



**Singapore Healthcare Management 2017**

# SingHealth Polyclinics Mentoring Programme For Clinician Leaders

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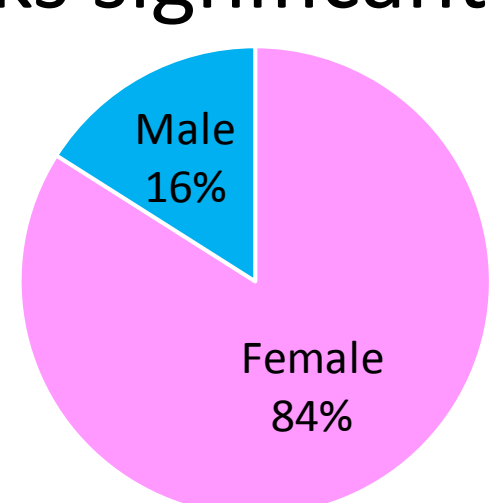
## Introduction

The word *Mentor* originates from Greek mythology and means “to endure” - to last through the ages. SingHealth Polyclinics (SHP) talent development framework recognizes the important role of clinician leaders and the need to enhance our bench strength. A 2016 SingHealth cluster-wide Mentoring survey also confirmed that Mentoring is in demand and valued. Hence, our Mentoring programme was launched in November 2016.

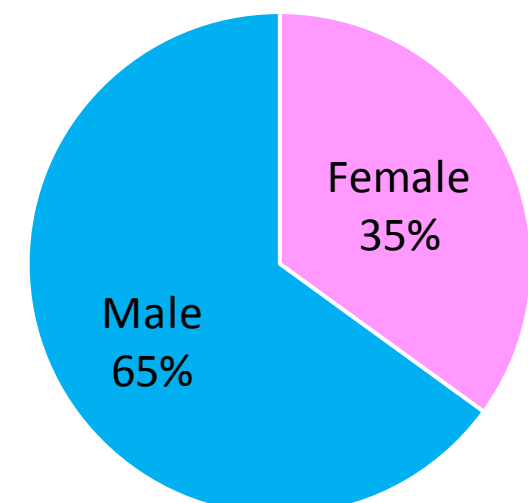
## Background

SHP is unique among the healthcare institutions in that more than 50% of our medical staff are female.

At the entry Family Physician (FP) level, female doctors are the majority. However, at the more senior level (Associate Consultants and above) the proportion shrinks significantly.



Family Physicians (MMed)



Associate Consultants & above

There is a need to build leadership capacity among our FPs of both genders.

## Objectives

The objectives of the SHP mentoring programme for clinician leaders are:

1. To provide a structured approach in developing future SHP leaders
2. To build and enhance our bench strength with a balanced mix of male and female potential successors
3. To nurture, smoothen and accelerate the leadership development of our mentees
4. To nurture a stronger culture of sharing, nurturing and mentoring in SHP and through the mentor/mentee relationship.

## Methodology

In-depth discussions were held between SHP senior management, Human Resource, Education departments and SHP clinician leaders to help shape and identify the key objectives of the SHP Mentoring programme. A decision to adopt a gender-based pairing of Mentor/Mentees was made, in view of the observations on FP staff population by gender.

The SHP Medical Staff Mentoring framework was developed, together with a set of guiding principles and criteria for identifying Mentors/Mentees.

