

Joshua N. Raub PharmD, BCPS



Mentor or Preceptor? Be Both at the Same Time!

Josh currently practices as a Clinical Pharmacist Specialist in Internal Medicine in addition to serving as the Residency Program Director for the Postgraduate Year 1 (PGY1) Pharmacy Residency at Detroit Receiving Hospital. He has precepted 46 total residents (41 PGY1, 5 PGY2) over 9 years. He also has contributed to the *Letters from Pharmacy Residents: Navigating Your Career*. As a clinician educator, he holds adjunct faculty positions at the Wayne State University (WSU) College of Pharmacy and School of Medicine. He is a strong advocate for advancing mentorship within residency training. His precepting efforts have been recognized from three graduating classes at WSU where he was named Preceptor of the Year. In addition, he received the ASHP Foundation's 2016 New Preceptor of the Year Award. Josh's research interests include interdisciplinary education, transitions of care, and pain management. As a result of collaborating with two previous pharmacy residents, Josh and his colleagues received an ASHP Best Practices Award in 2018.

Josh received his PharmD degree from the Eugene Applebaum College of Pharmacy and Health Sciences at WSU and completed a PGY1 pharmacy residency at The Johns Hopkins Hospital in Baltimore, Maryland.



Josh's precepting advice is: *Never underestimate your impact as a mentor while you are precepting residents. Merge the two roles and provide a unique level of personal and professional development!*

Dear Colleague,

As I neared the end of my PGY1 residency, I vividly remember a conversation I had with one of my mentors who was also my preceptor at the time. We were discussing professional goals that I wanted to create for the next 5 to 10 years of my career. During the conversation, my mentor repeated a phrase I had heard several times throughout my residency. “*Hold on, let me take off my preceptor hat and put on my mentor hat.*” Not surprisingly, the phrase left an impression on me. From these interactions, I came to believe the roles of a mentor and a preceptor were separate. Any time I self-assess my precepting skills, I cannot help but think of my mentors. Many of these individuals helped to establish the framework of my precepting style. Their sage wisdom and sometimes unconventional methods left an imprint on my desire to precept my own students or residents.

A decade has passed since I completed my role as a pharmacy resident, and the subsequent 10 years have been a continuous learning experience as I expanded on my roles as both a preceptor and clinician. Immediately following residency, I followed my passion and was able to officially put on my preceptor hat. It was also during this time that I discovered my interest in mentorship. I recognized the value that mentorship had in both personal and professional development and was able to create a formal mentorship program as part of our residency at the Detroit Medical Center. Despite the benefit that mentorship provided to residents, I saw it as a separate role from routine precepting—a separate hat to wear. In my eyes, there was a clear distinction between precepting and mentoring. Preceptor assignments were often prearranged from a program director or experiential coordinator, unlike mentor and mentee pairings that were often sought out individually. *A preceptor’s primary goal is to instruct, model, coach, and facilitate knowledge and behavior, while mentorship revolves around personal and professional development. Finally, the relationship of a preceptor is often limited to 4 to 6 weeks, while mentoring can last decades.*

After a few years of precepting, I realized that sometimes I was mentoring residents as much or more than I was precepting them. Continually “changing hats” was a concept I was getting frustrated with. I saw myself merging the two roles together more seamlessly as I precepted more and more students and residents. I was conflicted with the approach I implemented at our system and the segregated thought process that my mentors instilled in me. The beauty of mentorship, however, is that you can disagree with your mentor. The prototypical mentor–mentee relationship of Socrates to Plato demonstrates that you can spend a lifetime of learning from someone but develop a completely different