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Chapter 10- Preparing the Effective Mentor

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PREPARING THE EFFECTIVE MENTOR

Natasha Mickel

Abstract

Mentoring is a central component of teaching and learning in academia that involves mentors ranging from novice to advanced mentoring experience. Mentoring has been found to play a crucial role in successful career development at every professional level in academia. Consequently, it's imperative that institutions design and implement mentoring programs that prepare mentors, regardless of background, to establish, build, and maintain positive mentoring relationships.

This chapter begins by discussing mentoring and its role in academia. As institutions strive to retain faculty, staff, and students, it serves institutions well to understand how the successful implementation of effective mentoring programs can close the gap in supporting different stages of professional and educational careers. Individuals that do not have a mentor or have an ineffective mentor may miss out on the support needed to obtain personal and professional growth and balance. Absent or noneffective mentoring tends to result in less productive and less satisfied individuals that are less prepared to face internal and external challenges, which can negatively impact a professional's career and the institutional strength.

This chapter explores specific characteristics of effective mentors. One of the focus areas is on successful communication between the mentor and mentee. Effective communication considers personality characteristics, mentor-mentee expectations, trust, motivation and an expected career pathway. Modeling the characteristics of effective communication will enrich the mentoring relationship for both mentors and mentees.

Mentors also utilize different styles of communication and connect differently based on individual needs and circumstances. Often as mentors, the communication style depends upon the situation itself and possible solutions to support the mentee. Additionally, understanding different communication styles (and when to use them) will also make for a more effective and gratifying

relationship. The chapter will further provide insight of ineffective communication that mentors may exhibit in an effort to avoid difficulty in the mentoring relationship.

Being a mentor can have a great effect on a person's confidence. Motivation is utilized to help set goals and create a solid foundation that will strengthen the mentoring relationship during difficult times. Motivation techniques can be key factors for mentors to engage with mentees, especially to understand their goals, expectations, and driving factors for participating in the mentoring relationship. In addition, it's essential for mentors to understand and develop a mentoring plan during the beginning of the mentoring relationship. A description and detailed example of tools to develop a mentoring plan is presented in this chapter.

This chapter also demonstrates a step-by-step process to design a curriculum for academic institutions. The needs analysis is one of the keys to effectively design a campus-wide mentoring program that allows various stakeholders to provide input to align mentoring needs. Additionally, continuous evaluation of the mentoring programs and training feedback can help to shape and improve the mentoring programs to your institution's specific needs. From start to finish, this chapter on mentors will unlock a host of benefits that will impact everything from individual mentor development to institutional mentorship growth.

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To my very first mentor and coach, my mother. Thank you for pushing me beyond my limits. Ron, Chase, and Chandler, thank you for supporting me and loving me.

Introduction

When implementing a mentoring program, it is imperative to understand the intricacies of those who individually encompass the roles in the mentor-mentee relationship. This introduction provides an inclusive framework for reviewing aspects of an effective mentor in a mentoring relationship and provides the reader with a guided outline of mentor qualities. More specifically, the chapter explores the characteristics of the mentor, which include the dynamics of a mentor's role, responsibility, and expectations in the mentoring relationship. Although the mentor in the mentoring relationship lends its role as the primary lead, it is also valuable for the mentor to explore the characteristics of an effective mentee in the mentor-mentee relationship (see Chapter 11). To produce a successful mentor-mentee relationship, each individual—both the mentor and the mentee involved—should understand their role in the mentoring relationship. As a result, the mentoring relationship becomes a reciprocal relationship in which the mentors and mentees will likely learn from each other and acquire knowledge about their specific roles that can benefit future partnerships. These mentoring characteristics exist in all mentoring typologies, such as the traditional hierarchical relationship, reverse, peer, group, and developmental networks (see Chapter 3).

A large component of any relationship is the communication between the parties. Communication is just as imperative and critically vital in a mentor-mentee relationship. The relationship can be most effective when both the mentor and mentee communicate their needs and expectations. Additionally, the trust that sustains an effective mentoring relationship requires clear and continuous communication through exchanging personality traits, goals, and learning opportunities.

