

Mentoring for Success

What is and is not a mentor?

A mentor is a:

- Role model
- Active listener
- Resource
- Leader
- Communicator
- Skill builder
- Negotiator
- Facilitator that is

Non-judgmental *Resourceful*
Respectful *Supportive*
Empathetic *Encouraging*
Committed *Accountable*

A mentor is not a:

- Therapist
- Parent
- Counselor
- Advisor that is

Authoritarian *Judgmental*
Critical *Rejecting*
Disrespectful

Mentoring versus Coaching

COACHing is:

Task oriented

Short term

Performance driven

Mentoring is:

Relationship oriented

Long term

Development driven

What do Mentors do?

- Listens
- Uses non-judgemental questioning
- Motivates others
- Can relate to issues of the mentee
- Wants to help
- Is trustworthy, responsible and ensures confidentiality

What Mentors don't do

- Mentors will **not**:
 - Take action on behalf of mentees
 - Intervene on behalf of mentees
 - Take part in any succession planning discussions that relate to their own mentee
 - Discuss the mentee with the line manager

Mentor - Tips for Starters

- Stay in your zone of expertise/experience
- Be clear that mentee sets pace of relationship
- Advise, do not manage
- Extend mentee's developmental network - suggest additional mentors to address unique needs
- Be reliable, patient and consistent

Mentor - Tips for Starters

- Do not try to fix
- Listen without judgment; Advise and do not manage
- Be open and honest about what you can and cannot do
- Recognize that mentee may be uncomfortable asking for help
- Stay in your zone of expertise/experience
- Extend mentee's developmental network - suggest additional mentors to address unique needs
- Be reliable, patient and consistent

Mentee – Tips for Starters

- Seek counsel and advice, not a supervisor who directs actions.
- Be aware of potential pitfalls: Overbearing mentor, mentor exploitation of mentee's work.
- Be sensitive to the difference between asking for help/advice from your mentor and demanding favors from your mentor.
- Synthesize lessons learned from all mentors – become your own person.

Establishing Trust & Respect

- Be consistent, reliable and predictable
- Insure confidentiality
- Trust is reciprocal, if the mentor trusts the mentee and vice versa the relationship is more likely to build on trust.
- Once trust is lost it is very difficult to rebuild
- Value and respect differences

Mentoring Women

Women face additional challenges in finding mentors

- Limited access to potential mentors due to limited informal networks
- Few same-sex role models
- Peer-perceptions of cross-gender mentoring relationships

Mentoring provides additional benefits for

- Sharing “inside” knowledge about the profession, the department
- Expanding networks
- Providing encouragement and role modeling

Mentoring Women

Provide assistance to women in identifying and forming mentoring relationships

- Women benefit more from mentor-initiated or mutually-initiated relationships (Stonewater, Eveslage & Dingerson 1990)

Multiple mentor model is especially effective for women

- “Collective mentoring” model can create supportive environment
- “Peer mentoring” can also be effective, esp. as complement to mentoring team
- Encourage protégés to look beyond research group, department, discipline, institution

Effective Mentoring Conversations

- Conversations are the foundation for strong relationships
- Questions are an important element in mentoring conversations
- Open ended questions are particularly effective

Open ended questions

- Designed to encourage more detailed and meaningful responses
- Wonderful tool to promote creating thinking, problem-solving skills and cognitive growth
- Create free and open lines of communication
- Means of developing rapport, trust and credibility
- Perceived as less threatening than closed ended questions
- No right or wrong answer

Open ended questions

- In an open ended question there is:
 - No leading
 - No prompting
 - No interrupting
- Example: *“What have you found most interesting in your current job?”*

Closed ended questions

- Usually answered by either yes or no
- Can often be leading, presuming or probing
- Often stifle open engagement in conversation and limit information sharing

“Have you had a mentor before?”

“Do you see yourself going into industry?”

“Why” Questions

Be careful when using “Why” questions as they are often interpreted as judgmental and can close down a conversation.

“Why do you want to take an academic job?”

“Why do you want to give a talk at that meeting?”

“Why do you think it is important to take a postdoc?”

Block and Unlock Words and Phrases

Unlock phrases provide an opening to learn more about the mentee.

“What do you like about....?”