### Gender-based Pairing

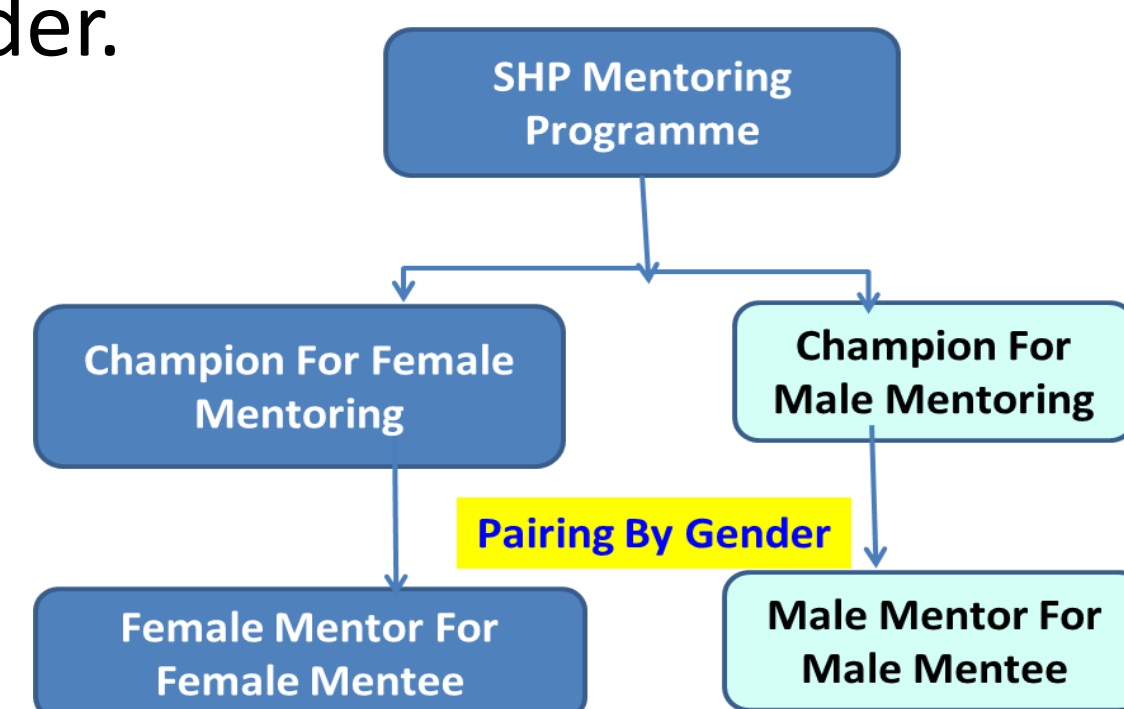
- ✓ Minimizes gender-based stereotypes between Mentor/Mentee
- ✓ More candid sharing/discussion on work-life balance
- ✓ Potential for deeper, more trusting bonds/connections to be developed

### Equipping our Mentors and Mentees

The Mentoring programme was launched in Nov 2016 with the identification of Mentors and Mentees. A workshop to equip 10 pairs of Mentors/Mentees with the knowledge and skills for an effective relationship was conducted by an experienced external trainer.

### Implementation

A Mentee-centric approach was adopted with mentees indicating their preferred choice of mentors. Formal appointment of the mentor/mentee relationship is for 1 year (Jan to Dec 2017). The pairs are to schedule at least 4 meetings, with 2 SHP level engagement sessions during the year.



Mentoring Programme Lunch 3 Jan 2017

## Results

### Successful Pairing of Mentor-Mentee Pairs

All Mentors and Mentees who attended the training workshops on 16 Nov 2016 (Mentee workshop) and 19 Nov 2016 (Mentor workshop) were invited to participate as Mentors and Mentees.

All 10 Mentees agreed to participate in the year long programme. All Mentors accepted the pairing, and were paired with 1 or 2 Mentees.

10 Mentees (100%)

Choose and rank 3 Mentors



9 paired with 1<sup>st</sup> choice of Mentor (90%)

1 paired with 2<sup>nd</sup> choice of Mentor (10%)

### Review of Mentoring programme

A mid-point review of our Mentoring programme was done in April 2017.