In addition to the skills necessary to engage as an effective mentor, there are also benefits to recognizing characteristics of ineffective mentors. Mentoring is a committed relationship that takes a sustained amount of time and dedication, unlike coaching and advising, which tends to be more informal in nature (see Chapter 1). Receiving ineffective support from a mentor can result in a lack of motivation, efficacy, and time loss. Additionally, ineffective mentoring habits could be passed on or masked as beneficial, resulting in unproductive mentoring in the future. Ineffective mentoring could be combated by developing the emotional intelligence of the mentor in the mentoring process. Regarding the role of mentors and their engagement with mentees, there is a positive relationship between emotional intelligence and the degree of confidence that a mentee has in them (Chun et al., 2010). Emotional intelligence is also valuable for mentees, in fact, and is positively related to the extent to which a mentee learns.

While communication and emotional intelligence are important contributing factors to positive mentor-mentee relationships, so are the structure and design of a formalized mentoring program. To design curriculum for a mentoring program, the first step is to assess the mentoring culture of your environment. A mentoring culture defines how institutions have implemented elements of mentoring by showing visible support through leadership, strategic plans, and internal stakeholders. Determining how the culture views mentoring can lead to a robust analysis of the needs of a mentoring program. There are formal and informal ways to support your institution's mentoring culture. Once mentoring training is supported, choosing which mentoring components to promote in your mentoring program will assist in determining the most appropriate facilitation. In addition, evaluating the mentoring program will be just as important for the program in an effort to support the participant's feedback and

recommendations. As institutional changes occur, the mentoring program should adapt to support the current mentoring culture.

As gaps begin to emerge in your mentoring culture, consider those for future research. There may even be some novel decisions or innovations created within your mentoring program that could contribute to the design for others in their environment. Sharing ideas and strategies through research will continue to impact the need and necessity to implement sound and, more importantly, evolving mentoring.

This chapter is arranged to provide the reader with an overview of (a) origins of mentoring and the need to define it, (b) elements of an effective mentor, (c) components of an ineffective mentor, (d) communication in the mentoring relationship, (e) bridging mentor-mentee needs, (f) emotional intelligence in the mentoring process, (g) designing the curriculum, and (h) environmental issues that impact the mentoring relationship.

Origins of Mentoring and the Need to Define It

To understand the significance of a mentor, it is important to explore where the word originated in ancient history. This chapter provides a brief orientation to the history of mentoring, while Chapter 1 goes into greater depth. Various cultures mention the act of mentoring; however, the oldest origin of the word mentor comes from Greek mythology. The name mentor comes from Homer's classic poem, *The Odyssey*. Homer's poem describes the character Odysseus, king of Ithaca, preparing to leave for Troy. During his preparations, he wanted to ensure there was someone who could look after his son, Telemachus, should he not return. Odysseus needed someone to act in his place as a teacher and advisor. Athena, the Goddess of Wisdom, disguises herself as an old friend of Odysseus, named Mentor, so she can impart wisdom and courage to Telemachus (Colley, 2001). In the same way that Athena guides Telemachus, the mentor's role is to support the mentee by listening, sharing their knowledge and experience, providing different perspectives, and offering feedback to help the mentee progress in their career.

In ancient Asian cultures, there are references to the mentor Confucius. In *The Analects*, Confucius has multiple conversations with his followers and depicts himself as a mentor to his disciples. Confucius mentors a group of young men who want to serve in the government. His response to their questions leaves the followers with various learning insights (Colley, 2001). Confucius loves to learn and conveys wisdom from the ancient past. Confucius showed that learning was essential to knowing, and knowing was essential to doing, which, in part, depicts how we understand the term mentor.

