What is your work style?

What is your mentor’s work style?
Managing Up - Communication

- Manage the flow of information
- Ask directly about mentor’s preferred style
- Listen actively, ask questions
- Avoid defensiveness—your goal is to improve
- Think very carefully if disagree
  - Should put forth own ideas
  - Disagree respectfully, ask clarifying questions
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!
Stages of Mentoring

Initiation
Initially hierarchical

Cultivation
Interactive sharing

Separation
Plan to independence

Redefinition
Collegial relationship
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
Special Situations

- Multiple mentors
- Long distance
- Dissatisfaction/problems
Multiple Mentors: Necessity

- Ways to make it work:
  - Clear roles & expectations
  - Good relationship among mentors
  - Complementary experience

- Potential problems
  - Unclear expectations
  - Disagreement or competition
  - Inefficient/overlap
Long Distance

- Ways to make it work
  - Establish locally and then continue
  - Occasional face time at meetings
  - Clear expectations

- Potential problems
  - Not as effective as on-site
  - Lack of direct observation
  - Problems with email or phone
Dissatisfaction and Termination

- Society of General Internal Medicine mentoring survey
  - 84% unsatisfactory mentoring relationship
  - 23% terminated mentoring relationship
- Most common complaints
  - Mentee did not follow through
  - Mentee did not use mentor’s time effectively
  - Poor fit with work style and/or personality
Dissatisfaction

- Mismatch of goals, commitment, expectations
- Reluctance to own and pursue own development
- Reluctance to ask for personal help
- Mentor or mentee can suggest change
  - Depends on style how approach
  - Ask for advice
Know yourself

- Work style
- Other important relationships
  - Parents, teachers, coaches, professors
- Sources of conflict
- Sources of stress

- Common issues
  - Need to please others
  - Independence
  - Control
  - Confidence
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 3rd 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. There is a senior mentor she has approached for advice about setting up a small project to study proposed changes in the clinic. He is excited about her interest and 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?
Cases

Watson is in his 4th month of research. He sets up a meeting with his mentor to discuss his project. He wants to discuss an idea for a dose-response study and adjustments to protocols for his immuno-assays. He states the problem as he sees it. The mentor then interrupts and spends the rest of the meeting talking about ideas for future experiments, including mouse genetics. Watson feels overwhelmed by all there is to do, stops the planned experiments and spends the week learning about conditional knockouts. Watson starts presenting what he has learned plans at next meeting, but the mentor says, “Oh, we don’t have the facilities ready to do mouse genetics 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 a 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?
- How do you know if the problem is you?
- 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. Her mentor recently assisted her to write her K award, which scored well but was not funded in the first submission, and she is truly grateful for the time and work he put in. Recently, though, she feels annoyed that her mentor has been putting excessive demands on her unrelated to her own studies. He is increasingly critical of her work, and seems to be nit-picking her writing and proposed studies. She wants to stay at her current institution and her Dept. is supportive, 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?