Are You Ready to Be a Mentor?

Elizabeth M Hecht, MD  
Vice Chair for Academic Affairs  
Professor of Radiology  
emh2002@med.cornell.edu
Objectives

- Mentoring mythbusting
- Readiness checklist
- Mentor malpractice
- Communication and feedback
What is Mentorship?

• Working alliance, active partnership
• Supports personal and professional growth of the mentee
• Roles may include
  o Advisor
  o Coach
  o Connector
  o Sponsorship
  o Role-model
• Should I be a mentee or mentor?
  o It’s not either/or
  o You can have both at the same time

• Mentoring myths…
  o Mentoring is a waste of my time; it will distract, exhaust me
  o The best mentor is the most “successful” or “famous” person
  o Once assigned a mentor or I pick a mentor, I am stuck for life
  o “Ball is in the mentor’s court”, choice is theirs
## Benefits of Mentoring

### Mentorship Benefits

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>For the Mentor</th>
<th>For the Institution and Specialty</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Belong to a network</td>
<td>Development of networks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Develop base of support via loyalty of protégés</td>
<td>Enhanced productivity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Higher salary and rate of promotion</td>
<td>External recognition</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Immortality/legacy</td>
<td>Improved morale</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Improved technical expertise</td>
<td>Improved skill of junior members</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Less likely to burn out or plateau</td>
<td>Improved technological capability</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal satisfaction</td>
<td>Institutional efficiency</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pride in developing the next generation</td>
<td>National collaborations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recognition by superiors</td>
<td>Recruitment advantage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Renewed sense of purpose</td>
<td>Retention of senior members</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stronger perception of career success</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(more evidence driven data is needed however)

---

**W Coates Acad Emerg Med 2012**

**LT Eby et. al. J Vocat Behav. 2008**

**D Sambunjak et al. JAMA 2006**
Mentorship Roles, Think Bigger

**FIGURE 4-1** Example mentorship configurations. (A) Dyad (B) Triads (C) Collective or Group (D) Network
e.g. peer mentor gp e.g. social media forum

Expectations of a Mentor

• “I don’t want to mentor a clone of me. I want to mentor somebody who wants to do something different. It’s about asking different questions and building on what’s been done. It’s about making an impact and looking at things through a different lens.”

- Joseph Osborne MD, PhD, Chief, Nuclear and Molecular Imaging at WCM, Interview in JNM 2020
What do I do as a Mentor?

• **Support**
  - Build rapport
  - Maintain open communication
    - Be open to new ideas
    - Be authentic
  - Align expectations, advocate

• **Challenge**
  - Set tasks, high standards, modelling, provide a mirror
  - Facilitate mentee agency
  - Provide constructive feedback

• **Provide vision** for a satisfying career

Adapted from the Faculty Mentoring Toolkit by Mitchell D. Feldman, MD, Mphil
UCSF ©2017
Imposter Fears

Tina Fey: “The beauty of the impostor syndrome is you vacillate between extreme egomania and a complete feeling of: ‘I’m a fraud! Oh God, they’re onto me! I’m a fraud!’”

Maya Angelou: The prizewinning author once said, after publishing her 11th book, that every time she wrote another one she’d think to herself: “Uh-oh, they’re going to find out now. I’ve run a game on everybody.”

Imposter Fears

- Commonly experienced, you are not alone
- Remember, you have a great deal to offer
- Ask your past mentees, peers for objective feedback
- Own your strengths, acknowledge your weaknesses
- Trust yourself—you know more than you think you do." — Benjamin Spock
Overcoming Imposter Syndrome

• Learn to recognize fact from fright

• Step back a moment and get some perspective
  o Talk to your colleagues, friends, mentor
  o Life is not a competition, it’s about personal growth
  o Take a moment to reflect on what you are doing well
  o “Perfect is the enemy of progress” – Churchill
  o Compliment yourself, a favorite quote in your time of need

