Fundamentals of Professional Mentoring

Utah Coaching Advancement Network Guide

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Table of Contents

HEALTH
UNIVERSITY OF UTAH

SECTION 1. INTRODUCTION TO (CAREER) MENTORING

Academic healthcare has become more complex, with faculty pursuing multiple pathways to success, including clinical practice advancement and education, in addition to the more traditional research pathway. Academic departments are recognizing that early-career faculty are often unclear about what steps to take to accomplish their goals (or even what their goals are) and how to identify mentors who can guide them.

This guide is meant to support the development of mentors who are prepared to provide career advice to early career faculty that facilitates their engagement and success. We envision mentors and their mentees will develop long-term relationships that focus not on a specific project of the mentee, but on strategies for a successful early career in academics. In the table below, we identify ten common pitfalls which hinder the effectiveness of mentoring relationships and use the sections of the guide to address each.

Section	Mentor Pitfall
1. Introduction to (Career) mentoring	Not committing sufficient time or energy to the relationship.
2. What Do You Bring to the Table as a Mentor?	Not integrating one's authentic life perspective or acknowledging one's biases.
3. Setting Ground Rules and Commitments	Not encouraging and teaching mentees to take ownership of the relationship, set the agenda, and maintain communication.
4. Building Trust in a Mentoring Relationship	Not acting in the best interest on the mentee.
5. Using Coaching Skills in Mentoring	Being too directive rather than asking questions and listening.
6. Giving Difficult Feedback in the Context of Mentoring	Avoiding giving critical but helpful feedback to the mentee.
7. Ethical Considerations in Mentoring	Allowing conflicts of interest and bias to compromise the professional relationship.
8. Mentoring Teams	Reliance on a single mentor, rather than a network of mentors with different experiences, strengths,
9. Life Cycle of Mentoring	Not understanding the growth and the eventual independence that the mentee will develop.
10. Building a Mentoring Culture	A transactional concept of mentoring that does not serve the growth and development of people.

THE NEED FOR CAREER MENTORSHIP

Mentoring has traditionally been narrowly viewed as long-term relationship, centered on the expertise and advice of the mentor, with an underlying assumption that the mentor's experience and wisdom should be the primary guide. While mentorship has been defined[1] as "A dynamic, reciprocal relationship in a work environment between an advanced career incumbent and a beginner aimed at promoting the development of both," in practice, lack of reciprocity in mentoring relationships—lack of alignment of mentor and mentee goals, for example-- is a common cause of frustration and/or failure.

Formal academic mentoring has traditionally centered around research, with a senior investigator mentoring a graduate student, post-doc, or early-career faculty member, with a primary focus on the mentee's research project(s) and the development of a successful research career as the foundation of an academic career. More recently, the view of mentoring has transitioned to a broader range of relationships, including formal mentoring for mentees focused on careers as educational and clinical leaders, as well as research leaders, short-term mentoring around specific career and life goals, and peer mentoring, as well as a greater emphasis on reciprocity and "mentoring up," that is being driven by the mentee's goals and needs.

Mentorship outside of primary research or academic contexts is often limited to casual, short-term relationships or pop-in/water cooler advice. This style of informal mentoring is natural and organic, which certainly has some benefits. The mentor and mentee often self-select one another, either due to convenience or shared interests and goals, as well as a baseline level of comfort with one another. Both parties may find this style of mentoring "easy" in that expectations and commitments are minimal, extending only as far as either is interested or engaged. In addition, mentees may be more receptive to advice from a trusted mentor, often someone they have sought out, and in a comfortable setting. Formal mentoring is notably different from informal mentoring and has numerous, important benefits.

Formal mentoring involves a more structured relationship that includes defined goals and boundaries. Follow up is assured and both the mentor and mentee have clear roles and responsibilities in the relationship. One of the fundamental benefits of formal mentoring programs is the accountability of the mentor and mentee to one another and the clarity of goals and end-points. In addition, the formation of mentoring relationships is not left to chance and the burden of identifying and establishing these relationships is not placed on the shoulders of the mentee.

With the complexity of today's academic careers, we believe that formal mentorship should be an integral part of academic life. We can't afford to leave career mentorship to the informal processes of the past. There should be an expectation that faculty will receive formal career mentorship – not just a mentor written into their contract with whom they might or might not ever meet - but a mentor who has agreed to work closely with the faculty member to guide them in their career. As a result, mentors of today will need greater training and development of mentorship skills. Furthermore, there is need to professionalize mentorship activities to ensure faculty who commit the time and expertise to mentoring are recognized for this commitment and critical contribution to the institution. Mentorship as performed by senior faculty should be recognized and supported through promotion, training and remuneration.

Importantly, not everyone will (or should) serve as a formal mentor and the benefits of informal mentorship suggest that these types of relationships remain valuable. Even if you wish to be an informal mentor, you will still gain skills from this program.

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1 Healy CC, Welchert AJ. Mentoring Relations: A Definition to Advance Research and Practice. Educational Researcher. 1990;19:17-21.

WHAT MENTORS OFFER: PERSPECTIVE

Mentorship exists within an ecosystem of developmental relationships which may include supervisor, coach, advisor, and sponsor. In your role as mentor, you may even take on some of these other roles. **However, your greatest value as a mentor comes from the perspective that you can impart to the mentee. In some way, you and your mentee** share a pathway (e.g., career field), and your having more experience in that pathway can share the lessons that you've learned for the benefit of the mentee.

Keep in mind that providing perspective (how to look at something) is not quite the same as providing answers and directives. Although you share a common pathway, your pathways are not identical. There must be space for the mentee's pathway to be distinct and space for the mentee to be an agent in their own career. Therefore, mentors practice the art of listening and observation in order that the perspective they share is of value in the career of their mentee.

BENEFITS OF BEING A MENTOR

A mentor, by definition, is an experienced and trusted advisor. In a mentoring relationship, there are usually two parties, a mentor and a mentee. It is relatively easier to understand the "Whys" for mentees, but not always clear why mentors do what you do. Simon Sinek's book, "Start With Why" illustrates that it is not about what you do, or how you do, but why you do what you do that is the most powerful engine of one's passion and motivations. "And it's those who start with why that have the ability to inspire those around them or find others who inspire them".

In addition to what a mentor can provide to their mentee, such as support, guidance, or new skills, there are many benefits for mentors. For example:

1. **Commit to a mission bigger than oneself.** Mentoring others, in general, is a voluntary act that comes from one's inner motivation to support colleagues. In an academic setting, providing mentoring to other faculty promotes a positive and supportive culture at work that may indirectly positively impact a mentor's performance. For many of us who want to make a difference in the world, mentoring is a powerful platform through which we can make an impact by supporting those around us.

2. **Nourish long-term professional connections, networking, even friendship.** A mentoring relationship is one of the most organic relationships that we have at the workplace. With a generous investment of time and energy mentoring others, mentors are more likely to develop friends, supporters, or followers at work. One of the critical lessons the COVID-19 pandemic has taught us is the importance of meaningful human connections.

3. **Improve your skills and knowledge.** As a mentor, you have the opportunity to improve your communication skills, domain knowledge, and leadership skills through working with mentees.

4. **Learning from mentees, a "reverse mentorship".** Confucius once said, "When I walk along with two others, from at least one I will be able to learn." Mentoring allows mentors to learn from their mentees - their unique life experiences and perspectives, potentially from a different generation. Knowing how to lead and work with employees in different generations is a critical skill for leaders.
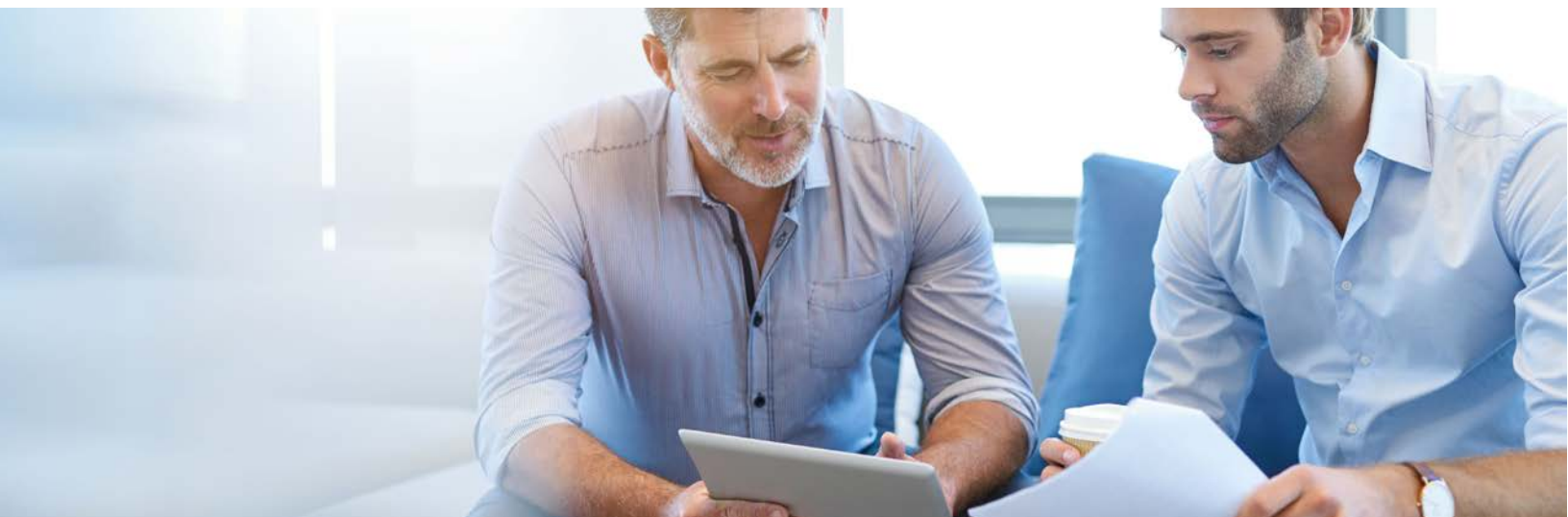
ADDITIONAL PROMPTS

- As you reflect on engaging in career mentorship consider the following prompts:

- Why do I want to be a mentor?

- What unique life and career perspectives do I have to share that may benefit a mentee?

- What kind of mentee might I work best with?

- What kind of mentorship did I experience earlier in my career? How can I model my mentoring after those (good and bad) experiences? What would I like to maintain? What changes do I want to make?

- Am I ready to invest energy in a mentoring relationship?

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SECTION 2. WHAT DO YOU BRING TO THE TABLE AS A MENTOR?

Mentors often feel that they must bring "answers" to the mentoring relationship. This sets up a dynamic where mentors may feel inadequate ("I don't have all the answers.") or may become over-directive ("You need to do what I tell you because I have the answers."). As described in Section 1, **what mentors actually bring to the table is perspective**. Mentors, in having greater experience (or different experiences, in the case of peer mentoring), can provide the mentee a way to think about and develop their own answers. As a mentor, you have lived through many challenging situations and learned many valuable lessons. That experience and perspective is something that you have to offer a mentee.

At the same time, your experience is not exactly the same as that of your mentee. They have their own experiences, and while those may overlap to a large extent with what you have experienced, it is not your experience. Therefore, mentors are able to offer their own perspective, but not their own answers. It is through understanding our experiences (assets) and our biases that we, as mentors, can discern the difference.

▌DO YOU WANT TO BUY WHAT I'M SELLING?

Congratulations, you were asked to be a mentor! Mentoring can be a hugely rewarding activity; but before you jump in with both feet it is important to take time to reflect on a few things. There are no right answers here...ok maybe a few, but thinking about these areas ahead of time will help you be honest and realistic with yourself and your future mentee and set the relationship up for success!

- **Why are you interested in being a mentor?**
  Common answers include prestige, guiding the next generation, and helping others avoid pitfalls.
- **Who/What would you potentially be a good mentor for?**
  Focus areas might include academic vs community providers, research, education, promotion and advancement, women, underrepresented groups, the work/life juggle, career change, etc. Your choices will largely depend on your assets (see below). The bottom line is, will your mentee have enough faith in you to "buy what you are selling"?
- **What are your needs/desires?**
  Schedule, time, short projects, long-term relationships, a few in-depth relationships, more mentees but less time with each?
- **What are your limitations? Who should you not mentor?**
  This will largely depend on your assets and biases (see below). We all have blind spots so consult a trusted colleague if you are having difficulty identifying yours.

▌WHAT ARE YOUR ASSETS?

Once you have decided that you are ready to be a mentor, it is important to take careful stock of what you bring to the mentoring relationship. Overlooking assets can limit your contributions and the possibilities and opportunities in the relationship. Specifically, assets include:

- **Life experience and perspective** (e.g., personal reflection, balancing family and work, moving, life transitions, life events and challenges)

- **Career experience and perspective** (e.g., making career transitions, career pivots, leadership or advanced training, navigating promotions within the academic health system, non-traditional paths)

- **Knowledge of the organization and systems** (e.g., institutional memory, organizational charts, promotions process)

- **Network and referrals** (e.g., personal relationships with others in the institution, referring your mentee to someone for specific reason such as being a woman in healthcare or having needed expertise)

- **Technical or topical expertise** (e.g., research, administration, education, global health)

- **Collaborative opportunities** (e.g., committee opportunities, academy opportunities, regional or national opportunities)

WHAT ARE YOUR BIASES?