Institutions across the country understand the importance of mentoring and are establishing both formal and informal programs to support mentoring in their environment. Understanding that each institution will have a unique mentoring culture, it is important that there be a clear adoption and definition for mentoring. For example, the University of Oklahoma Health Sciences Center defined a mentor as:

An experienced individual engaged in a longitudinal professional developmental relationship with a more novice colleague or mentee; to aid the mentee's transition toward fuller mastery of

knowledge, skills and aptitudes necessary for success, professional progression, and capacity for independent contribution to science and/or practice in the field and productive professional and interprofessional engagement with others. (Mickel et al., 2018, p. 37)

Depending on at the institutional type, ensuring clarity that there is an identified clear definition (see Chapter 1) of mentoring is important to guide the mentoring program. Mentorship in any organization is about building a relationship. In this relationship, two people will learn new things from one another while one person helps lead the other to become better at a job or task. People who are mentors are invested in making a good relationship with their mentees. Mentors envision what it would take to help achieve a mentee's success. Mentors in a formal mentor program will generally mentor individuals at the beginning of their academic journey. Informal mentors offer advice at various points in a mentee's career.

Mentors also help by providing information or resources needed to do the best in their careers. For example, if the new employee has trouble adjusting to their new role or has questions on how best to accomplish certain tasks specific to the organization, a mentor can be a valuable asset to help find resources faster. A mentor will help a mentee navigate their environment and find their role within the organization. Keep reading for a detailed look at which characteristics make a good mentor and which do not . The next section will explore elements of an effective mentor. It includes characteristics of an effective mentor's personality, tips for practicing active listening skills, as well as the importance of providing constructive feedback.

Elements of an Effective Mentor

Personality

For a mentor relationship to be effective, a mentor should exhibit certain personality traits. Characteristics like empathy and a sense of humor can form the foundation of the relationship to help the mentor bond with the mentee. One who is too intense or too focused can be hard to work with in a mentoring relationship. When a mentor finds humor in a stressful or uncomfortable conversation, it creates an open environment to explore topics or questions that might otherwise be uncomfortable for the mentee to convey.

Humor creates an environment where a mentee may feel more open and free to express themselves. While building a rapport, it is easier to express disappointments or frustrations with someone you can laugh with. Thus, humor cultivates a safe space to present critical feedback or persuade the mentee to discuss challenging issues.

Empathy is a complex relational process that means understanding the feelings, thoughts, or attitudes of others. A key aspect of all relationships is understanding how it may feel to put oneself in another's shoes. Empathy can become a strong component of a successful mentoring relationship in the mentoring process. While the mentor's primary obligation is to provide sound advice and direction, empathy is critical to the success of the relationship. If the mentor cannot sympathize with and understand the mentee's circumstances, then their efforts to build a connection with the mentee will be ineffective.

Empathy also extends beyond sympathies. It requires mentors to relate to, support, and reassure the mentee in a judgment-free zone. This type of environment is developed through thoughtful communication. For example, in discussions with mentees, mentors can use reflecting and rephrasing as mechanisms to implement empathetic communication. More broadly, institutions and organizations that encourage empathetic communication in their mentoring programs effectively create more equitable atmospheres.

Active Listening Skills

Active listening can be a vital approach for mentors to build trust in their mentoring relationship. Active listening involves more than just listening; mentors need to consciously analyze what they hear and try to pick up on verbal and nonverbal cues from mentees. Even if mentors are paying attention, mentees will appreciate eye contact, verbal or nonverbal acknowledgment, and replies with suggestions that convey their enthusiastic support. Active listening can help mentors collaborate more effectively, reduce misunderstandings, negotiate more effectively, and build more successful mentoring relationships.

Active listening takes practice. Here are a few tips on improving active listening skills as mentors:

- Pay attention. Being an effective listener starts by setting a comfortable tone that allows mentees to think and speak. Then, pause before responding. Do not cut mentees off, finish mentees' sentences, or start formulating the mentees' answers before they have finished.
- Have an open mind. Mentors have to be open to new ideas, new perspectives, and new possibilities when practicing active listening in the mentoring relationship. Even when successful mentors have strong opinions, they suspend judgment, hold any criticisms, and avoid interruptions like arguing or selling their point right away.
- Clarify. Mentors should be willing to ask questions about any issue that's ambiguous or unclear when engaging in active listening with the mentee. Open-ended, clarifying, and probing questions are important active listening tools that encourage the mentee to do the work of self-reflection and problem-solving rather than justifying or defending a position or trying to guess the right answer.
- Summarize. Restating key themes as the conversation proceeds confirms and solidifies the mentor's grasp of the mentee's point of view. It also helps both parties to be clear on mutual responsibilities and follow-up. As mentors summarize what they have understood while practicing active listening, they should ask the mentees to do the same. (Steele et al., 2013)

