

What is Mentoring?

I have been involved with mentoring for over ten years, both as a mentee and as a mentor. At it's most basic, mentoring is the provision of perspective, wisdom, and knowledge from someone with a solid history of experience. This information is passed to a mentee.

The mentee is the relationship is the driver of the program. Only the mentee can determine what they want to achieve through the program. Once those goals are discussed with the mentor, the partnership can begin.

The mentor cannot provide a specific roadmap for the mentee to follow. The mentor can only listen to the mentee, help them see alternative perspectives, suggest possible strategies and details analogous situations that achieved a successful outcome. A mentor can facilitate events that will be beneficial to the mentee.

Mentoring Guide

This guide is intended to help those new to a mentoring relationship. In the first meeting between Mentor and Mentee the following discussion should take place.

- The program is driven by the mentee. The mentor serves as a sounding board, provides alternate perspectives, and assists in the decision-making process.
- The mentee acknowledges that they have primary responsibility for the successful completion of their personal growth and/or moving forward in their professional career. The mentee should maintain a high level of professionalism, self-motivation, engagement, curiosity, and ethical standards.
- Goals (what the mentee hopes to achieve as a result of this relationship, e.g., gain perspective relative to skills necessary for success, exploring new career opportunities/alternatives, obtain knowledge of organizational culture, networking, leadership skill development, etc.)
- Steps to achieving goals as stated above (e.g., meeting regularly, manuscripts/grants, collaborating on research projects, steps to achieving independence, etc.).
- Meeting frequency (frequency, duration, and location of meetings).
- Any sensitive issues that are discussed will be held in the strictest of confidence. Issues that are off limits for discussion should be identified.
- Plan for evaluating relationship effectiveness (e.g., bi-annual review of mentorship and outcomes/accomplishments).

- If either party finds the mentoring relationship unproductive and requests that it be terminated, the Mentor and Mentee agree to honor that individual's decision without question or blame.
- This mentorship relationship will continue if both parties feel comfortable with its productivity or until 12 months has passed. Extensions beyond 12 months will be at the discretion of the Mentee and Mentor in tandem.