When we talk about biases we tend to focus on the classics – gender, race/ethnicity, social stratum, Coke v Pepsi. Obviously, we are all trying to be aware of and mitigate biases such as these. However, there are other insidious biases that, although societally less harmful, are potentially problematic for a fruitful mentoring relationship. As an exercise we are going to use the bullet points from the previous section to illustrate this point:

- **Life experience and perspective** (e.g., "having kids early in one's career is the best way to go" or "an academic clinician must have a primary focus in research")
- **Career experience and perspective** (e.g., "you must have an MBA if you want to be a hospital leader" or "you must have a PhD if you want to focus on research")
- **Knowledge of the organization and systems** (e.g., "that will never work – no-one has ever done that" or "that has already been done and there is no more interesting work left in that area")
- **Network and referrals** (e.g., "I'm going to connect you with Dr. Jones, he always gives the best advice" or "the only organization worth joining is...")
- **Technical or topical expertise** (e.g., "research careers are the only ones that get promoted" or "the area you are interested in is simply not important")
- **Collaborative opportunities** (e.g., "don't bother trying to collaborate with that department, they are never interested" or "if you can't be first author, the collaboration has no value")

We are largely unable to eradicate our biases. However, knowing that we have them enables us to interrupt their impact, make recommendations with an acknowledgment that we are biased, and the shared understanding that "You don't have to be like me".

TOOL (MENTORING BALANCE SHEET)

In the worksheet below, write down the ways that you can be of help to the mentee in the "Assets" column for each "Value Category". Then for each category, write down biases that you may have in the "Biases" column. As you mentor others, being aware of your assets and biases allows you to offer greater value in the former while avoiding destroying value in the latter.

Assets	Value Categories	Biases
(e.g., personal reflection, balancing family and work, moving, life transitions, life events and challenges)moving, life transitions, life events and challenges)	**Life experience and perspective**	(e.g., "having kids early in one's career is the best way to go")
(e.g., personal reflection, balancing family and work, moving, life transitions, life events and challenges)moving, life transitions, life events and challenges)	**Career experience and perspective**	(e.g., "you must have an MBA if you want to be a hospital leader")
(e.g., institutional memory, organizational charts, promotions process)	**Knowledge of the organization and systems**	(e.g., "that will never work – no-one has ever done that")
(e.g., personal reflection, balancing family and work, moving, life transitions, life events and challenges)moving, life transitions, life events and challenges)	**Network and referrals**	(e.g., "I'm going to connect you with Dr. Jones, he always gives the best advice")
(e.g., research, administration, education, global health)	**Technical or topical expertise**	(e.g., "research careers are the only ones that get promoted")
(e.g., committee opportunities, academy opportunities, regional or national opportunities)	**Collaborative opportunities**	(e.g., don't bother trying to collaborate with that department, they are never interested)

ADDITIONAL PROMPTS

As you reflect on what you bring to a mentoring relationship, consider the following prompts:

- Do my mentee and I share a similar "path"? What is that main "path" we have in common?

- What are the main lessons I've learned on that path?

- How might those lessons be an asset in my mentoring? How might they contribute to my biases and detract from good mentoring?

- In what ways do my mentee and I have different paths?

- How much pressure do I feel to provide answers?

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES & BIBLIOGRAPHY

- **How to Increase Your Impact as a Mentor:**
  https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/how-increase-your-impact-mentor-gisle-grave/

- **Essential Rules for First Time Mentors:**
  https://www.fastcompany.com/40540798/eight-essential-rules-for-first-time-mentors

- **How to be an Amazing Mentor:**
  https://blog.hubspot.com/marketing/mentor-tips-positive-impact

- **HBR Great Mentors Focus on the Whole Person:**
  https://hbr.org/2019/08/great-mentors-focus-on-the-whole-person-not-just-their-career

SECTION 3. SETTING GROUND RULES AND COMMITMENTS

As a new mentoring relationship is established, there is often a "honeymoon" phase where there is the excitement of a new relationship and both sides assume the best in one another. Because of the initial optimism, mentors and mentees often overlook the need to explicitly align expectations and establish ground rules and commitments for the mentoring relationship. For example, the mentor may expect to meet once a quarter whereas the mentee had expected to meet once a month, or the mentee is looking for broad career guidance, while the mentor is only prepared to give targeted advice for a specific task. Such misalignment of expectations can lead to misunderstanding and can strain the mentoring relationship. Discussing and coming to an agreement on common expectations and commitments at the start of a mentoring relationship sets the relationship up for success.

GETTING STARTED: SETTING EXPECTATIONS OF MENTORS AND MENTEES

It is critically important for the mentor and mentee to discuss their expectations before diving into the content of mentoring. Discussing expectations is often done during the first meeting. This discussion should include the scope of the relationship (see below), the obligations of both the mentor and the mentee, and the logistics of meetings and communication. It should be noted that the mentee's goals for their interactions with the mentor may change over time as trust develops, and that the goals may become more expansive or more refined. These shifts may be subtle, but are important to recognize to ensure ongoing alignment within the dyad. Thus, while this section focuses on setting ground rules and commitments at the start, it is a good practice to revisit this discussion periodically, especially in a longer-term mentoring relationship.

Strategies to align expectations:

- **Discuss expectations during the first meeting.** A good place to start may be for the mentor and mentee to discuss what both mentorship and "menteeship" mean, and to fill in gaps in these definitions together.

- **Review the responsibilities of both the mentee and mentor:** For a mentoring relationship to develop and thrive, both the mentor and mentee should be aware of their respective responsibilities and commit to follow through on those. For example, it is critically important that the mentee come prepared to each session with questions for the mentor that are based on their processing and reflection of what was discussed during the prior session. It is likewise important for the mentor to provide active listening and questions for the mentee to consider at the end of each session. Please review the more comprehensive list of responsibilities later in this section.

- **Discuss expectations around timing and duration of mentoring:** Some mentees may desire focused mentorship for a short period of time, while other mentees may expect, or be open to, a longer-term interaction. The dyad should discuss this at the first meeting and come to a common understanding on timing and duration, knowing that the topic can be revisited as the relationship develops.

DETERMINING THE SCOPE AND PURPOSE OF THE MENTORING RELATIONSHIP

At the inception of a mentoring relationship, the mentor and mentee should have a candid discussion about the relationship's scope and purpose. Setting boundaries and ground rules can help to define expectations for each individual.

The following are aspects of a mentoring relationship that should be discussed at the outset to promote confidence, develop trust, and engender transparent communication:

- **Discuss the scope of the relationship.** Mentees benefit from multiple mentors: some will have a role limited to specific aspects of the mentee's professional development, while others may provide mentoring around broader goals and skills. Ascertain what mentee would like from YOUR mentorship early. Evaluate biases that may affect the relationship and limit influence that may be used for personal gain.

- **Communicate the expectation of confidentiality.** All conversations between mentors and mentees should be expected to remain confidential. Exceptions may include speaking with others on behalf of the mentee, but this should be done only with permission. Concern for harm to self or others should always be an exception to this expectation (see Section 7, Ethical Considerations).

- **Set goals for the mentoring engagement.** Goals may range from long-term career development goals, to shorter-term professional activities. Goals surrounding the engagement itself may similarly be broadly defined or related more directly to expectations and commitments such as frequency of communication. Goals should be re-evaluated at regular intervals to determine progress and need for adjustment, recognizing that the mentor-mentee relationship will evolve over time.

▌RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE MENTOR

Becoming a mentor has many rewards – influencing the careers of trainees and early-career faculty, sharing in their success-- and often results in a personal sense of "giving back". Other rewards include the opportunity to form a bond, and for both mentor and mentee to receive feedback. Mentees may connect mentors with new networks and often increase the mentor's productivity, especially when the mentoring is related to a project. Although many mentoring relationships are long-term, mentors can reap these rewards in short-term engagements as well. To be successful, both the mentor and the mentee must be ready to commit to the relationship and each participant has certain responsibilities.

For the mentor, responsibilities include:

- Be available to your mentee. Truly set aside time and be present. Your undivided attention will convey to the mentee that you value serving as a mentor despite your busy schedule.
- Establish mutual agreement on frequency and method of communication.
- Maintain contact with your mentee and initiate contact when necessary.
- Promise and maintain confidentiality.
- Direct the conversation into areas that are important to your mentee's career success. While the mentee may have an agenda, the mentor should play an active role in adding to that agenda and exploring areas the mentee may have overlooked. On the other hand, it's important for the mentor to listen to the mentee's values and goals, and not simply assume or impose goals based on their own values and expectations.
- Help your mentee develop personal goals and a plan to achieve their goals. Individual Development Plans (IDP) are useful for this purpose. Many formal programs incorporate IDPs, and you can also use them in organically developed relationships. See Additional Resources (below) for links to some examples. Goal setting will be discussed in more detail in Section 5, Using Coaching Skills in Mentoring.
- Be open-minded and non-judgmental.
- Actively listen and ask questions to clarify professional intentions.
- Be willing to share your own experiences.
- Be thoughtful and strategic about approaches to problems and issues that come up.
- Recognize your limitations and be willing to direct the mentee to other resources.
- Provide the appropriate level of accountability to the mentee.
- Recognize and honor when you, or the mentee, might not be able to achieve a mutually agreed-upon goal due to extenuating circumstances (e.g., a need to attend to personal wellness)
- As conditions change, revisit the scope and goals of the relationship.

RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE MENTEE

For the mentoring relationship to succeed, the mentee must also take on responsibility and initiative for their own development. However, interacting with a mentor can feel daunting at first. The mentee may feel that they lack the professional standing to direct and give input into the relationship. As a result, they can often be passive, waiting on the wisdom and advice of the mentor. To develop a successful partnership, mentees must take an active role in a mentoring relationship.

The mentee's main role is to develop an agenda. This allows the mentee to take primary responsibility for their career while the mentor plays an influential supporting role, drawing upon their perspective and experience. Mentees should be "coach-able", listening and interacting with the mentor in a meaningful dialogue. Finally, the mentee should follow through with any agreed-upon work outside of the mentoring session.

A critical skill for mentees is "mentoring up," that is, being proactive participants who share their goals and guide their mentors in a mutual relationship. Mentors play an important role in encouraging their mentees to take charge of each mentoring relationship, as well as reach out to a broader team of mentors.

For the mentee, responsibilities include:

- Propose an agenda for the mentoring sessions and arrive prepared.
- Keep track of the topics discussed and of any follow-up work required.
- Work with the mentor to actively define the scope and commitments in the relationship, including frequency and method of communication.
- Work with mentor to identify and develop goals.
- Communicate your needs. Be candid and allow yourself to be vulnerable.
- Be open-minded to the mentor's perspective and be "coach-able". At the same time, know your own values. You may need to consider finding a new mentor if their perspective and experience does not align with them, or if the goals they think you should pursue don't align with yours. It can be difficult to know when to listen and follow their advice and when to disagree. Having an honest discussion with your mentor raising your concerns is one way to resolve this. Other mentors, including peer mentors, can help you frame the conversation or make difficult decisions.
- Communicate with mentors on major developments in your career.
- Maintain contact with mentors and follow up as agreed upon.
- Notify the mentor when you are unable to achieve a mutually agreed-upon goal due to extenuating circumstances (e.g., a need to attend to personal wellness).
- As conditions change, revisit the scope and goals of the relationship.

Manuel SP, Poorsattar SP. Mentoring up: Twelve tips for successfully employing a mentee-driven approach to mentoring relationships. Med Teach. 2021 Apr;43(4):384-387.

REVISITING EVOLVING EXPECTATIONS

There could come a time when the mentee feels their goals for the mentoring relationship have been achieved. Similarly, the mentor may reach the extent of their capacity to provide mentoring. Regardless of initial expectations, the mentor should be prepared to facilitate a transition at an appropriate time. This could mean an ending or an evolution to a new kind of relationship. Especially for long-term mentoring relationships that involve individuals in the same field, over time, as the mentee gains in accomplishment and stature, the "mentee" label is often shed and both parties consider themselves simply "colleagues".

Revisit expectations over time and be prepared to speak up when it appears that expectations have shifted. This will likely be a positive development that both members of the dyad will welcome, but this movement should be acknowledged so that the mentor can provide the best possible ongoing guidance to the mentee that meets their evolving professional needs.

State when the goals appear to have been achieved: At this point, the mentee can indicate whether there are any additional items that need to be covered or reviewed. If a longer-term interaction is agreed upon by both parties, ground rules for this ongoing interaction can be established. With time and experience, the mentee may eventually be considered a peer by their former mentor.

For further discussion of this topic, see Section 9, Life Cycle of Mentoring.

▍TOOL (WORKSHEET/CHECKLIST)

This tool can be a useful framework for establishing the mentoring relationship. The mentee completes the left-hand column of this document and sends it to the mentor. After the initial meeting, the mentor completes the right-hand column and returns the document to the mentee. Further discussion may still be needed to refine the goals and expectations of the mentor/mentee relationship. Both the mentor and the mentee initial each row of the document once it is finalized to indicate their agreement.

	Mentee Column	Mentor Column	Initials of Mentee & Mentor
Goals	List up to 3 goals that you hope to achieve from this relationship: 1. 2. 3.	Refine the mentee's goals based on discussion with the mentee: 1. 2. 3.	
Specific Outcomes	At the end of this relationship, I would like to have completed the following (e.g., manuscript, curriculum development, or application for a leadership role)	I acknowledge the specific outcomes desired by the mentee.	
Duration	Keeping in mind that mentor/mentee relationships can change over time, is this relationship envisioned as short-term or long-term?	Reflection on anticipated duration of the mentor/mentee relationship.	
Logistics	I propose the following meeting logistics: -Time -Frequency -Duration -Modality	The agreed-upon meeting logistics -Time -Frequency -Duration	
Relationship Termination	I agree that this relationship may be ended by the mentor or mentee at any time and for any reason, and that this will not be held against the mentor or mentee.	I agree that this relationship may be ended by the mentor or mentee at any time and for any reason, and that this will not be held against the mentor or mentee.	

