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Being a Successful Mentee: Getting the Most out of Mentoring

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The Experience of a Mentor

..... “So in case you have ever been concerned about wasting my time, don’t be (sure I’m in a hurry professionally speaking. I’m on a long distance run punctuated by sprints.) But in many ways, it is how we are changed by and what we learn together in the process that is the most important outcome. To my mind, this is a two way street that is paved with privilege.”

Denny Drotar, PhD – Email to his mentees, October 2004



Types of Relationships

- What is the difference between a mentor and an advisor, collaborator, or advocate?
 - Advisor: offers advice, not necessarily reciprocal or a long-term relationship
 - Advocate: advocates with or without relationship
 - Collaborator: more equal and may not have overlapping areas of expertise
- Mentors incorporate these roles but are a mutual, long-term relationship

Mentoring: What It Isn't

The New Breed



"I expected more from my mentor than 'Been there, done that.'"

How Do I Find a Mentor?

- Think about the general qualities and your specific needs
- Ask around – your peers, your leaders
- Meet with potential mentors
- Start with small projects
- Make sure to have the conversation!!!

Mentor

- Have the energy to do it
 - Feel that they have something to offer
 - Genuinely like the mentee
- Can act in the mentee's best interests (dual relationships)
- Will respect the mentee's ideas/ownership of ideas (diminished autonomy)

Mentee

- Articulates personal goals and objectives
- Responsible for meetings and follows through on commitments
- Can respond to feedback

Mentoring for YOU!

- What kind of mentoring do I need?
- What is the mentoring environment?
- Is it a dual relationship?
- Are there multiple mentors/mentees?
- What is my preferred communication style?



What Kind of Mentoring Do I Need?

- Specific clinical skills
- Scholarly activity:
 - Development of evaluative evidence/work products
 - National networking/reputation
- Leadership skills and development
- Educational/mentoring skills
- Work/life integration
- Others?

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Mentoring Environment

- The mentor's stage of professional development
- The frequency of meetings
- The management of diversity: mentors and mentees can be diverse in a variety of ways; expect unconscious bias
 - Those that are “obvious” may be best to address before an issue
 - Non-obvious ones will come up; best to inquire without attacking (Most people are not malevolent; just uninformed)

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Dual Relationships

- Dual relationships include administrators/supervisors, key stake-holders
- Advantages:
 - May increase commitment to you
 - May be the best source of expertise
- Risks:
 - May be a conflict of interest
 - May impact skill development
 - May impact autonomy



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Multiple Mentors

- Multiple mentors – advantages:
 - Reduce the “pressure” for mentor to be all things
 - Help to divide the tasks
- Multiple mentors – risks:
 - Have to be able to work together in supportive manner
 - Multiple mentors (or mentees) can create competitive feelings



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Preferred Communication Style



Preferred Communication Style

- Directness of the communication
- Demonstration of support
- Processing information
- Other key ones?

Direct Communication

- “Objective II is boring – it doesn’t convey the impact the project will have.”
- “Your project is really important. You are doing really interesting work and it will have great impact. You want to make sure that the important impact your project will have is conveyed.”

Demonstration of Support

When noting you never leave clinic before 8:00 PM:

- “It is so frustrating that our clinics are so busy and understaffed.”
- “I found that if I chart while I am talking to the patients, I get out much earlier.”



Processing Information

- Do you prefer time to process yourself or to think aloud with your mentor?
- Does the mentor prefer to understand the underpinnings of your decisions?



Next Steps

- Where are you in the process?
 - Do you need to find a mentor/mentee?
 - Do you need to enhance the relationship?
- Think about one next step that you are going to do; turn to your neighbor and make a commitment to doing that