Constructive Feedback Skills

Similar to active listening, constructive feedback also helps establish an atmosphere of mutual trust and regard in the mentoring relationship. When mentees develop trust with their mentors, it is often easier to both give and accept feedback. The mentee must feel like the feedback is necessary to help them obtain success. Providing and receiving feedback can be a positive experience for mentors as they learn to connect to the needs of each mentee. When providing feedback, the mentor should always be

specific and refrain from harsh critiques. Feedback is most helpful when it is specific to a particular element of work or step in the mentee's career. By keeping the feedback simple, the mentee is able to easily modify tasks or assignments, thus helping the mentee build their self-efficacy. Like any relationship, the mentor-mentee dynamic is at its best when both parties are feeling understood. Taking the time to understand effective mentor personality traits, practice active listening, and provide constructive feedback is a great way to show the level of engagement in the mentoring relationship. The next section explores the components of an ineffective mentor in an effort to avoiding the possibility of creating an unproductive mentoring relationship.

Components of an Ineffective Mentor

After 5 decades of academic research supporting mentoring relationships (Fleming et al., 2012; Feldman et al., 2010; Packer-Williams & Evans, 2011), the evidence is irrefutable: people who have strong mentors accrue a host of professional benefits, including more rapid advancement, higher salaries, greater organizational commitment, stronger identity, and higher satisfaction with both job and career. They also see personal benefits, such as better physical health and self-esteem, ease of work-life integration, and strong relational skills. At its best, mentoring can transform lives and careers while bolstering retention and maximizing employee potential. Too often, we focus on the mentor and the effective components they should exude, but we fail to recognize when a mentor is being ineffective in a mentoring relationship.

How do you determine a mentoring failure? Some indicators of a failing mentoring relationship are poor progression toward mentee goals and unproductive mentoring sessions. Additionally, when the mentees decline the advice of mentors or simply miss sessions, the relationship is likely no longer advantageous. The mentee or mentor starts to get stressed out because of the mentoring relationship, which could possibly lead to or exacerbate issues in mental and physical health.

If there is a single, consistent Achilles' heel in organizational mentoring structures, it is marginal mentoring. Marginal or mediocre mentoring may be a consequence of assigning mentors who are too busy, disinterested, dysfunctional, or simply lack the competence for the role. Prospective mentors often are randomly selected or told to participate. Leaders fail to give resources to, evaluate, or reward mentoring. With no meaningful incentives attached, it is justifiably seen as an onerous add-on duty, a thankless distraction from real work leading to pay and advancement (i.e., faculty who believe mentoring is not part of their academic role).

What is more, too often program leaders erroneously assume that any successful manager can mentor effectively with minimal (if any) training. But since so many never had mentors themselves, they lack mental maps for how it is done well. Evidence indicates that poor mentoring can be worse for employees than no mentoring at all (Jung & Bozeman, 2020). Ill-prepared and marginally competent mentors not only give mentoring a bad name in an organization, but they also sabotage retention, commitment, and mentee development—the very objectives that drive mentoring program initiatives in the first place.

Communication in the Mentoring Relationship

You do not have to be a work rock star to be a good mentor, but you should probably be invested in your job and be respected by your colleagues. Enthusiasm to be a mentor and readiness to invest time and energy into the relationship is necessary. When someone agrees to become a mentee or is told they will have a mentor at their new job, they often are looking forward to meeting with someone who can truly show them guidance. A mentor should be able to answer the basic questions of a mentee, and when they do not know the answer, they know whom to ask to figure it out. Being a helpful resource for the mentee should not be an annoying work distraction but something the mentor is excited about.