	Mentee Column	Mentor Column	Initials of Mentee & Mentor
Commitment To Confidentiality	I pledge to keep all of our conversations confidential, unless a topic that is discussed could lead to reasonably foreseeable harm.	I pledge to keep all of our conversations confidential, unless a topic that is discussed could lead to reasonably foreseeable harm. By mutual agreement, I may provide sponsorship or networking.	
Topics That Are Off-Limits	I do not wish to discuss the following topics:	I do not wish to discuss the following topics:	
Obligations	As the mentee, I am responsible for: -Professional conduct during this relationship -Setting the agenda for each meeting -Reflecting upon the mentor's advice between meetings	As the mentor, I am responsible for: -Professional conduct during this relationship -Actively listening and reflecting upon the items presented by the mentee -Providing questions for the mentee to consider (i.e., "homework") at the conclusion of each meeting	
Regular Check-Ins	I will participate in regular check-ins with the mentor to assess whether my goals are being met and if any new goals have emerged	I will track whether our conversations appear to be aligned with the goals stated at the outset and to identify when new goals emerge.	
Conclusion	I will tell the mentor when I think my goals have been achieved and it is time to conclude the mentor/mentee relationship.	I will discuss with the mentee whether I think they have achieved the goals of the relationship.	
Other Agreements			

ADDITIONAL PROMPTS

As you reflect on creating a proper expectations and commitments for the mentoring relationship, consider the following prompts:

- What is my level of commitment to this mentoring relationship? How much time and energy do I have available to commit?

- What should someone who is new to working with me know about me? (e.g., pet peeves)

- What are standards of good mentorship that I'm willing to meet?

- What are issues around mentoring that I have encountered in the past?

- What is the nature of this mentoring relationship?
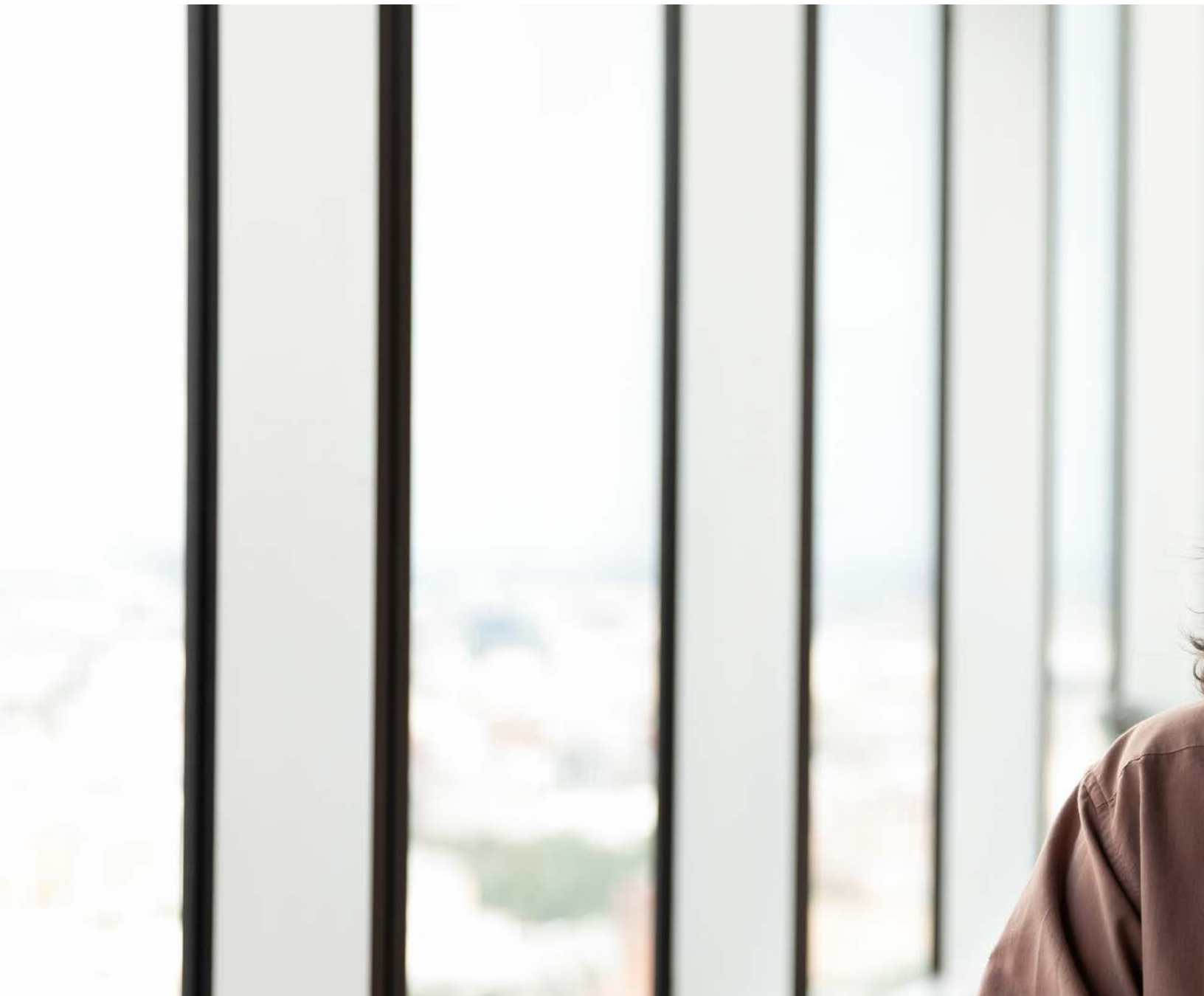
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    - **UMichigan IDP:**
      https://faculty.medicine.umich.edu/sites/default/files/downloads/individual_development_plan_0.pdf
    - **Emory IDP:**
      https://med.emory.edu/departments/medicine/_documents/idp-mentoring-program.pdf
    - **FASEB IDP:**
      https://cfe.unc.edu/wp-content/uploads/sites/326/2021/07/Instructions-for-developing-and-implementing-an-IDP-mentees-and-mentors.pdf
    - **SMART Goals IDP:**
      https://prd-medweb-cdn.s3.amazonaws.com/documents/vmcpathology/files/Smart_goals_template.pdf

SECTION 4. BUILDING TRUST IN A MENTORING RELATIONSHIP

▌THE BASIC QUESTION OF TRUST

If you were to wonder if you could trust someone, you can ask yourself, "Is this person acting in my best interest?" If yes, you will find that you can trust this person. While trust does indeed take time and effort to fully develop, a simple touchstone will orient you to the words and actions it requires to build trust with your mentee: **Am I acting in the best interest of my mentee?** In this section, we break down Building Trust into two fundamental principles that help mentors and mentees gain trust:

1. **Building a solid relationship requires effort.** A healthy and organic relationship between mentor and mentee is the foundation for productive and effective mentoring outcomes. To build a sustainable and long-term relationship between mentor and mentee, both sides need to invest effort, time, and empathy; these must go beyond mutual admiration, understanding, and a desire of working together.

2. **Recognize power dynamics in the mentoring relationship.** It is also important when building trust to recognize the power dynamic in mentoring relationships. The desire to learn from someone with a higher level of influence and authority inside and/or outside the organization may be the most important reason why the mentee sought out their mentor. This power dynamic gives the mentor the valuable ability to share lessons learned from their career and, when appropriate, to leverage their professional network for the mentee's benefit. However, this power differential – whether actual or perceived – can also present challenges for mentors and mentees. (For further discussion, see Section 7, Ethical Considerations)

▌BUILDING A SOLID RELATIONAL FOUNDATION

Nothing worth having comes easily. The same is true for all relationships, among which the mentoring relationship is a special one that is crucial to success, satisfaction, and well-being in academic healthcare. There are numerous benefits for both mentors and mentees involved in a mentoring relationship, and for our organizations' long-term success. Here are a few essential tips to help you build healthy relationships with your mentees.

1. You are committed to a relationship when agreeing to serve as a mentor to someone. Any meaningful relationship does not come free and **requires energy and time**.

2. Before getting to the formal mentoring content, allow time to **invest in knowing each other** on a personal level. Trust requires some time to build. Consider a less task-oriented first session, in a formal or informal setting, just to get to know each other. "Icebreaker" questions, coffee, lunch, or even short walk outside together can provide a natural and non-intimidating setting for the first interaction.

3. Compared to other work relationships, the mentoring relationship is more intimate and requires a greater level of trust. While expecting mentees to be transparent and honest about their needs, goals, and concerns, the mentor also needs to **be honest, transparent**, and genuine. An agreement on confidentiality (see Section 3, Setting Ground Rules and Commitments, for details on agreements) might help to establish a basic level of trust before starting to work with your mentee.

4. Knowing your WHY of becoming a mentor helps to promote empathy and compassion towards your mentees. Many mentors who agree to serve as a mentor do not consider it as an assignment, but rather an opportunity and a mission bigger than themselves to contribute to others' success. It is **useful to share your WHY** with your mentee and ask them to share their WHYs; it helps build connection and keep both motivated for the mentoring relationship.

5. **Recognizing the power dynamics** between you and your mentee, and occasionally showing your vulnerability, can help to "tune down" the status difference between you which often leads to more genuine conversations.

6. Looking at needs through the mentee's eyes helps you to build your **empathy**. What would you like your mentor to do for you if you were in the shoes of the mentee?

7. Realizing the ultimate goal of mentoring is not only to help your mentees to achieve the short-term or long-term results they desire but also to **help them discover inner strength**, resilience, and resources they otherwise might not recognize in themselves. Your support, inspiration, and positive influence will remain impactful throughout their careers and lives. This is one of the benefits of serving as a mentor.

8. Like any relationships, things may NOT always go smoothly, for many reasons. The dyad may not be compatible, one or both may not have adequate capacity to devote to the relationship, or the needs and goals of the mentee may change over time as their career develops. Allow some pauses and time for reflection periodically, especially if the mentoring relationship does not go well, or begins to founder. Ask yourself, "how can I be a better mentor?" and "what is not working in our relationship?" Ask the mentee to provide feedback. Encourage them to reflect on what isn't working and how they could contribute to a better relationship. **Offer them feedback** as well, making sure it is both constructive and kind. Honest communication is required to probe each other's expectations for improvement. Recognize when a relationship is not going to be successful and be willing to take the lead in ending it. It is important to discuss how to sustain or end a mentoring relationship at the start, and especially to let the mentee know that it is okay to end the relationship if they are not getting out of it what they need—and to reassure them that you will not retaliate against them if they do.

RECOGNIZING POWER DYNAMICS

In most mentoring relationships, the mentor will have a higher level of influence than the mentee in one or more domains, such as age, academic rank, knowledge, expertise, or professional status. There may also be factors including gender, cultural background, or membership in an underrepresented group that differ between the mentor and mentee. All of these factors can create a power differential.

Within this power dynamic, the mentor may be reluctant to express their own vulnerability, such as a current or prior difficulty in their career, to avoid undermining their status. The mentee may be reluctant to express their own vulnerability to the mentor to avoid being perceived as weak to someone who has more power. While neither the mentor nor mentee should feel obligated to disclose any information that would make them feel uncomfortable, the inability to share items with which one is struggling may prevent the mentor/ mentee interaction from being maximally beneficial for both parties.

STRATEGIES TO MANAGE THE POWER DYNAMIC:

- **Acknowledge the power dynamic at the outset:** If the power dynamic is not discussed, at least indirectly, the mentor and mentee may be less likely to be appropriately vulnerable during subsequent discussions. It may feel artificial and "forced" if the mentor tries to level the playing field by saying they are on the same level as the mentee when this is not actually the case. The mentor should claim their expertise, but also signal that they recognize the mentee brings unique experiences and perspectives to the relationship that are also valuable. One approach is for the mentor to initiate a conversation during the first meeting in which each member of the dyad talks about their background and their reasons for participating. The mentor should emphasize that their role to act in the best interest of the mentee. The mentor can then summarize their experience with the topic for which the mentee is seeking advice and highlight their particular focus in the area, while acknowledging the value of the mentee's experiences and goals in informing the direction of the relationship. The process of identifying and wrestling with gaps in expertise or knowledge is critically important for the career development of the mentee and for the mentor's ability to assist the mentee.

- **Express vulnerability to the extent that you feel comfortable doing so:** Expressing vulnerability may help advance the conversation between the mentor and mentee. The mentor can model vulnerability to make the mentee feel more comfortable doing so as well. At no time should either feel obligated to discuss a topic or reveal information that would make them feel uncomfortable or embarrassed. It is recommended that the mentor ask permission of the mentee before discussing topics that they sense might be important to ask about but that also might be potentially uncomfortable for the mentee—and not pursue them unless invited.

- **Be mindful about the power dynamics related to background, especially for mentees who have an identity(ies) and/or background underrepresented in medicine (e.g., gender, race/ethnicity, LGBTQ+, and/or first-generation student).** In many workplace settings, these individuals have likely had to overcome more barriers in their professional and personal lives to get to where they are. Don't assume your experience is universal. It's always useful to share personal experiences at the start of a mentoring relationship; when mentoring across differences, it is even more important to listen and understand the mentee's journey before getting into the formal topics, i.e., the career mentoring subjects. Whether we like it or not, it is important to be aware of the existence of unconscious bias. You may feel more comfortable mentoring someone who reminds you of you; learning to mentor across differences is a valuable skill for supporting the workforce of the future. It is not the mentee's job to "fit in" with existing culture—it is your job as a mentor to help them find ways to apply their unique perspectives and value. (See Section 2, What Do You Bring to the Table?, for recommended approaches to interrupting bias.)