Block phrases stop or stall a conversation.

“How do you expect to...? No....”

BLOCK Phrases

Avoid block words and phrases as they can imply manipulation, judgment, criticism, control or correction.

Also – be mindful of your tone and implication when using the word “you”. It may be interpreted as implying power.

“Did you...?”

BLOCK and UNLOCK Phrases

Block or Unlock phrases?

You must...

It's not so bad...

I like what you are.....

You need to....

Did you....

Have you thought about...?

How do you expect to...?

Can you give me an example...? Tell me more...

Reflective Listening

A communication strategy involving two key steps:

Seeking to understand a speaker's idea and then offering the idea back to the speaker to confirm that the idea has been understood correctly.

Listening closely with their whole body to the content and intent of what someone is saying.

Reflective Listening

Use paraphrasing (restating what you heard) as a tool to reassure your mentee that you are interested in understanding what is being said.

“It sounds like what you are saying is....”

“What I hear you saying is....”

“Let’s see if I understand what you are saying....”

“Do I have this right...?”

Others?

Reflective Listening

When practicing reflective listening, the mentor should not be thinking –

“What can I do for my mentee?”

But rather steer the conversation to obtain more information to the following questions

“How can I help her work towards a realistic solution?”

“How can I help her get her needs met?”

Engage in the Listening Process

Give the mentee full attention

- Make eye contact
- Nod your head
- Offer verbal affirmations and short phrases that will not cast shame, blame or judgment such as:
 - “I understand....”
 - “That’s interesting....”
 - “I’m with you....”
 - “Tell me more about that...”
 - “Really.....” (but be careful with this one)

Listen for feelings, not just content

- Is there an emotional tone in the comments?
Fear? Frustration? Disappointment?
Embarrassment? Excitement?

Listen for feelings, not just content

An effective listener listens for what the mentee is saying about herself rather than the situation, incident or others involved.

“I’m worried that I won’t finish my thesis in a timely manner”

It’s more effective for the mentor to acknowledge the state of worry rather than the situation.

“I can appreciate your worry as you don’t want to be in graduate school forever”

Rather than offering a solution on how to get the thesis done in a timely manner.

Let's practice

Break up into groups of 3: Mentee, mentor and observer.
Role-play the scenerio given. Once completed, switch roles and repeat. Each group is given 3 scenerios.

Have the mentee read the question and the mentor practice reflective listening techniques to help the mentee come to a solution. The observer looks for examples of reflective listening and conversation unlocking techniques used.

When the mentor-mentee discussion is completed, the observer reports what she likes about the mentor's approach.

Switch roles for the next 2 scenerios.

My advisor refuses to acknowledge anything that I do right. How can I change this?

I would like to network at meetings but I'm very shy. What do I do?

The chairman of my department seems to easily talk to the other male members in my department but rarely interacts with me.

I am having difficulty getting some of my research papers completed and I am concerned that it will work against me in my upcoming evaluation. What should I do?

I have a very heavy teaching load and rarely have time for my research. I am very worried that the effort that I am putting into teaching will be to my detriment when coming up for promotion.

It seems to me that the men in the department can easily recruit the best graduate students and I am left with the weaker ones. What should I do?

I believe that I am doing some of the best research in my field but I worry that others are not noticing my work or are overlooking it in favor of others. What should I do?

Reporting out

Is it hard to use reflective listening?

How can reflective listening be more beneficial to the mentee?

Can you think of a situation where reflective listening would not be beneficial to the mentee? The mentor?

Distance Mentoring

- How to use e-mail
 - Use e-mail to set up meetings (face-to-face or phone), clarify plans/goals, pose non-time urgent questions, review plans, maintain contact.
 - Don't use e-mail to give critical or complex feedback, provide impressions of other's behavior, provide impressions of third parties, exchange sensitive information.
- Communication Challenges
 - Listen for nonverbal cues (e.g., pregnant pauses, voice tone, tempo, volume)
 - Push for specific information, clarify meanings
 - Summarize agreements



Self Assessment

- What are your best skills at mentoring?
- How can you improve?

Mentoring for Success

Topics Discussed

- What does it mean to be a good mentor or mentee?
- Assessment of your skills and interests
- Stages of the mentoring process
- Mentoring techniques and tools