**Qualitative feedback** was obtained in person by a 3<sup>rd</sup> party facilitator for candid and open sharing. Mentor and Mentee sessions were held separately. Feedback was very positive. Key highlights include:

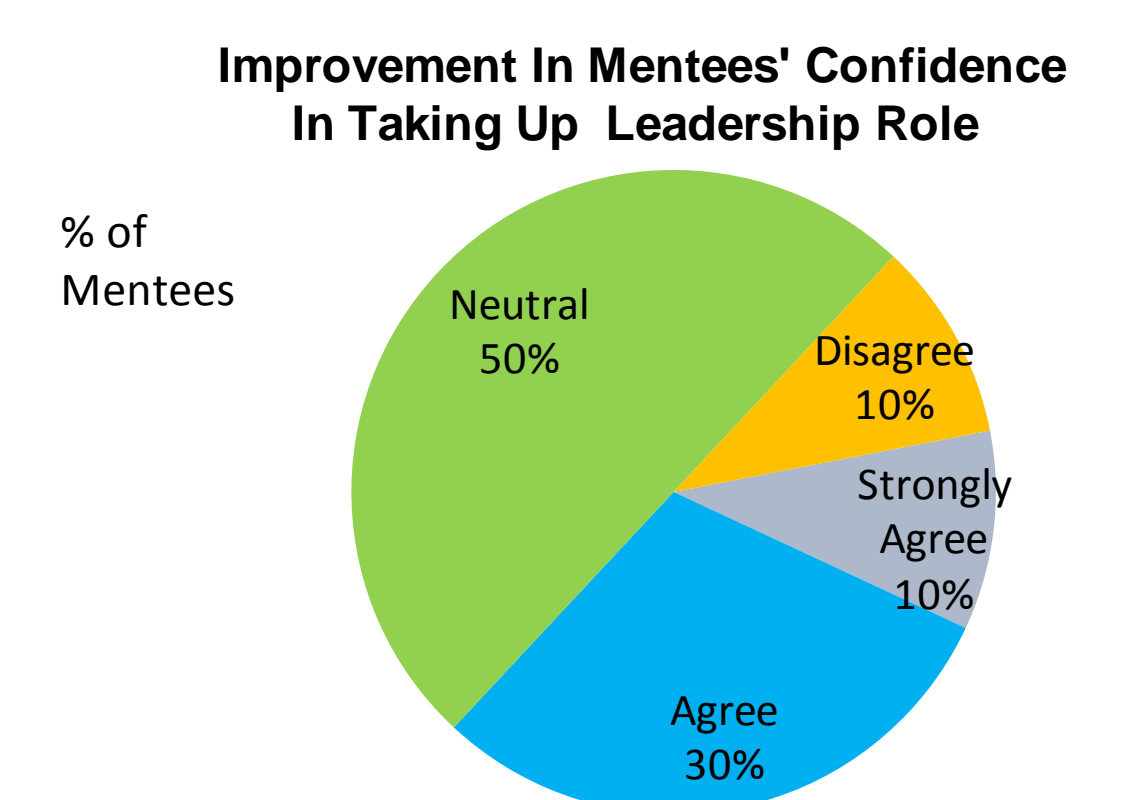
- Mentoring programme is useful and insightful
- Good that sharing is candid
- Mentors and Mentees faced similar challenges and experiences
- Good to see a different perspective of issues raised
- Good to see sharing of professional and personal issues
- Gained insights into balancing work-life harmony

### Quantitative Feedback

Quantitative feedback was obtained from a survey in April 2017. 100% of Mentors and Mentees responded.