- **Consider the interplay between professional and personal discussion:** Professional growth occurs in the context of one's personal life, and the development of the mentoring relationship may be limited if participants focus only on business in mentoring sessions. Conversations between mentors and mentees will inevitably involve some level of discussion about personal matters. Mentors can use these discussions as opportunities to share authenticity or vulnerability. Distressing family situations or health issues may directly affect the mentee's professional responsibilities and career development; if the mentee raises them, it is important for the mentor to take the time to acknowledge the issues and support the mentee to the best of their ability. Mentors and mentees should be respectful of each other's personal lives, and discuss personal topics only with explicit consent, in a sensitive, respectful manner. Disclosed personal information must be kept confidential, except in narrow circumstances (see Section 7, Ethical Considerations in Mentoring for a discussion of ethics and mandatory reporting). Mentees may bring up a personal matter that is outside the scope of the mentoring relationship (e.g., a request for advice about a personal health or legal issue). This is an uncomfortable situation and mentors may be tempted to deflect or ignore the topic. Instead, mentors should provide support and empathy: listen to the mentee, acknowledge the difficult situation, explain it is beyond the scope of the mentoring relationship, and direct the mentee to resources for appropriate assistance (e.g., their healthcare provider, the Wellness Office, or the Ombudsman's Office.).

ADDITIONAL PROMPTS

As you reflect on building trust with your mentee, consider the following prompts:

- Am I acting in the best interest of my mentee?

- What do I want from the mentoring relationship? Am I honest about expressing that?

- Have I taken the time to really understand my mentee as a person?

- Have I taken steps to acknowledge the power dynamic and address the issues associated with power differential?

- Am I modeling vulnerability and the giving of trust?

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES & BIBLIOGRAPHY

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SECTION 5. USING COACHING SKILLS IN MENTORING

▍FOUR TYPES OF DEVELOPMENTAL RELATIONSHIPS

There are four major types of developmental relationships: **advising, mentoring, sponsoring, and coaching.** While there is overlap, differences between them can be viewed from the perspective of 1) whether they are driven by the person seeking development or the person offering it and 2) whether they are driven primarily by asking questions or giving answers (see Figure 1 for a detailed description of each type of relationship).

A mentor generally has experience and perspective on a path similar to the one the mentee is pursuing and thus can help to guide the mentee toward success. The mentoring relationship can therefore be seen as being driven by the mentor's expertise. While the mentor and mentee's paths are similar, however, they are not the same. When the mentor bases their advice on the goals that they think the mentee should have, it can lead to frustration, lack of progress, and burnout. Thus, mentoring relationships should start with questions: about goals, values, aspirations, and the mentee's experience thus far, as well as what they are looking for in the mentoring relationship. When the mentor understands what the mentee is seeking, their advice, perspective, wisdom, and ability to serve as a role model become enormously powerful. **The mentor-mentee relationship should focus on the mentee's path starting with listening and asking questions to start.**

Listening and asking powerful questions, providing challenge and support, and then partnering to create goals, actions, and accountability are fundamental coaching skills. Incorporating these skills into mentoring relationships will increase alignment with mentee goals and thus increase mentee engagement, satisfaction, and success. In this section, we will focus on these basic coaching skills and how they can be incorporated into any mentoring relationship, especially at the start, but ideally during every interaction.

A coaching culture is a place where authentic leaders and managers help people to grow, thrive and perform through effective conversations and honest feedback underpinned by trust.

https://www.coachingculture.com/#/

▍HOW SHOULD COACHING SKILLS SHOULD BE USED IN MENTORING?

When a mentee shares a goal or challenge, it will often remind you of your own goals or challenges. Your experiences will inspire you to give advice: how to avoid pitfalls you ran into, how to achieve success, and how to focus on the most important areas. That advice will be based in your experience, rather than the mentee's, however; their goals may sound like yours, but they are likely somewhat different. Giving advice based only on your own experience, without exploring the mentees goals, may lead to misalignment and frustration for both of you.

Mentoring and coaching are clearly different relationships. The **coach** has expertise in facilitating conversations that help the coachee achieve clarity and confidence around their goals. The **mentor**, on the other hand, has perspective in an area where the mentee is seeking advice; giving advice is a fundamental characteristic of mentoring relationships. Incorporating coaching skills into a mentoring relationship, however, will strengthen the mentoring experience and align advice with mentee needs.

In any mentoring relationship, the mentee is the expert on where they want to go; the mentor is the expert on reality checking, sharing what the desired path could look like, giving advice on decisions and commitments, and role modeling success. Thus, every mentoring relationship should begin with coaching skills: curiosity, listening, and asking thoughtful, mentee-centered questions. These questions could include: "What are your goals?" and "How can I help you reach them?" For more ideas of powerful questions, see the Worksheet and Quick Reference Guide, below.

Incorporating coaching skills into mentoring will help develop a habit that leads to using these skills in everyday interactions. Curiosity, listening, and asking powerful questions also form the basis of a "coaching culture." When using coaching skills becomes an institutional norm, that is a coaching culture.

Modes of Developmental Relationships

Gap to be Addressed:
Perspective and Experience

When to Use:
When a mentor and mentee share a common pathway; the mentor can guide from their greater experience

Example Cases:
Modelling skills and way of being
Sharing experience / perspective
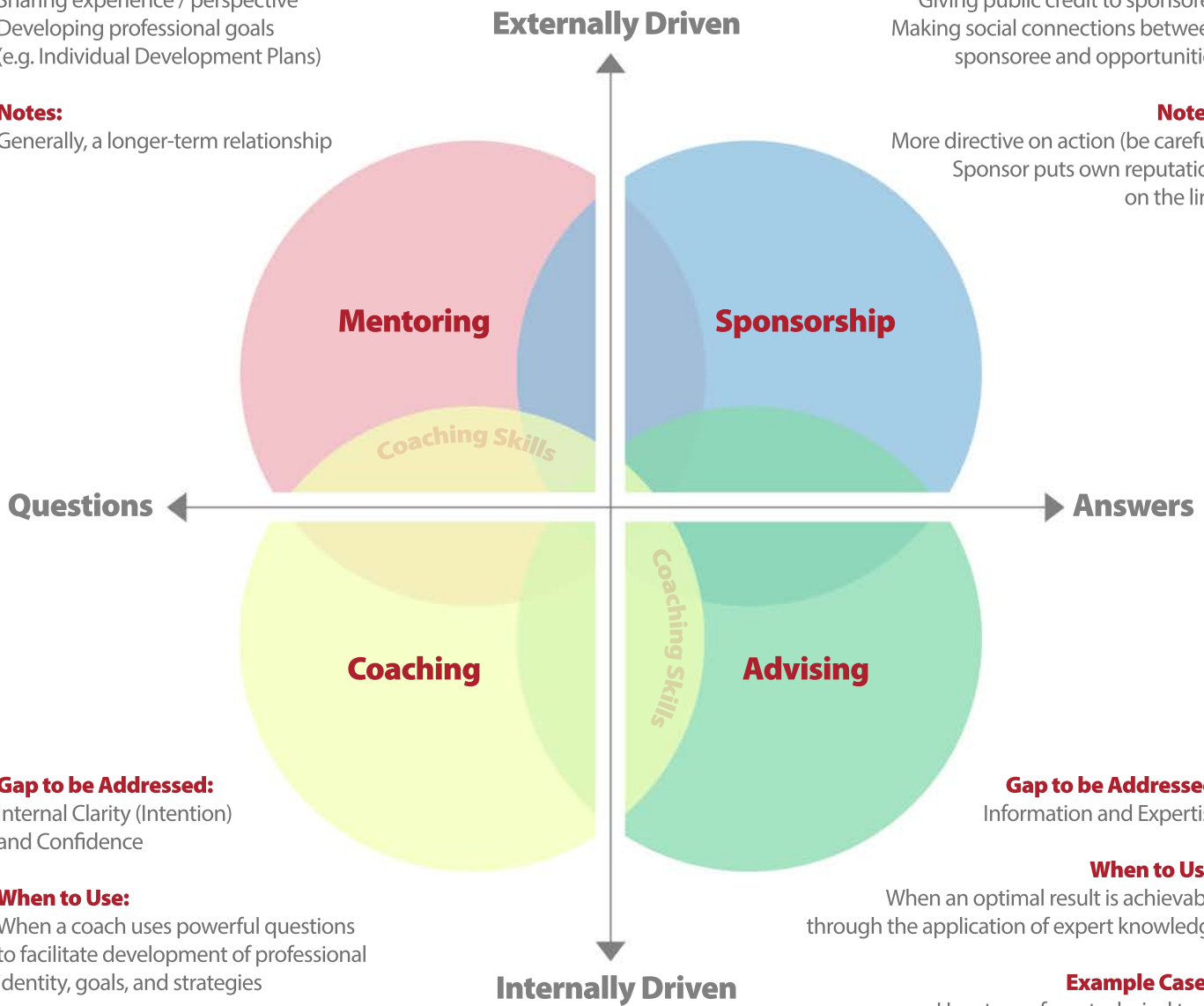Developing professional goals
(e.g. Individual Development Plans)

Notes:
Generally, a longer-term relationship

Gap to be Addressed:
Connection and Endorsement

When to Use:
When a sponsor has greater social resources to advocate for and connect sponsorees with opportunities

Example Cases:
Nominating someone for role
Giving public credit to sponsoree
Making social connections between sponsoree and opportunities

Notes:
More directive on action (be careful)
Sponsor puts own reputation on the line

Externally Driven

Mentoring

Sponsorship

Coaching Skills

Coaching Skills

Questions

Answers

Coaching

Advising

Internally Driven

Gap to be Addressed:
Internal Clarity (Intention) and Confidence

When to Use:
When a coach uses powerful questions to facilitate development of professional identity, goals, and strategies

Example Cases:
Reflection on personal values
Making important career choices
Setting professional goals and plan
Accountability partnership (balancing challenge and support)

Notes:
Coachee drives agenda and goals
Coach drives process

Gap to be Addressed:
Information and Expertise

When to Use:
When an optimal result is achievable through the application of expert knowledge

Example Cases:
How to perform technical tasks
Navigating specific processes
Information on choice options

Notes:
More directive on choice (be careful)
Onus of action on the advisee

University of Utah Health
Utah Coaching Advancement Network

WHAT ARE COACHING SKILLS? HOW CAN YOU DEVELOP THEM?

Using coaching skills is particularly important at the beginning of a mentoring relationship, and helps build trust, mutual understanding, and a shared vision of goals. You can incorporate these skills into each mentoring session by practicing asking open-ended questions, being both supportive and challenging, and partnering to create goals, actions, and accountability. Honing coaching skills will help you naturally incorporate them into every meeting. This will help you avoid making assumptions based in your own biases or jumping straight to problem-solving.

LISTEN ACTIVELY	*Listening actively* is rooted in curiosity and a desire to understand the mentee's feelings, values, goals, and needs. Use silence to create space in the conversation for your mentee to reflect, synthesize, and share. Be attentive: beyond facts, listen for feelings, values, and concerns. Reflect what you heard. Ask questions or paraphrase to clarify that you are understanding. Summarize and synthesize, then give the mentee the opportunity to expand and focus.
ASK POWERFUL QUESTIONS	*Powerful questions* are open-ended, cause the mentee to think, and often result in insights. In general, short questions like, "Tell me more" or "What do you mean?" free the mentee from specific options and allow them to choose the direction of the conversation. Being curious and withholding judgment will help reduce the tendency to focus on what your next question will be. Instead, listen for repeated words, vague statements, feelings & values, and things you notice, then "double click" on them- with open-ended questions. You know it's a good question when the mentee says "Wow" or takes time to respond. Silence is a great opportunity for the mentee to reflect; try not to fill the silence with questions or suggestions.
SUPPORT AND CHALLENGE	*Empathy and reflecting* on the mentee's feelings and concerns you notice are effective ways to build trust, provide support, and encourage the mentee to explore their values, goals, and opportunities. Powerful questions might include, "What do you fear?" or "This seems important to you. What makes it important?" Providing support opens the opportunity to challenge the mentee to imagine alternatives, rethink assumptions, and explore possibilities, and recognize what is required for a specific goal. Powerful questions might include, "What story are you telling yourself?" or "What do you control?"
PARTNER TO CREATE GOALS, ACTIONS, AND ACCOUNTABILITY.	As the mentee's goals become clear, coaching skills will help you partner with the mentee to define next steps informed by their values and your experience, and then to create accountability for follow-through. Powerful questions might include "How will you know if you are successful?" or "How would you like to be held accountable?"

For a more detailed description of coaching skills, see https://coachingfederation.org/core-competencies

▌WORKSHEET: FOUR AREAS TO BE CURIOUS ABOUT

When you ask powerful questions, it's important to listen for four things in your mentee's answers (facts, feelings, values, goals) and to use them to help the mentee to refine their intentions.

Focus on four areas	What questions might you ask?
FEELINGS: Notice, Acknowledge **Pay attention to:** • Connecting with feelings can open the conversation • Feelings are information **Follow-Up:** Framing	1. What are you feeling right now? 2. How do you feel about…? 3. _____ 4. _____ 5. _____ 6. _____
FACTS: Clarify, Summarize **Pay attention to:** • Interpretations versus objective occurrences • Vague or sweeping mentee statements are worth exploring **Follow-Up:** Process	1. What is the situation? What has happened? 2. How did it get to this point? 3. _____ 4. _____ 5. _____ 6. _____
VALUES: Elicit, Affirm **Pay attention to:** • Make sure the mentee is the one who defines values • Listen for metaphors & charged phrases • Conflicts between goals and values can be revealing **Follow-Up:** Synthesis	1. This seems important to you. What makes it important? 2. What are you giving up or compromising? 3. _____ 4. _____ 5. _____ 6. _____
Goals: Identify, Refine **Pay attention to:** • What the explicit goals and implicit perceived gaps are • Explore & refine the goal before moving to action **Follow-Up:** Action	1. What outcome do you want? 2. How does that goal align with your values? 3. _____ 4. _____ 5. _____ 6. _____

WORKSHEET: USEFUL COACHING QUESTIONS

General
- Can you tell me more about…?
- Can you clarify… for me?
- I noticed that… (reflect what you are seeing).

