

## **Introduction to the Mentor's Office**

### **Resource 9**

This resource will facilitate a discussion as part of an introduction to the mentor's firm/office.

- Discuss the importance of having support staff on your team and treating them with respect.
- Share suggested "do's and don'ts" of dealing with support staff, colleagues and those more senior than the new lawyer.
- If the new lawyer has an assistant, secretary and/or paralegal, explain the types of tasks that are appropriate (and inappropriate) for them to do.
- Discuss the importance of asking for help before taking action about which you are not sure and of obtaining assistance when you have made a mistake. Give the new lawyer examples of problems you have encountered and tried to solve without help and discuss the consequences that occurred.

### **Inside (within firm) Mentoring Relationships**

- The new lawyer should be introduced to other lawyers and personnel in the firm/office. If the office/firm is large and it is not feasible to introduce the new lawyer to everyone, the new lawyer should be introduced to at least the partners or supervising attorneys, associates and staff in the division(s) in which the new lawyer will work.
- Explain who will be giving the new lawyer work. Do all assignments come through one person? Is the new lawyer responsible for checking in with a group of people to obtain assignments? To whom does the new lawyer report?
- As possible, discuss the working styles and preferences of those lawyers in the firm/office for whom the new lawyer will likely be working. If the mentor does not have this information, introduce the new lawyer to other lawyers in the firm who can share this information.
- Discuss office culture and administrative details, such as:
  - The time that the new lawyers are expected to arrive and leave the office, and how flexible the working hours are for staff.
  - The type of social climate that exists among staff.
  - The type of office dress that is appropriate.

- Discuss the types of tasks new associates should expect in their first three months, first year, and first three years. Explain how the new lawyer will obtain practical experience while employed in the firm/office. If there is a formal program for new associates with training over a period of time, explain the structure of the training.
- Discuss the relationship the mentor has to the new lawyer within their office. Make it clear *the mentor will not be responsible for reviewing the new lawyer's performance*. Discuss how the mentor will interact with the new lawyer's supervisor.
- Give the new lawyer the firm or organization's policy manual and use it as an agenda for issues to be discussed.

### **Outside Mentoring Relationships**

- Introduce the new lawyer to members of the mentor's firms, including non-lawyer staff.
- Explain to the new lawyer each employee's role in the firm and each lawyer's area of practice.
- Share stories of employee accomplishments that the mentor recommends the new lawyer emulate.
- Discuss activities in which the new lawyer can engage to acquire practical skills (e.g., litigation skills). For example, the new lawyer might volunteer to act as counsel at a bar association, could volunteer to be part of a hearing panel for the disciplinary board, could get on a guardian ad litem list at the local court, or could sign up for criminal or probate court appointments, etc. Additionally, the mentor may be able to introduce the new lawyer to a colleague with whom the new lawyer could co-counsel a criminal case, or the mentor may be able to introduce the new lawyer to a judge who would appoint the new lawyer to second-chair a case with a competent, professional and experienced first Chair.
- Share the activities in which the mentor and/or his or her colleagues participated to obtain their practical experience at the beginning of their careers.
- If possible, distribute to the new lawyer the mentor's office policy manual and use it as an agenda for general issues to be discussed.