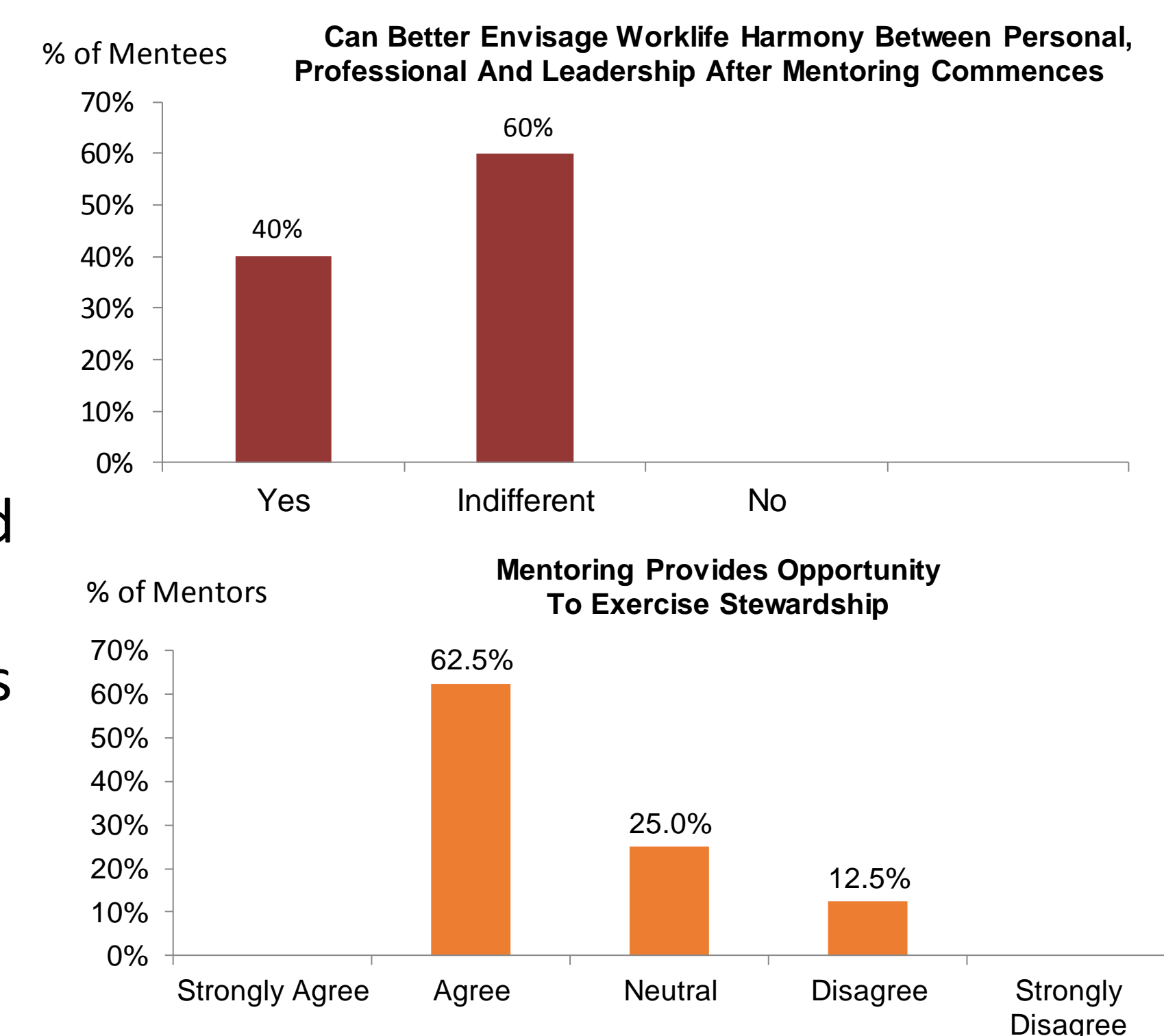
### Mentees Feedback

- ✓ It is encouraging that **40%** of Mentees agreed or strongly agreed that their confidence has improved in taking up leadership roles
- ✓ **40%** can better envisage work-life harmony **after** just 4 months into the programme



### Mentors Feedback

- ✓ **75%** agreed or strongly agreed that their leadership competency to develop others has strengthened
- ✓ **62.5%** agreed that Mentoring provides opportunity to exercise stewardship



## Conclusion

The qualitative feedback received from our first batch of medical clinician leaders mid-way through the formal 1-year long Mentor/Mentee relationship has been extremely encouraging.

We are convinced that in our tight Medical manpower and the ever increasing need for more senior Family Physicians, Mentoring is a key piece in engaging, equipping and energizing our FPs.

Gender-based pairing for Mentors and Mentees has been well received, and we will continue with this model for our second batch of clinician leaders.

The initial positive results suggest that the SHP Mentoring programme is able to meet the expectations and needs of our future leaders (Mentees) and our senior FPs (Mentors). We will be extending the programme to more clinician leaders, and also to other staff groups like our Allied Health and Nursing staff.