Feelings
- What are you feeling right now?
- You seem [name emotion]. Can you talk about that?
- How do you feel about that?
- How would that make you feel?
- What's the worst thing that could happen?
- How can I best support you right now?
- Imagine you have a magic wand: how would things change? How would that feel?
- What is going well for you?
- Of the things you are doing, which one or two things give you the most joy? Which do you most dislike?
- Why might someone else do or feel the way they do?
- How might you look at the situation differently?

Values
- This seems important to you. What makes it important?
- What is most important to you?
- Does that match with your values?
- What are you giving up? Where are you compromising?
- What are your expectations?
- Who is your authentic self? Who are you at work?
- What do you want to be known for?
- What strengths do you have that will advance that goal? How can you call on them?
- What part of your life currently "fills your cup"?
- What meaning do you get from what is happening?

Facts:
- What is the situation?
- What led up to this?
- How might someone else see the situation?
- How did you arrive at your current goals?
- Could you give me a bit more detail?
- Can you give me an example of that?
- What's not clear yet?
- What is working?
- What is getting in the way?
- What do you have to do to achieve that goal? What knowledge or skills do you need?
- What are the key steps to reach your goals?

Goals
- What outcome do you desire?
- What would that look like?
- What would you like to focus on?
- How does that goal align with your values?
- How do you feel about that goal?
- Imagine you have a magic wand: what would you ask for?
- I hear what you want; what is it you don't want?
- What do you want to stop doing?
- What do you really, really want?
- What decision do you need to make?
- What action do you need to take?

▌EXERCISE (15 MINUTES, WORK IN PAIRS)

You will need to find a colleague or established mentee to do this exercise with you. You should choose someone you know fairly well and trust, so both of you are comfortable sharing personal thoughts and feelings. Explain to them you are working on asking powerful questions and you would like to practice. Assure them at the start that you will keep anything they tell you confidential. Asking open-ended questions is powerful, and it is likely that they will get something out of it as well.

Ask the person to share with you a goal or challenging situation they are currently thinking about. Spend 8-10 minutes just **asking questions** to clarify the goal or situation. Start by asking them something like "What are your goals?" or "What would you like to work on?" or "What are you hoping I can provide you as a mentor?" Build organically from there, focusing on the facts, their feelings and values as demonstrated in their answers, and thinking about how to synthesize what they tell you and help them clarify the goal/ situation. It is useful to reflect back what you heard and verify you understood correctly. Some find it useful to take notes during the conversation; you should request permission if you plan to do so. The worksheet (above) can provide structure for your notes. Ask your partner to hold you accountable not to move into advising or mentoring mode, but to continue to ask questions for the entire 8-10 minutes.

At the end of the 8-10 minutes, **review**:

- What **facts** did you learn? What initial goals did the person share?

- What **feelings** did the person share? Did you notice them? Did you reflect or ask questions about them?

- What **values** did the person share? Did you notice them? Did you reflect or ask questions about them?

- What intuitions and perspectives did you have about what you were hearing? Did you follow up on them?

- What was their answer to your first question? What is their answer to that question now? How did the answer change?

- What did you learn about the power of questions?

▌ADDITIONAL RESOURCES & BIBLIOGRAPHY

- **CCL Leading Effectively:**
  https://www.ccl.org/articles/leading-effectively-articles/how-to-have-a-coaching-conversation/

- **CCL Better Culture Better Conversations White Paper:**
  https://hub.ncat.edu/administration/human-resources/cloe/better-culture-better-conversations-white-paper-ccl.pdf

- **HBR The Surprising Power of Questions:**
  https://hbr.org/2018/05/the-surprising-power-of-questions

- **Asking Powerful Questions:**
  https://www.deployyourself.com/deploy-yourself/asking-powerful-questions-51-different-situations/

- **The Art of Asking Powerful Questions:**
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SECTION 6. GIVING DIFFICULT FEEDBACK IN THE CONTEXT OF MENTORING

In most situations, mentoring engenders a great deal of goodwill between the mentor and mentee, but what if the situation requires critical feedback? In some cases, the mentee may be pursuing a course of action that will likely result in frustration (e.g., applying for a role for which they may be unsuitable or unqualified). In other cases, the mentee may be behaving in a way that is hurting the mentoring relationship (e.g., not following through on agreed upon tasks). Occasionally, the mentor may notice detrimental behavior by the mentee that requires remediation to avert future harm. In rare cases, the mentoring relationship itself may need to be dissolved earlier than intended or the mentee has outgrown the need for a certain type of mentorship.

In those cases, critical feedback is a part of proper and effective mentoring practice. In this section, we will address the situations where mentors may need to deliver critical feedback.

❚ TRUST ENABLES DIFFICULT FEEDBACK

It is important to anticipate the possibility of difficult conversations in your mentoring relationship, so you do not avoid them when they are necessary. A key first step to successfully navigate difficult conversations when they arise is to establish trust with your mentee (see Section 4, Building Trust). Early on, you must make it clear to the mentee that you have their best interest in mind. The relationship between mentor and mentee is all about what the mentee needs, and at times this may necessitate being firm or direct with the mentee to help them achieve their previously identified goals (see Section 3, Setting Ground Rules and Commitments).

It is important to note that the mentor cannot enforce or dictate a particular response to feedback, but rather they are a trusted person to help the mentee progress in their career. If the mentee realizes that the mentor only has their best interest in mind, then they will be more apt to accept difficult advice or feedback. To do this effectively the mentor must establish or leverage their reputation as being respectful, honest, and authentic in their feedback. The mentor must also be aware of their own biases and frequently check themselves to make sure they are offering advice that is focused on the mentee's best interest.

❚ TWO DIMENSIONS OF FEEDBACK: STRIKING THE RIGHT BALANCE

In her 2017 book, Kim Scott describes an approach to providing guidance to employees (and mentees) that she calls 'radical candor'. There are two dimensions to good guidance – care personally (compassion) and challenge directly (candor). From them we can derive a matrix that describes the goal (and less desirable alternatives) for mentored advice (Figure 2).

From the above we can see that manifesting only one of these attributes leads to, at best, a missed opportunity, and, at worst, a damaged relationship. The ability to challenge directly requires a trusting relationship. The recipient must understand that you care for them and have their best interests at heart.
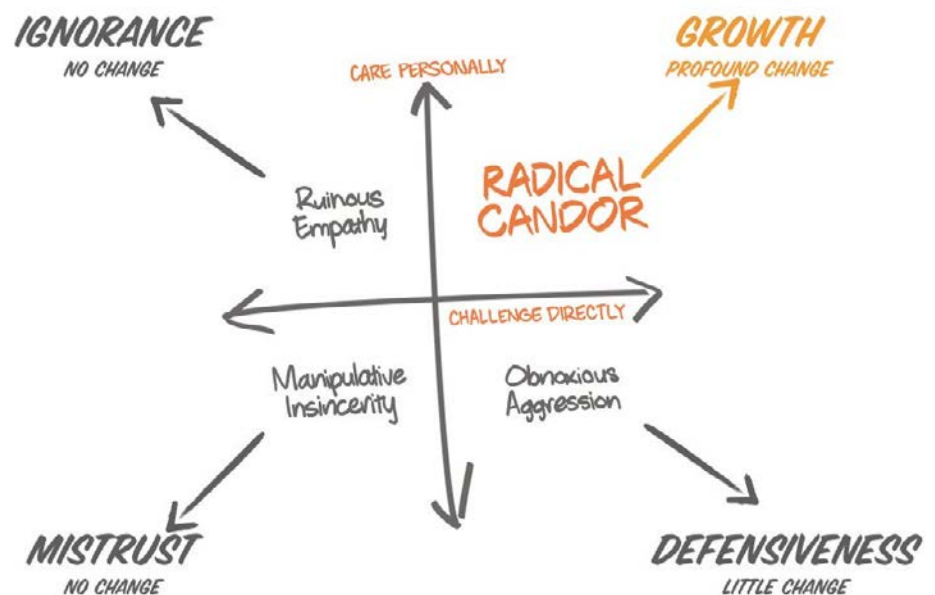
Scott, K. (2017). Radical candor: be a kick-ass boss without losing your humanity. First edition. New York: St. Martin's Press

Figure 2. From Scott, Radical Candor.

STATING YOUR NEEDS

Good relationships provide benefits and serve the needs of those within the relationship. Communication is important because it allows people to express their needs. In the beginning of the relationship, there is usually particular attention paid to clearly communicating each person's needs. As the relationship progresses, needs may change, and certain needs may not be met. In cases where certain needs are not met, the person whose needs are not met will need to express their experience.

While this sounds straightforward, it often isn't because expressing one's needs requires a degree of emotional vulnerability. If I express a need, the other person may reject that need, or become defensive, and either of those responses might damage the relationship. As a mentor, you should acknowledge that you have needs within the relationship (e.g., appreciation, follow-through, mentee time investment, punctuality, etc.). When those needs are not being met, it is important for the relationship to honestly state your needs. For example:

Punctuality is important to me because it's a sign that the mentee respects and values the mentoring I provide. When you are not punctual, it can seem like this mentoring relationship is not important to you. I would like to request that you pay more attention to being punctual for our meetings in the future.

Below are additional considerations in providing critical feedback and maintaining the mentoring relationship:

- Early intervention is important if the relationship starts to falter. Delay is often detrimental to the situation.
- The mentee should be involved in the problem-solving (particularly if they have contributed to the problem).
- Transparency on both sides is important (see Section 2, What You Bring to the Table as a Mentor and Section 3, Setting Ground Rules and Commitments)
- Discuss recommendations for improving the relationship and re-assess progress at defined times.
- A person outside the relationship may be engaged to help in certain situations, such as when conflicts cannot be resolved.

DISSOLVING A MENTORING RELATIONSHIP

In the best mentoring relationships mutual closure is often an opportunity to celebrate successes and talk about future directions with your mentee. However, positive closures are not always the case and sometimes as the mentor you may need to end a mentoring relationship. This may be due to a variety of circumstances: you believe the mentee is ready or needs to move on, changes in availability, or challenges in the mentor/mentee relationship that cannot be overcome. Ideally, when you and your mentee first decided to commit to the mentoring relationship you established some ground rules and expectations (See Section 3, Setting Ground Rules and Commitments).

The "break up" or "closure" conversation is often easier if expectations have been set ahead of time. If things have not been going well, e.g., the mentee consistently showing up unprepared, providing that feedback in a timely manner allows the mentee an opportunity to adjust. No matter the circumstance, it is crucial to be honest and direct. It may be helpful to reflect on how things have been going and then next steps. Starting the conversation is often the most difficult step so practicing aloud or talking with a trusted colleague may be helpful in some circumstances. Below are some examples of how the conversation could start:

"So back in July we agreed that we would re-evaluate how things are going in six months and now it's December ..."

"We have been working together now for xx months and it has been exciting to see you work toward/accomplish _____. I think you are ready to move on to someone who can help with _____. For our next meeting I would like to set some time aside to brainstorm who that person might be?"

"I appreciate how consistent you have been about making our meetings on time but my observation is that _____ (you often come unprepared, are not completing tasks/making progress, are going in a different direction than what I can mentor you with, etc.). I think it is time for you to find a mentor who can _____ (connect with you in a different way, motivate you, help you with xxx, etc.). If you would like, I would be happy to talk with you about different types of mentors/mentoring relationships and that may help you seek someone out who may be a better match.

"Recently xx has changed (mentor received a grant, is changing career focus, change in responsibilities, etc.) and I unfortunately won't be able to mentor you any longer."

A CHECKLIST TO PREPARE FOR A DIFFICULT CONVERSATION

Don't rush into difficult conversations. Difficult conversations should be like a curriculum, with clear objectives. Consider: Is this the right time? For you? For them? Are you in the right frame of mind? Are they? Do you have enough time? Is this the right location? Below is a checklist to help mentors navigate difficult conversations.

☐ **Prior to having a difficult conversation, take the time to prepare.**

- Gather data (e.g., documented expectations or goals, facts about the situation) and filter your own emotions.
- Clarify your own message. Write this down in preparation for your conversation (see examples above).
- Set a time to meet (ideally in person) to have this conversation. Ensure you set aside enough time to have the full conversation!

☐ **During the conversation, maintain a balance between compassion and candor.**

- Affirm mutual respect and mutual purpose.
- State the facts in a direct but compassionate manner. (Have tissues handy... you may unpack more than you intended.)
- Create space for the mentee to share their side of the story. Listen and seek to understand.
- Deliver your message (based on what is applicable below)
  - Offer your opinion on a matter
  - State your needs / make a request of the other person
  - State a decision that you have made

☐ **Resolution and follow-up**

- While mutual understanding and consensus is desired, it is not required. One's responsibility is to communicate in a professional, compassionate, and candid manner.
- State what has been communicated and what has been agreed to.
- After the conversation, follow up with an email to recap next steps that were agreed or decided upon during the conversation.

ADDITIONAL PROMPTS

As you prepare to give difficult feedback, consider the following prompts:

- Am I always working to develop greater trust between my mentee and me?

- When was the last time I gave critical feedback to my mentee? Do I provide too little or too much?

- What is the hard truth that my mentee needs to hear? How can I deliver that feedback with as much compassion as possible?

- Am I getting my needs met through the mentoring relationship? Am I meeting the needs of my mentee?

- Is it time to dissolve this relationship?

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- Scott, K. (2017). Radical candor: be a kick-ass boss without losing your humanity. First edition. New York: St. Martin's Press.
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SECTION 7. ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS IN MENTORING

Mentors hold positions of influence that come with a significant responsibility to maintain high standards of ethical behavior. While the rewards for mentees are frequently emphasized, mentors also benefit from these relationships, making it vital that mentors recognize and avoid or minimize potential ethical conflicts. Mentor rewards might include improved communication and leadership skills or the fulfillment of helping with another's development and success.

