MAKING THE MOST OF YOUR MENTOR: A GUIDE FOR MENTEES

Surviving and Thriving in the Research Years
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AGENDA

Introduction to mentoring

Stages of mentoring

Cases and discussion

From the mentee’s perspective!

Originally presented at Society of General Internal Medicine 2006 and 2007
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INTRODUCTION TO MENTORING
WHAT IS MENTORSHIP?

Mentoring: Advancement and enjoyment of career

Dynamic
Collaborative
Two Way Street
Professional Development
Personal Development
A MENTOR IS DIFFERENT THAN A...

Manager
- Directs work
- Focus on performance
  - Motivated by organizational needs

Role Model
- A distant relationship
- Passive role

Sponsor
- Champions
- Focus on career development
  - Motivated by advancement goals
WHY DO I NEED A MENTOR?

Increase productivity

Improve career advancement

Increase achievement of grant funding
IMPACT OF MENTORSHIP PROGRAMS

Retention of women and URM from 20% to 58%

URM faculty from 2.6% to 5.8%
Retention from 58% to 80%

Long-term follow-up shows 90% promotion rate for women and URM faculty that go through mentorship program
Rodriguez Fam Med 2014.

From B. Goff, Chair, Dept of Ob/Gyn
STAGES OF MENTORING

KATHY KRAM

Initiation
Initially hierarchical

Cultivation
Interactive sharing

Separation
Plan to independence

Redefinition
Collegial relationship
STAGES OF MENTORING
KATHY KRAM

Initiation
Positive emotions

Cultivation
Relationship reality

Separation
Negative emotions & stress

Redefinition
Gratitude
INITIATION
INITIATION: FIRST STEPS

Clarify **Values**
- What do you value?
- Interpersonal preferences?
  - Personality
  - Gender
  - Race/ethnicity
- Mentor style?
  - Hands on vs. gentle guidance

Clarify **Needs**
- Knowledge gap
- Skills gap
- Confidence level
- Opportunities
- What do you want mentor(s) for?
  - Professional
  - Personal
  - Research
  - Academic
  - Skill development

Set a **Clear Vision**
- Write down goals
  - Three months
  - One year
  - Three years
- Be specific
- Even if you don’t know – try!
TIPS FOR THE FIRST MEETING

Market yourself: you are recruiting mentor
- Don’t have to ask formally at a 1st meeting

Communicate clear goals & needs
- Being prepared demonstrates organization

Give positive feedback

Bring a specific and limited request for help to engage the prospective mentor (e.g., research idea)
- Ask permission to request more help later
- State exactly what the help might be

Be accountable: follow up & stay engaged
- Make mentor feel appreciated
CULTIVATION
CULTIVATION: AGREEMENT ON STRUCTURE AND OBJECTIVES

- Frequency of meetings
- Key responsibilities & needs
- Mutual expectations & goals
- Measures of success & progress
- Confidentiality

Make Relationship A High Priority
CULTIVATION: MANAGING UP

Understand yourself and your mentor—Goal is to develop a healthy working relationship compatible with each person’s work style and expectations

The mentee takes ownership of the relationship

- Let your mentor know what you need
- Set own goal schedule and stick to it
- Be responsive to suggestions
- Communicate in the mentor’s preferred style
- Straightforward, bring up issues
- Directly ask how success judged
MANAGING UP

Let your mentor know what you need
What is your work style?

What is your mentor’s work style?
CULTIVATION: MANAGING UP FOR MEETINGS

Agree on regular meeting schedule

Set agenda for meetings

- Check-in
- Discussion of 2-3 topics
- Long-term goals
- Short-term action items

Actively inform on progress in preferred style

Identify what is expected prior to next meeting

Use your mentor’s time wisely!
SEPARATION

A natural evolution

Ideally, a planned separation as mentees achieve goals and independence

Are there future mentoring needs?

Work toward a collegial relationship
SEPARATION

But...

- Marked by conflict and negative emotions
- Anxiety
- Guilt
- Abandonment
- Resentment
REDEFINITION

A new relationship
Peer and colleague
Friendship
Gratitude
CONCLUSION

Mentees have an active role in mentoring

- Know values
- Know needs
- Know styles
- Manage up
- Show appreciation

Mentoring requires time and nurturing

- Worth the effort!
CASES AND DISCUSSION
Thuy is a 3\textsuperscript{rd} year resident. She is interested in studying clinic care coordination because she has seen many areas for improvement in the structure of her own continuity clinic. She approaches a senior mentor who wants her to do one of the research projects he already has underway instead of her own study.

Is this a good idea?

When should you join on with someone else’s projects vs. starting your own?

When do you begin to assert your own ideas instead of following along on all your mentor’s projects?
Watson sets up a meeting with his mentor to discuss adjustments to protocols for his immuno-assays. He states the problem as he sees it. The mentor interrupts and spends the rest of the meeting talking about ideas for future experiments, including mouse genetics. Watson feels overwhelmed and spends the week learning about conditional knockouts. At the next meeting, Watson starts presenting what he has learned, but the mentor says, “Oh, we don’t have the facilities ready for that now.” The mentor then wants to know the results of Watson’s experiments, but Watson hasn’t done them and leaves feeling awful.

What are sources of conflict and stress in this mentoring relationship?

How can Watson respond?
Paco just started fellowship and is finding his mentor is somewhat absent. He finds it takes several emails and phone calls in order to set up a meeting and once he has a meeting with his mentor she interrupts their conversation to answer the phone and works on email while they are talking. He feels like she doesn’t have time to help guide him. He has asked her about other people who might be able to help him with his projects and the only person she suggested wrote back “too busy” to his email request.

What should he do?

When do you end a mentoring relationship vs. trying to work on it more?

How do you end a mentoring relationship?
Siri, a Fellow, has been working in her mentor’s large laboratory for several years. She has led several projects to completion and publication and received a fundable score on a K award. Recently, though, she feels annoyed that her mentor has been putting excessive demands on her unrelated to her own studies and seems to be nit-picking her writing and proposed studies. She wants to stay at her current institution, but her mentor keeps talking about her role on his pending grants. Siri is thinking about seeking other positions where she can be truly independent.

How are Siri and her mentor doing at managing Siri’s transition to independence?

Is it necessary to move to achieve independence?


THANKS!

Judy Zerzan

My mentors and (getting to be...) colleagues

- Dedra Buchwald
- Jack Goldberg
- Mike Schwartz
- David Cummings
- Ginny Broudy
- Tom Grabowski
- Joann Elmore

For your time and attention