• Can co-exist with depression, anxiety and other mental health issues so DONT hesitate to seek professional help
Mentor Readiness Checklist

✓ I have a sincere interest in helping this person succeed
✓ There is mutual interest and compatibility
  • Our assumptions about the process are congruent
✓ I am clear about my role
  • I am the right person to help achieve these goals
  • I can enthusiastically engage in helping this person
  • I am willing to use my network of contacts to help this person succeed
  • I can commit adequate time to mentoring this person
  • I have access to the kind of opportunities that can support this person’s learning
✓ I have the support I need to engage in this relationship in a meaningful way
✓ I am committed to developing my own mentoring skills

Mentor-Mentee Agreement

- How often are we going to meet? Online or in person? Scheduling?
- Who is responsible for setting the agenda?
- What are the goals for this relationship? How often should we revisit/refine them?
- Will there be assignments and deadlines?
- How will we track progress?
- Do we agree our discussions are confidential unless an agreement is made to disclose information?
- Who else is mentoring you, should we ever meet as a group?
- What are the expectations regarding feedback?
- How will we resolve conflict?
- Any other concerns?
Mentor Mis-steps

• Hijack
• Exploit
• Undermine
• Breach trust
• Overly possessive
• MIA/Neglect
  o Bottleneck or disconnected
• Failure to protect/advocate
• Micro-manage, fail to suppress the righting reflex

Culturally Responsive Mentorship

- Mentors may be inclined to downplay or de-emphasize cultural and social diversity in mentoring relationships believing “colorblindness” is desirable.
- Effective mentorship requires that the mentor have an awareness of the identity-related challenges their mentees may have and effectively supporting them in the context of racial realities in the field.
- **Identity matters**
  - Ignoring race, gender, and other important social identities is to deny the formative effect of these identities on students’ experiences in their programs and later careers.
  - Acknowledge your own bias and create safety so feedback can be offered and received bi-directionally.

Communication is Key, Relationships have Challenges

- “We don't see things as they are, we see them as we are”
  - Varied/Anonymous

From the The Tao of Pooh
By Benjamin Hoff
Over 90% of Communication is Nonverbal

Nonverbal Cues

- Body Language
- Face to Face
- Video conferencing
- Phone call
- Written notes
- Email
- Text

- Showing up on time  (respect)
- Sitting at the table  (engagement)
- Posture and gestures, eye contact (self-confidence)
- Facial expression
- Tone, volume
- Attention
- Personal appearance
- Physical space/ contact
Conflicts of Interest and Competing Agendas

• Context matters (biases are real)
• Don’t make assumptions
  o “It’s easy to make the mistake of thinking our mentees are just like us”
• Far more likely, you will first notice differences
• Power differentials (be wary e.g. division chief, chair as mentor), gender, sexual orientation, age, race, socioeconomic
Being Receptive to Feedback

• “Rationalizing, defending and bemoaning won’t get us where we want to be. They become excuses for staying where we are.” –Lois Frankel

• Why is it so hard?
  • We are internally conflicted
  • We are vulnerable, can be easily triggering
  • We often are don’t ask for what we really want

• Think carefully about what you need v. what is being offered, get aligned
Effective Feedback is…

- Honest, candid, nonjudgmental
- Timely
- Focused on specific behavior
  - Discuss how might the behavior be perceived by others
- Acknowledges outside factors that may contribute
- Emphasizes actions, solutions or strategies
  - Identify opportunities for personal growth, development

From the Faculty Mentoring Toolkit
Mitchell D. Feldman, MD, Mphil
UCSF ©2017
Summary

• Mentorship is an **opportunity** but it is also a big **responsibility**
• It is appropriate to **reflect** on whether you have the time, skill set and enthusiasm to be a mentor before accepting the position
• Mentorship is a two way street, **communication** is key and establishing clear **mutually agreed upon expectations** is critical for its success
• **Be honest and compassionate** for your benefit and your mentees’
• **Know your limitations** and encourage mentees to have **multiple mentors** to satisfy their needs