The mentor may benefit in more material ways, such as increased productivity in research or other projects or credit for the mentee's success. While there are benefits for the mentor, the mentee's goals, development, and well-being should remain the primary focus of the relationship. Many ethical issues can be avoided through setting ground rules and commitments, as described in Section 3 (Setting Ground Rules and Commitments) and Section 4 (Building Trust). As a foundation, these considerations should be incorporated into every mentoring relationship. Beyond these ground rules, what are the ethical aspects of mentorship and how can a mentor avoid or navigate ethical conflicts?

The inherent power differential in most mentoring relationships creates potential for the mentor to cause harm to a mentee. Ethical concerns in mentoring relationships may stem from power differentials, motivations of the mentor, bullying, sexual harassment, and discrimination. Predisposing factors for breaches of ethical behavior in a mentoring relationship include lack of mentoring training and/or experience, and personality conflicts.

Mentors often also have responsibilities related to becoming aware of mentee harm caused by others. Mentor training, oversight, availability of role models, and unit culture all have the capacity to improve mentoring effectiveness and reduce harm. In this section, we will discuss sources of harm, mechanisms for avoiding harm, and effective practices in managing mentoring relationships to prevent and mitigate harm.

▌POWER DIFFERENTIAL, CONFLICTS OF INTEREST, AND BIAS IN MENTORING

The unavoidable power differential in most mentoring relationships creates potential to cause harm to a mentee. A mentor may stand to gain personally from the work done by a mentee on committees or other service. Heightened attention to appropriate allocation of credit for work done is critical to preventing this type of harm. A mentor may hold power to offer or deny favors such as opportunities for career amplification, travel, meeting presentations, and authorship. Those opportunities must be offered appropriately and without expectation of reciprocity. There cannot be a 'quid pro quo'. The mentee must come first, not the mentor. The mentor must recognize that the ultimate goal of the relationship is for the mentee to succeed.

Mentoring: "dynamic, context dependent, goal sensitive, mutually beneficial relationships … focused upon advancing the development of the mentee."

The power of mentoring stems in part from the overlapping interests and goals of mentor and mentee, with the mentor usually (though not in peer-mentoring relationships) having more experience, which is the source of advice and guidance. The overlap creates an intrinsic conflict of interest: when giving advice, is the mentor focused on benefit for the mentee, rather than potential personal benefit? Does the mentor have other roles (e.g., supervisory, influence on allocation of opportunities and resources) in which they have influence over a mentee's pathway? Given a mentor may have multiple roles in which they interact with their mentee, it is critical for the mentor to be aware of and make clear their role in each interaction.

A mentor-mentee relationship is susceptible to bias. The mentor may favor a mentee for the very reasons that foster mentorship such as likeness to oneself and alignment of interests. It is entirely appropriate for a mentor to tailor time allocation to each mentee's need. It is not appropriate for that variability to be due to bias, reciprocity ,or the mentee's ability to demand more. Conflicts of interest between mentees may allow a mentor to preferentially offer opportunity to one over another. Additionally, assumptions about a mentee's career desires may result both in denials of opportunities, or expectations that do not align with goals. Given a mentor's position of influence, even a single gesture of kindness, compassion or selflessness can uplift. Just as easily, apathy or neglect, intentional or not, can be harmful.

Confidentiality is a foundational component of mentoring relationships that helps build trust and provide the mentee with a safe space in which to share concerns and struggles. Confidentiality can be more slippery than immediately apparent, particularly when the mentor and mentee also interact socially or in other aspects of their professional life. It can be difficult to remember what information should stay within the confines of the mentoring relationship and what is public knowledge, gained from interaction in other spheres. There also may be circumstances when the mentor needs to break confidentiality for the safety or well-being of the mentee; however, these exceptions should be acknowledged and communicated in a clear and direct way.

Sometimes mentoring relationships don't work out, for a variety of reasons (see Sections 3, 6, and 9). Regardless of whether the relationship ends by mutual agreement or at the choice of the mentor or mentee, the mentor may feel a variety of strong emotions such as disappointment, anger, or sadness. Given the power differential, the mentor usually has the power to cause harm to the mentee through retaliation: spreading negative stories, obstructing the mentee's ability to form new mentoring relationships, preventing the trainee from accessing research data or other joint work products, or blocking access to resources. Except in extraordinary circumstances (e.g., confirmed research misconduct by the mentee) this should never happen. Following the guidance for establishing ground rules and building trust is one way to prevent unsuccessful relationships; that guidance is also valuable when ending a relationship.
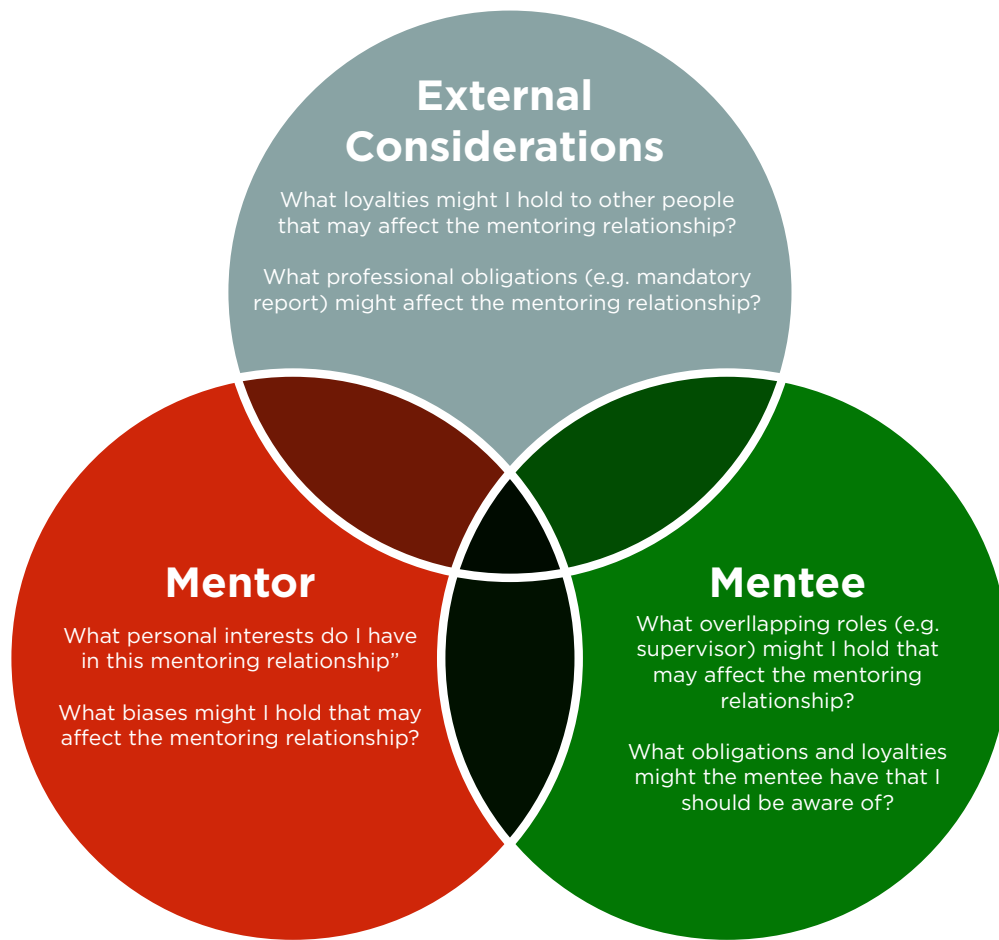
▌CASE STUDY: CONFLICT IN MENTORSHIP

You are advising two early-career faculty members in your department, both of whom are at similar stages in their careers. You have encouraged both of these individuals to apply for committees within national organizations of your specialty as a means to build their network and gain administrative experience. You receive emails from each of your mentees on the same day asking you to write a letter of recommendation. Both have decided to apply for one open position on the same committee, which happens to be chaired by a colleague at another institution with whom you have a long-standing collaborative relationship. Each of the mentees has strengths that would serve the committee well. How will you navigate this conflict between mentees?

1. Do you write each mentee a letter of recommendation unique to their strengths and weaknesses without making a clear recommendation for one over the other?

2. Do you suggest to one of the mentees that they should apply for another committee?

3. Are you transparent with your mentees, telling them that you have been approached by both but feel you need to write a strong letter of recommendation for only one of them?

4. Are there other approaches to manage this conflict?

▌WORKSHEET: ASSESSING POTENTIAL CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

What are the factors that may interfere with the mentoring relationship? What factors may affect your ability to act in the best interest of the mentee?

External Considerations
What loyalties might I hold to other people that may affect the mentoring relationship?

What professional obligations (e.g. mandatory report) might affect the mentoring relationship?

Mentor
What personal interests do I have in this mentoring relationship"

What biases might I hold that may affect the mentoring relationship?

Mentee
What overllapping roles (e.g. supervisor) might I hold that may affect the mentoring relationship?

What obligations and loyalties might the mentee have that I should be aware of?

Mentor	External Considerations	Mentee

▌MANDATORY REPORTERS

Mentees who experience conflict or incivility outside of the mentoring relationship may report the issue to their mentor, especially if the mentor has built a relationship of trust. As a mentor, how should you respond? Developing the ability to help a mentee understand conflicts and rehearse for difficult conversations is a powerful tool for advancing their career. Some of these concerns, however, may rise to the level of discrimination or sexual harassment, which requires a different response.

As a faculty member and mentor, you are a "mandatory reporter" under University of Utah policy (https://sexualassault.utah.edu/reporting/mandatory-reporters/), which means if you are given information about possible sexual misconduct or discrimination, you must report it to the Office of Equal Opportunity and Affirmative Action (OEO). If a mentee raises such concerns during a meeting, you should voice your support for them, let them know you are required to inform the OEO, encourage them to report the matter to the OEO, and reassure them that you and the OEO will preserve their privacy and can facilitate a complaint. It is important to suspend judgment and start by believing: it is not your job to investigate. One way of voicing your support is by saying "I'm so sorry this happened to you" and "I want to help you get support through this." The OEO has an excellent 10-minute training video that is good preparation for recognizing and responding appropriately in such a situation.

▌ADDITIONAL RESOURCES & BIBLIOGRAPHY

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- **ICF Code of Ethics:**
  https://coachingfederation.org/ethics/code-of-ethics
- **APA How to Mentor Ethically:**
  https://www.apa.org/monitor/2019/04/mentor-ethically
- **APA Ethical Issues in Mentoring:**
  https://www.apa.org/career-development/ethical-issues.pdf
- **OEO Mandatory Reporters:**
  https://sexualassault.utah.edu/reporting/mandatory-reporters/
- **OEO Mandatory Reporter Training:**
  https://mediaspace.utah.edu/media/t/0_u9a7jjnd

SECTION 8. MENTORING TEAMS

The importance of mentors for trainees and early career faculty is well-established, with a particular focus on connection with a more experienced individual who has skills and perspectives pertinent to the developmental needs of the mentee. Mentoring relationships may focus on specific skills, such as research or clinical care, or may be more broadly focused on professional, personal, career, or leadership development. There is growing recognition of the value of **mentoring teams**, made up of individuals with varying skills and perspectives, who provide a broader range of experience.

Mentoring teams may be formally constituted, which is common in research mentoring and increasingly used by some departments for early career faculty members, or may be developed organically by the mentee, often with encouragement and facilitation by their mentor(s). Successful mentoring teams incorporate five key components into their organization and execution: trust, ability to engage in and resolve productive conflict, commitment, accountability, and attention to results.

"Mentoring is a mutually empowering relationship where both parties learn and benefit." ~Stacy Blake-Beard

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Substantial research has focused on the value of mentoring teams in research. The Vice President's Clinical and Translational (VPCAT) Research Scholars Program at the University of Utah developed a holistic multilevel approach, the Matrix Mentoring Model , that centers the early career faculty member as their own mentor, who is empowered to direct their research mentoring team. The team is envisioned to include senior, scientific, staff, and peer mentors to provide comprehensive perspectives (Figure 1).
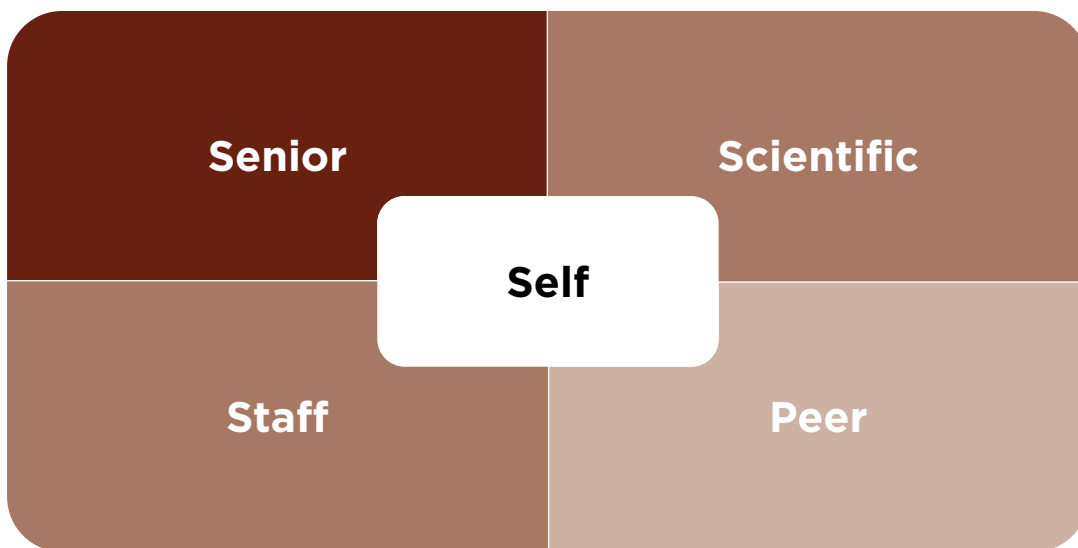

Figure 1 The five mentoring levels of the Matrix Mentoring Model (MMM), of the clinical and translationalscholars (CATS) mentoring program, University of Utah. The MMM is a holistic multilevel approach for mentoring clinical and translational investigators at an academic health center.