Bridging Mentor-Mentee Needs

This section explores several factors displayed during the initial phases of the mentor-mentee relationship, which include: onboarding, expectations, trust, motivation, and a mentoring plan. The function of mentor-mentee relationships can vary across each individual connection. Generally, the purpose of the mentoring relationship is to help the mentee achieve their professional and personal goals. It is significant to understand that mentoring relationships tend to thrive more when mentors understand the difference between mentoring and apprenticeship. An apprenticeship is a formal employment program where an individual attends classes to complete a certificate or degree for a particular trade or career path. An apprentice is a person who is learning a trade from a skilled worker. However, a mentee is in a mentorship to connect with their mentor to obtain a specific skill or knowledge and focus on professional and personal development. Mentors should explore the definition of a mentee in their environment in an effort to make distinctions to how the term is defined in their mentoring climate. For example, the University of Oklahoma Health Sciences Center defined what a mentee means for them on their campus as:

An individual engaged in their own professional development who seeks and obtains guidance from a more experienced individual (a mentor) in an active partnership, over a continuous time period of at least six-months, and through which the individual expects to be constructively challenged, and to acquire counsel, advice, technical guidance and other input to build personal and professional knowledge, skills and aptitude for advancement in a discipline, field of study, or inter-professional area, scholarly credibility, career and personal growth. (Wiskur et al., 2020)

The main objective of the mentoring relationship is to help the mentee realize their potential. As confidence, motivation, and trust evolve in the relationship, the mentee will be able to reach their objectives easier with the guidance and reinforcement of the mentor. Additionally, it is vital to understand that the mentor-mentee relationship is reciprocal in nature, meaning the relationship is bidirectional, where the mentor can learn from the mentees, resulting in an improvement of their own mentoring skills.

Onboarding

Onboarding into a mentoring relationship is an important factor in sustaining an effective relationship. Avoiding the tasks of adjusting to the needs of each individual mentee can be detrimental for both the mentor and mentee, resulting in a mutual waste of time, effort, and opportunity. Generally,

institutions and organizations match mentors and mentees based upon like-mindedness or shared interests. There may be a mentor-mentee matching (see Chapter 9) process completed by both parties, resulting in a pairing that could be either unceremonious or agreeable. Regardless of how the mentoring relationship was established, once formed, the mentor should take steps to ensure an exchange of information, which includes some of the following: background experiences, career path, mentoring history, expectations, personality traits, and learning styles. Mentors can obtain the information from their mentees through various exchanges; in preparation for the relationship, I recommend these strategic steps from Eisner (2015):

- Exchange background experiences with your mentee before your initial meeting with the mentee.
- Reach out to your mentee to schedule a meeting with a sincere interest in establishing the mentoring relationship.
- Share your career history with your mentor, especially the obstacles and adversities you may have endured.
- Discuss your mentoring history and give your mentee permission (if applicable) to meet with other mentees you are directing.
- Learn your mentee's expectations for the mentoring relationship and share your expectations of the mentee during the partnership.
- Be willing to share your assumptions and limitations about the mentoring relationship with your mentee.
- Discuss your personality and learning style, especially if it differs from your mentees.
- Be ready to share how the new mentoring partnership will benefit the development of your mentoring skills.
- Be clear about what opportunities and resources will be available for your mentee.

Additionally, mentors should strive to implement guidelines with their mentees as a way of providing structure about the conduct upheld in the relationship. Although mentors can implement additional structures, we recommend three areas as an initial start, which include confidentiality, respect, and flexibility. Mentors should be clear that the relationship will remain confidential. Confidentiality is essential for building and maintaining trust with your mentee. If there is ever a discussion or situation that cannot remain confidential, clearly communicate why the conversation or statement would be excluded at that specific time. It will also be helpful to clearly define what confidentiality means from the perspective of each person, as assumptions can tarnish future communication. In addition to confidentiality, respect is also an essential aspect of building a strong partnership in the relationship. As a mentor it's necessary to respond to a mentee in a way that demonstrates understanding about their position, welcome their willingness to be vulnerable, and allow them to explore their professional needs. As a result of this approach, mentees will likely value the relationship more when they feel they have mutual respect and a voice in making decisions. When mentees feel confident to share without being scorned or lectured, mentors open the space to build a stronger rapport.

