddy's advice on.
- Be considerate of your buddy. Find out about them, ask how they are, it's not a totally one-way relationship.
- Try to be flexible on where/when you want to meet, it needs to work for both of you.
- Ask for their help if you need it - can you talk through a difficult on-call with them? Ask their advice on a work issue? If being an FY1 feels tough, talk about it. The likelihood is they'll have been there too or experienced something similar.
- Consider telling your buddy who your educational supervisor is, and anyone else in any support network for you. It's good for your buddy to know who else is helping you through your FY1, and if necessary, who to contact to ensure you get more support if you need it (with your permission unless immediate or safety concerns require breaking your confidentiality, which your buddy would explain to you).
- Reply in good time. No one expects an immediate response, but try not to leave it too long, and consider letting them know if you're going to be away/on nights/busy during a certain period.
- Consider sharing with your buddy any additional support areas you may have - including those you specified at sign up. They may be able to help directly, or be able to signpost you.
- Contact us if you're having any issues or feel you need some additional support.

## DON'Ts

- Treat your buddy as if they are your counsellor, doctor, best mate, parent etc. Please don't ask them for personal medical advice. Remember your buddy is a mentor and colleague.
- Be offended or upset if they direct you to other sources of help. They may sometimes signpost you to other sources of support, such as your own GP, your supervisor or other sources of specialist advice/support. This is a good thing - your buddy is recognising the limitations of how they can help you and are suggesting things that may be more useful to you than they can be, or more appropriate. It's not them rejecting you or saying they don't want to help.
- Work directly with your buddy. If you end up working together - regularly or in the same team, it is ESSENTIAL that you contact us. It can really change the informal buddying relationship if the buddy becomes the FY1's supervisor or senior and that could be a difficult situation for you and your FY1 to be in.

## KEEP IN REGULAR CONTACT WITH YOUR BUDDY - ANSWER THEIR EMAILS OR MESSAGES

Please keep in contact with your buddy. It can cause concern/distress for your buddy if they don't hear back from you. If your buddy contacts you a few times and hears nothing, they will let us know. We will contact you to see if

you still want to be part of the scheme. If we still don't hear from you, we will have to assume you don't want to be part of the scheme any more. We may re-allocate your buddy to another FY1. If for some reason there is an issue between you and your buddy or you no longer want to be part of the scheme do let us know.

### WHAT TO DO IF YOU DON'T HEAR BACK FROM YOUR BUDDY

Don't expect an immediate response. Your buddy is a busy doctor too and won't always be able to reply quickly. If you haven't heard back after about a week, send them a polite reminder email or message. Give that a few days, then contact them again, perhaps by another means if you've already exchanged numbers - if you already emailed, then send them a text message. If you whatsapped, then email, etc.

If still no word, please email us [info@fy1buddynetwork.co.uk](mailto:info@fy1buddynetwork.co.uk). If needed, we can allocate you a new buddy.

### WHAT HAPPENS AT THE END OF THE YEAR?

We're expecting most of you to only use the scheme for a year. Some may be an FY1 for longer (if you're less than full time for example) and if so we'd hope you could arrange with your buddy to continue the support until the end of your FY1, whenever that is. This may not be possible, in which case get in touch and we can arrange to find you a new buddy.

At the end of your time as an FY1, you need to have a conversation with your buddy about what happens next and agree this between you. You may wish to ask them to continue to be your buddy, and if they agree to this, just let us know so we can keep track of who's still involved in the buddy scheme. You may feel it is time to move on, maybe even become a buddy to an FY1 yourself. Confirm your wishes with your buddy and thank them.

*From e-learning for Healthcare - It is better to acknowledge the end of the mentoring process, rather than allow it to just lose momentum and the relationship to either fade away or become awkward. This ending of the mentoring relationship is a chance to:*

1. *Say goodbye and thank you, **OR***
2. *To redefine the relationship as colleagues or even friends, **OR***
3. *If the mentee chooses to request it and the mentor is happy to do so, to agree to continue the mentoring relationship for a new defined period of time, in which case the cycle continues.*

*Either way, be deliberate and clear about this last step of the mentoring process.*

### OTHER PEER SUPPORT (please see the [Useful Resources](#) section of our website for more)

- [Tea & Empathy Facebook Group](#) (See the pinned post for regional Tea & Empathy groups)
- [LTFT Trainees Forum](#)
- [Doctors' Support Network \(DSN\)](#) - A fully confidential, friendly, self-help group for doctors with mental health concerns.