Byington CL, Keenan H, Phillips JD, Childs R, Wachs E, Berzins MA, Clark K, Torres MK, Abramson J, Lee V, Clark EB. A Matrix Mentoring Model That Effectively Supports Clinical and Translational Scientists and Increases Inclusion in Biomedical Research: Lessons from the University of Utah. Acad Med. 2016; 91:497–502.

Similar considerations apply in mentoring for career development, whether formal or informal, and potentially with an even broader matrix of contributors, including content-focused, career, professional, peer, and life mentors (Figure 2).
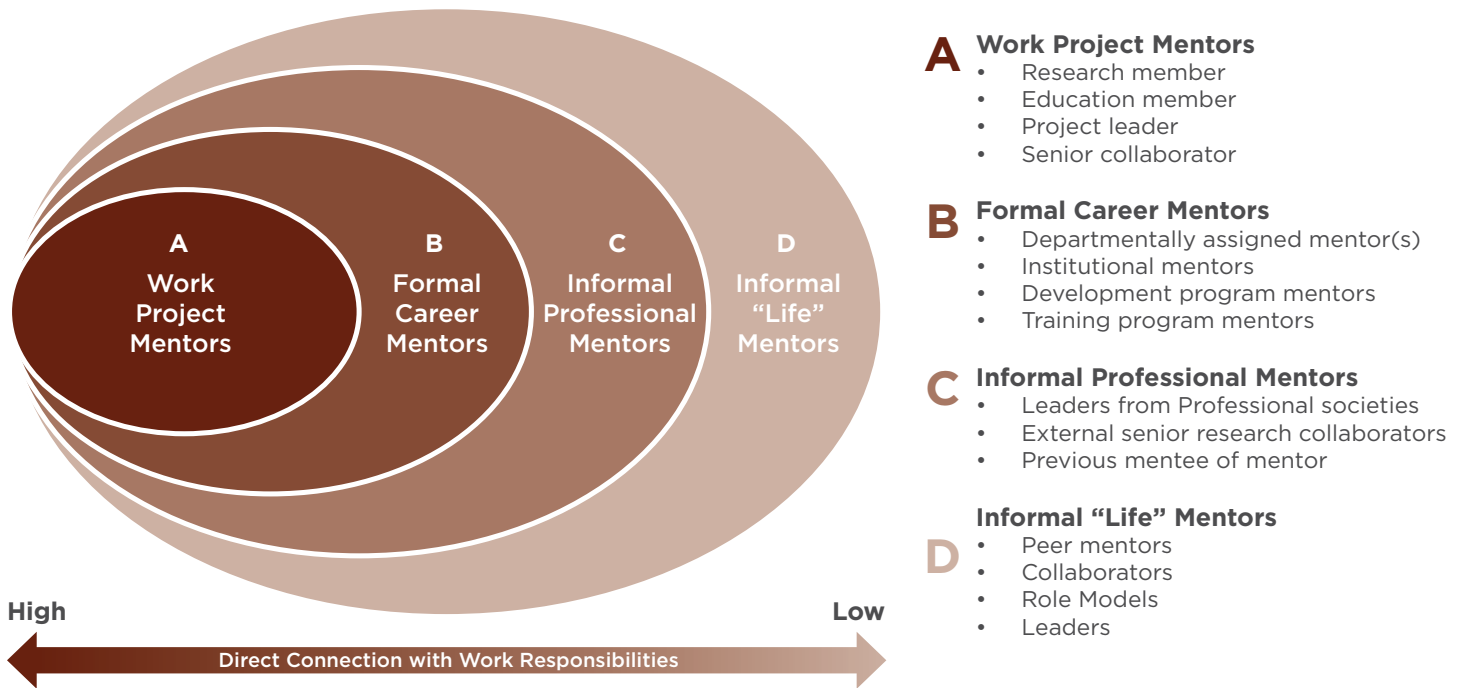

A Work Project Mentors
- Research member
- Education member
- Project leader
- Senior collaborator

B Formal Career Mentors
- Departmentally assigned mentor(s)
- Institutional mentors
- Development program mentors
- Training program mentors

C Informal Professional Mentors
- Leaders from Professional societies
- External senior research collaborators
- Previous mentee of mentor

D Informal "Life" Mentors
- Peer mentors
- Collaborators
- Role Models
- Leaders

High — Direct Connection with Work Responsibilities — Low

Figure 2. Four categories of mentors

Organizing mentoring teams around a project or task aligned with mentee goals increases engagement, commitment, accountability, and results. The project might be a research project, creation of a new curriculum, or development of clinical protocols or guidelines; the key characteristic is that it is within the mentee's expected work output and aligns with their short- and long-term goals.

It is useful to have mentors both internal and external to the mentee's department or institution. **Internal mentors** have insight into institutional culture and practices, but are more likely to have conflicts-of-interest, such as being a supervisor or having a voice in promotion discussions (see Section 7, Ethical Considerations). External mentors have less knowledge of institutional specifics, but also generally have fewer conflicts-of-interest and thus can often be a more objective source of advice. In addition, **external mentors** help mentees build a broader network and often act as sponsors for national opportunities; depending on the formality of the relationship, they may be valuable as external evaluators in the promotion process as well. Internal mentors play an important role in connecting mentees to external mentors; participation in national professional or scientific organizations is also an effective means of connecting.

Ahn MS & Ziedonis D. Coaching Health Care Leaders and Teams in Psychiatry. Psychiatr Clin N Am 42 (2019) 401–412.

FORMAL MENTORING TEAMS

Formal mentoring teams are usually assigned by a department chair or other leader. What are your responsibilities when you are assigned as a member of a mentoring team?

* Review the purpose of the mentoring team. Is it aimed primarily at career guidance? Research guidance? Other?
* Review your role. Why were you assigned to the team? What special expertise do you have and how can you use it to support the mentee?
* Review the team composition. Who are your fellow mentors and what expertise do they bring?
  Who is the lead mentor?
* If you are the team leader:

  · Connect with the other mentors to understand their expertise, clarify responsibilities, and set expectations.
  · Connect with the mentee to understand their goals and establish ground rules for the mentoring team, such as confidentiality, meeting frequency, and purpose.
  · Explain the concept of mentoring up and encourage the mentee to take the lead on setting up meetings. Prepare them to lead mentoring team meetings.
  · Check in with the mentee if they are not following through.
  · Check in with mentors if they are not participating, are ignoring mentee goals, or are providing feedback that is not constructive. Consider replacing them if they are detracting from the mentee's experience and don't respond to feedback.
  · Collaborate with the mentee to replace or add mentors as their needs and goals evolve. The mentoring team lead can play an important role in protecting the mentee from retaliation if a mentor does not wish to be replaced.
  · Provide updates and reports periodically, as required by the organizing unit.

Mentoring team meetings should take place in a private space with comfortable seating, which promotes confidentiality, engagement, and focus. Virtual or hybrid meetings also work well and may be easier to schedule; they are particularly useful if the team includes individuals from outside the department or institution. Participants in virtual meetings should be encouraged to turn on their cameras, if possible, to increase interactivity. A formal agenda is effective in facilitating participation. Mentees should be encouraged (and perhaps expected) to formally present their progress, challenges, and plans, which allows for constructive feedback, brain-storming, and encouragement, as well as providing a structure for the meeting.

ASSEMBLING A MENTORING TEAM

You may be assigned as a primary mentor through a formal program or a mentee may approach you and ask you to be their mentor. Primary mentors are valuable, but no single individual, no matter the quality of their experience and mentoring skills, is equipped to provide the 360-degree mentoring that is needed in the complex and rapidly evolving context of Academic Health Centers. Thus, as a mentor, it's important to develop your skills at helping mentees to develop their own mentoring team. The first step is to meet with your mentee to discuss ground rules and expectations, and to explore the mentee's goals, both broadly and in the context of the relationship. Once you understand the mentee's goals, it is worthwhile have a meeting with the specific agenda of identifying what other mentors they will need to be successful in their goals. They likely already have some mentors who could be formally engaged for some of those needs, but existing mentors are almost never sufficient for all of their mentoring needs.

One of the most valuable assets you bring to any mentoring relationship is your network and social capital; use it to connect your mentee with additional mentors. Brainstorm with the mentee: Who in your network could fill the roles you identified together? Who in your network could connect the mentee with additional mentors? If they would benefit from serving on a specific institutional, regional, or national committee or as a participant in a multi-center project, how can you sponsor them so they get selected?

While formally-assigned mentoring teams generally have explicit expectations, a meeting schedule, and required reporting, organically grown mentoring teams usually function on a hub and spoke model. The mentee is connected with multiple mentors, with whom they develop relationships that individually combine to meet their broad range of mentoring needs. As a primary mentor, however, you have the opportunity to give them experience mentoring up in your own relationship and encourage them to take the lead in all of their mentoring relationships.

CHALLENGES OF MENTORING TEAMS

The use of mentoring teams is growing, and for good reason. Nonetheless, there are some challenges, including when mentors give conflicting advice, the mentee has conflict with a mentor, or the mentee reports discrimination and harassment, whether by another mentor or in some other context.

Conflicting advice. Because of their diversity of experience and perspective, mentors may offer conflicting advice to a mentee. This may be obvious in a formal mentoring team meeting, or the mentee may approach you for assistance in navigating conflicting advice they have received. You are likely to have given advice in this conflict, so it's important to distance yourself, to the extent possible, from what you think the mentee should do. In this situation, it is useful to call on coaching skills: listening, asking powerful questions, supporting, and challenging. What are the mentee's goals? What are the advantages and disadvantages of each piece of advice? What are their ideas and concerns related to resolving the conflicting advice? A frequent source of concern is that, regardless of whose advice they select, they could hurt their relationship with those whose advice they don't follow; as a mentor, you can help them figure out how to approach these difficult conversations.

Conflict. You may also be asked by the mentee to help them navigate a challenging or dysfunctional mentoring relationship. As the leader of a formal mentoring team, you can directly intervene; as a primary mentor, your role is primarily to coach them through improving the relationship or closing it with grace. Your availability, support, encouragement, and coaching are particularly important in those situations. It is also important to make clear that solving the issue is the mentee's responsibility.

Concerns about discrimination or harassment. If mentees experience discrimination or harassment—or are concerned that may be a problem, they may consult with their mentor for advice. As a faculty member, it is important to recognize that, under University of Utah Rule 1-012 (*https://regulations.utah.edu/general/rules/R1-012.php*), you are considered a mandatory reporter with a duty to notify the Office of Equal Opportunity and Affirmative Action. You can notify the OEO online (*https://oeo.utah.edu/*) or by calling 801-581-8365 or emailing *oeo@utah.edu*. In this situation, you should inform the mentee of you are required to inform the OEO of the incident and that the you and the OEO will preserve their privacy and facilitate a complaint if they wish to file one. This 10-minute video is extremely informative and worth watching to learn more about what to do in such a situation before you encounter it. This SafeU web page is a useful quick reference guide. (See Section 7, Ethical Considerations, for more information)

ASSIGNED MENTORING TEAM CHECKLIST

What is the purpose of the mentoring team?	
Who are the mentors (including yourself!)? (roles, expertise)	
Who is the mentee?	
What conflicts of interest do you have? How can you mitigate them? (See Section 7, Ethical Considerations)	
What is expected? (frequency of meetings, areas of focus, outcomes)	
What are the mentee's goals?	
What are the ground rules?	
How can you contribute to those goals?	
How will you know when the work of the team is complete?	

BUILDING MENTORING TEAM CHECKLIST

What are the mentee's goals?	
What expertise do you provide? Will you be their primary mentor? If not, what does the mentee hope to gain from your mentorship?	
What expertise could be added to the team?	
Who are internal mentors who could fill mentoring roles?	
Who are external mentors who could fill mentoring roles?	
What opportunities do you have to connect the mentee to other mentors?	

ADDITIONAL PROMPTS

As you reflect on creating a comprehensive, mentee-focused, and engaged mentoring team, consider the following prompts:

- What is my role on the team? Do I have the capacity and commitment to contribute what is expected of me? If not, is there someone else who could replace me?

- How can I facilitate the mentee to embrace mentoring up, empowering them to identify their own goals and manage the mentoring team?

- What resources are available if I am concerned about the mentee's commitment, resources, mental health, or safety?

- If I have more than one role in the mentee's career (e.g., supervisor, voting member of promotion committee, research collaborator), how can I make sure I am acting as a mentor when appropriate?

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2. Byington CL, Keenan H, Phillips JD, Childs R, Wachs E, Berzins MA, Clark K, Torres MK, Abramson J, Lee V, Clark EB. A Matrix Mentoring Model That Effectively Supports Clinical and Translational Scientists and Increases Inclusion in Biomedical Research: Lessons from the University of Utah. Acad Med. 2016; 91:497–502.

3. Manuel SP, Poorsattar SP. Mentoring up: Twelve tips for successfully employing a mentee-driven approach to mentoring relationships. Med Teach. 2021; 43:384-387.

4. Henry-Noel N, Bishop M, Gwede CK, Petkova E, Szumacher E. Mentorship in Medicine and Other Health Professions. J Cancer Educ. 2019; 34:629-637.

5. Mentors and Sponsors Can Accelerate Your Career: https://insights.som.yale.edu/insights/how-finding-mentor-or-even-better-sponsor-can-accelerate-your-career

SECTION 9. LIFE CYCLE OF MENTORING

Unlike many professional relationships, such as coaching or direct supervisory relationships, which are shorter-term or term-limited, a mentoring relationship is often indefinite in time scope. What might start off as mentoring on a project may eventually develop into a more personal mentoring relationship. The mentoring can continue for as long as there is mutual benefit from the arrangement. Because of the potential length of the mentoring relationship, care should be taken to invest in the relationship itself, beyond the professional productivity or problem-solving aspects. With enough attention to the mentoring relationship in the form of check-ins and active communication, the relationship can become stronger and more durable and continue to serve the mentor and mentee throughout a career.

It's usually the case that the mentor in the relationship is more established while the mentee is still becoming established. This means that the mentee will experience more change in their perspective and career circumstances over time than the mentor. This is important for the mentor to note because the mentor's stability does not often reflect the developing circumstances of the mentee. A mentee who is quite lacking in perspective in the first year of mentorship will likely be much more seasoned by the fifth year. It may be that over time, the mentee may become the equal of the mentor or even surpass the mentor. **It is the responsibility of the mentor to recognize the growth of the mentee and to adapt the mentorship accordingly.**

▎THREE PHASES OF CAREER MENTORING

With good mentorship, mentees can flourish, and this growth can change the nature and focus of the mentoring relationship. Although this shifting is continuous, we will, for the sake of clarity, highlight three major phases: Early, Mid, and Late.

Early Phase: Mentoring relationships often start in one of two ways: formally or informally. In formal arrangements there is usually an organizational assignment of a mentee with one or more mentors. In informal beginnings, there is usually a more junior member seeking the assistance and advice of a more senior member; over time, the junior member seeks to establish a more purposeful mentoring relationship. In both cases, there is a need to "define" the mentoring relationship early on (goals, commitments, meeting frequencies, agendas, etc., see Section 3, Setting Ground Rules and Commitments).

Although the mentee is responsible for defining their needs and setting the agenda, the mentor should also be active during this stage. The mentee often doesn't know what they don't know. The mentor during this phase brings a larger perspective to the thoughts and plans of the mentee. The mentor can also serve in other roles during this phase, such as an advocate or a connector. In academic settings, early career faculty are often encouraged to develop an Individual Development Plan (IDP; see Section 3, Setting Ground Rules and Commitments and Section 5, Using Coaching Skills in Mentoring). If so, the IDP is a good channel for the mentor to work with the mentee to translate the mentoring into a specific output.

Mid Phase: In the early phase, there is a higher level of dependence on the mentor. For mentors, this can feel good; it feels like the mentor is actively contributing/shaping the mentee. As time progresses, the mentee will have a clearer sense of their own agenda. The mentee will also build their own professional network as well as more and more independent opportunities. This is a good thing, and yet for mentors, they can experience a sense of loss. Mentors must remember the mantra that they must act in the best interest of the mentee, and in this case adjust their mentoring accordingly.

What might this adjustment look like? The primary adjustment is to recognize the increased capability of the mentee to guide themselves. They still benefit from the relationship, but the mentor should be less directive in this phase and guide even more through questions than through answers. This is also a phase where high levels of collaborative professional productivity can be achieved between the mentor and mentee. The mentor and mentee know and trust one another, and the mentee is becoming capable but not necessarily fully independent.

Late Phase: Finally, as the relationship matures, the mentor and mentee will not only relate to one another as teacher/student, but also as respected colleagues. If the relationship has developed into this late/mature stage, there will be great satisfaction and trust between the mentor and mentee. The mentee at this stage will likely be fully independent. Contact between the mentor and mentee may be more sporadic and on an "as needed" basis. The work of mentorship is the least active at this stage. This is the "fruit" of the work done in the previous two stages, and as the mentor served as a caring guide, the mentee will value the relationship and recognize its role in their development and success.

▍WHEN THE RELATIONSHIP ISN'T WORKING OUT

While mentoring can be rewarding, these are human relationships and are subject to complex dynamics. Why mentoring relationships don't work out can sometimes be attributed to a misalignment in values (e.g., mentee wants to work on X, but the mentor has no interest or background in X). Most commonly, however, mentoring relationships fail because of inattention to the relationship, which, over time, erodes trust in the relationship. Reasons for failure in mentoring include:

Stemming from **Mentor Behavior**
* Mentor not committing adequate time to mentoring
* Mentor not understanding the mentee's context and being too directive
* Mentor not acting in the mentee's best interest

Stemming from **Mentee Behavior**
* Mentee is passive and doesn't initiate agenda
* Mentee doesn't heed guidance
* Mentee doesn't follow through with agreed upon commitments

Stemming from **Mutual Behavior**
* Mentee and mentor not aligned in assumptions and expectations
* Mentee and mentor not aligned in professional interests and goals
* Changes in roles and circumstances of mentor and mentee

As you begin to recognize that a relationship is "drifting", what should you do?

First, look at aspects relating to mutual behavior. Perhaps when the mentoring relationship started, expectations were not properly set or circumstances have changed and the expectations require updating. Return to that process and reassess goals and reaffirm commitments and expectations (see Section 3, Setting Ground Rules and Commitments and Section 4, Building Trust).

Second, look at aspects relating to your (mentor) behavior. Perhaps you, as the mentor, are being too directive, and the mentee doesn't have the courage to tell you. Look at ways you can improve your own mentoring behavior and acknowledge any shortcomings that you notice about yourself.

Third, look at aspects relating to the mentee's behavior. Some mentees need feedback about how to stay properly engaged in a mentoring relationship. Don't go here first; look at the mutual behavior and your own behavior first.

Mentoring is meant to be meaningful and rewarding to both sides and both sides have a responsibility to maintaining and growing the relationship. If a relationship is drifting, there is often more than one cause. Re-focus on the relationship and how each side can better contribute into it.

In the end, there are times when the mentoring relationship does not serve both sides. If a meaningful effort to salvage a failing relationship does not yield satisfactory results, each side has the option to evaluate and unilaterally decide their willingness to stay in the relationship.

TOOL (WORKSHEET/CHECKLIST)

▌PHASES OF MENTORING

	Early	**Mid**	**Late**
Mentee's Context What does the mentee need? What is the mentee focused on? What should they focus on?			
Key Actions			
Watch Out For			

▌TENDING TO A STRUGGLING RELATIONSHIP

What is the main issue we are experiencing in the mentoring relationship?		
What Mutual Behaviors are contributing to this issue?	**What Mentor Behaviors are contributing to this issue?**	**What Mentee Behaviors are contributing to this issue?**
How do we address the points above?	**How do we address the points above?**	**How do we address the points above?**

ADDITIONAL PROMPTS

As you reflect on the phase of mentoring that you are in with your mentee, consider the following prompts?

- What phase of mentoring are we in? Early/Mid/Late?

- How has my mentee grown in the recent past and how must I adapt to that growth?

- Am I continuing to act in the best interest of my mentee?

- What do I get from the relationship and how can I communicate my wants and needs in this mentoring relationship?

- If I'm sensing that the relationship is drifting, what is my role in that drift? How might I communicate my expectations to the mentee about their role?

- Is it time to let this relationship go?

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES & BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Baerlocher MO, O'Brien J, Newton M, Gautam T, Noble J. The mentor-mentee relationship in academic medicine. Eur J Intern Med. 2011;22(6):e166-7.

- Balmer D, D'Alessandro D, Risko W, Gusic ME. How mentoring relationships evolve: A longitudinal study of academic pediatricians in a physician educator faculty development program. J Contin Educ Health Prof. 2011;31(2):81-86.

- Rustgi AK, Hecht GA. Mentorship in academic medicine. Gastroenterology. 2011;141(3):789-792.

- Center for Health Leadership & Practice Mentoring Guide: https://www.rackham.umich.edu/downloads/more-mentoring-guide-for-mentors.pdf

SECTION 10. BUILDING A MENTORING CULTURE

CURRENT CHALLENGES WITH MENTORING

Mentoring has long been recognized as critical for success in academic healthcare, yet early career faculty members often struggle to find, or have negative experiences with mentoring relationships. While formal research mentor training is available and increasingly expected, lack of training for career mentors reduces the effectiveness of mentoring programs and informal mentoring.

Traditionally, mentoring paired a senior, experienced faculty member with a trainee or early-career faculty member embarking on a similar career path, in a long-term relationship, with the expectation that this relationship would fulfill all the mentee's needs. While many of these relationships were (and continue to be) mutually rewarding, many new faculty members struggled to find mentors, or found their mentoring relationships ineffective, frustrating, or discouraging.

Common pitfalls by mentors which may reduce the effectiveness of mentoring include:

*   Not committing sufficient time or energy to the relationship.
*   Not integrating one's authentic life perspective or acknowledging one's biases.
*   Not encouraging and teaching mentees to take ownership of the relationship, set the agenda, and maintain communication.
*   Not acting in the best interest of the mentee.
*   Being too directive and not asking questions or listening adequately.
*   Avoiding giving critical but helpful feedback to the mentee.
*   Allowing conflicts of interests and bias to compromise the professional relationship.
*   Reliance on a single mentor, rather than a network of mentors with different experiences, strengths, and expertise.
*   Not understanding the growth and the eventual independence that the mentee will develop.
*   A transactional concept of mentoring which does not serve the growth and development of people.

Even though mentors often fall short of excellence in their mentoring, mentors still want to be good mentors. Much of the gap stems from a lack of awareness or training. Many mentors feel that they are "thrown" into the role, and had they received the proper guidance or training, that their mentorship would be much more effective and rewarding.

CREATING THIS GUIDE

This guide was created to support the development of mentors who are dedicated to providing mentoring to early career faculty that facilitates their overall, long-term engagement and success, whether their primary focus is education, investigation, or clinical practice advancement.

For those mentors who are committed to excellence in mentoring, this guide has outlined ways to overcome ten common barriers to good mentoring. Each section addresses a major pitfall and provides tools and resources to help mentors navigate that aspect of mentoring effectively.

Recommended Timing	Recommended Timing	Notes
Introduction to (Career) Mentoring	Not committing sufficient time or energy to the relationship.	Put effort into tending to this important professional relationship.
What Do You Bring to the Table as a Mentor?	Not integrating one's authentic life perspective or acknowledging one's biases.	You bring a unique and valuable perspective to the mentoring relationship...as well as baggage.
Setting Ground Rules and Commitments	Not encouraging and teaching mentees to take ownership of the relationship, set the agenda, and maintain communication.	Set the mentoring relationship up for success by developing common understanding and commitments.
Building Trust in a Mentoring Relationship	Not acting in the best interest on the mentee.	Ask yourself, are you acting in the best interest of the mentee?
Using Coaching Skills in Mentoring	Being too directive rather than asking questions and listening.	Using coaching skills to align your mentoring with mentee goals and values.
Giving Difficult Feedback in the Context of Mentoring	Avoiding giving critical but helpful feedback to the mentee.	Your mentee needs your candid, non-judgmental, and compassionate feedback.
Ethical Considerations in Mentoring	Allowing conflicts of interest and bias to compromise the professional relationship.	Recognize, acknowledge, and absolve conflicts of interest and biases.
Mentoring Teams	Reliance on a single mentor, rather than a network of mentors with different experiences, strengths, and expertise.	Encourage your mentee to develop additional mentoring relationships to expand their perspectives and networks.
Life Cycle of Mentoring	Not understanding the growth and the eventual independence that the mentee will develop.	Be attuned to the need for adjusting to the changing nature of the relationship over time.
Building a Mentoring Culture	A transactional concept of mentoring that does not serve the growth and development of people.	Through good mentorship you can have a tremendously positive effect on others and the organization.

Your experience in mentoring may not have aligned with our discussions in this workbook, or you may already have been following many of these principles. Our hope is that in this training, you have learned valuable ideas, skills, and perspectives that will make you more effective and collaborative as a mentor.

BUILDING A CULTURE OF MENTORING

Updating these ingrained habits and expectations requires training, support, and a change in culture to better balance development of others rather than purely individual accomplishment in assessment of faculty accomplishments.

The primary benefit of mentoring was often conceived as uni-directional, with all the benefits accruing to the mentee, but mentors also reap rewards. A primary mentor benefit might be a sense of fulfillment from contributing to another's development and success, but mentors may also benefit from increased productivity through collaboration and receive credit for mentee's success.

The long-term goal of this guide and the Mentor Training Program at the University of Utah is to foster a Mentoring Culture, where all faculty have training in mentoring, and use those skills not just in long-term mentoring dyads and teams, but in every day interactions, to facilitate continuous growth and development of colleagues and trainees. Benefits of developing such a mentoring culture include increased retention, improved morale, increased organizational commitment and job satisfaction, accelerated leadership development, better succession planning, reduced stress, stronger and more cohesive teams, and increased individual and organizational learning.

We hope that this guide on effective mentoring will help you practice and realize the benefits excellent mentoring (and coaching).

ADDITIONAL PROMPTS

As you reflect on the value of mentoring and your role as a mentor, consider the following prompts.

*   What is the value of good mentoring?

*   How do we value mentoring as an institution?

*   Are there examples in your own experiences of older vs. newer models of mentoring? How did your experiences compare? What could you learn from your experiences and apply to your behaviors as a mentor?

*   What are the advantages of focused, long-term mentoring dyads?

*   What have you learned from your own mentors about how to be a better mentor, whether by example or through learning what not to do?

*   Commitment: what is a step you are willing to take to foster a bi-directional mentoring relationship or your mentee's unique path?

*   What will you do differently as a result of this workbook?

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES & BIBLIOGRAPHY

*   Zachary, LJ. Creating a Mentoring Culture: The Organization's Guide. 2005. Jossey-Bass.
*   HBR Mentorship Starts with Company Culture:
    https://hbr.org/2019/12/real-mentorship-starts-with-company-culture-not-formal-programs