Moreover, mentors must remain flexible with their mentees in all aspects of the partnership. There will be times when goals and objectives lack completion, but exploring inconsistencies from the mentee

could be due to unforeseen circumstances or lack of motivation to complete assignments. Mentors should also be flexible to adjust to the fluctuating needs of the mentee as they progress through various career and personal transitions. It's beneficial for both the mentor and mentee to evaluate the partnership, objectives, goals, and accomplishments periodically to ensure the relationship remains efficient.

Expectations

There are some expectations that apply to both the mentor and mentee in the relationship. The expectations should be agreed upon and written in a document (see Appendices A and B). Mentors are encouraged to utilize this agreement to help facilitate discussions of expectations and goals. These expectations may include respect of each other's time, confidentiality, a regular meeting schedule, and acceptance of differing opinions. Discussing expectations early and often will provide a clear understanding of what is needed to deem the mentoring relationship successful. When developing the mentoring relationship, the mentor should also work with the mentee to consider how they will a) support the mentee's career development, b) assist the mentee with obtaining additional professional development, and c) assist the mentee with developing their academic skills.

Building Trust

Building trust in any relationship is important, but it is even more significant in a mentoring relationship. Developing a trusting mentoring relationship involves creating a safe and supportive environment where both mentor and mentee can engage in setting goals and achieving them. If the mentee does not trust the mentor, they are unlikely to open up and be vulnerable with the mentor. If some topics are seen as being off limits for the mentee to share with the mentor, this can limit the growth that the mentee can achieve professionally and academically.

Trust contains multiple elements. A mentor's trustworthiness depends on the mentee's beliefs in the mentor's competence and motives. In a university-sponsored mentoring program, it's likely that the mentee already accepts the competence of the mentor, as they have the stamp of approval from the university by virtue of being tapped as a mentor. However, the mentor will need to focus on proving themselves with regard to their motives. If the mentee perceives that the mentor is in the mentoring program for the wrong reasons, the relationship isn't likely to be successful.

We often picture mentees to be a miniature version of the mentor. But this is not always the case. Many times, background and experiences will differ greatly from that of the mentee. While many mentors are naturally inclined to ignore differences, it could be more helpful to trust the building process to acknowledge them in certain circumstances (Evans, 2018). Differences in education, socioeconomic status, gender, and race can make a mentee reluctant to open up.

Gaining trust as a mentor takes time, but this relationship is also a two-way street. If the mentee is unwilling to open up, there's not much hope for a successful relationship. As a mentor, keep in mind that it is not uncommon for a mentee to resist your guidance or go against your suggestions, especially in the beginning. The important thing is how the mentor responds. If mentees go against your guidance and succeed, let them know that sometimes it's good to go with their gut. If they go against your

guidance and fail, let them know that it's also part of the mentoring process.

Motivation

Understanding the motivations behind any task is usually the best way to complete it with a full buy-in. Mentoring is no different. The rise of academic mentorships becomes not just a good idea for idea's sake, but a necessity. Many people have their own reasons for wanting or seeking out a mentor, which could be to support talent within the organization and to ensure practices and values are upheld. But the motivations behind mentoring is only part of the journey. The motivational impact that mentoring can have on individuals, groups, and even the organization—before, during, and after the process—are what will drive organizational improvements. Following through on promises of implementing mentoring programs that will help mentees advance in their career is not enough anymore; the transparency behind programs' motivations is what is needed to have a lasting impact. The program will need to promote the following motivational impact:

- **Serve.** The most outstanding mentors are those who genuinely want to give back and make a difference in someone's life. No matter the stage of your career, being a mentor can also enhance your skills and life experience, even if you are already a business leader.
- **Share.** When it comes to being an inspiring mentor, sharing is key. Do not be afraid to pass along your knowledge and your contacts. Introducing your mentee to your network does not take anything away from you, and it helps them build their network.
- **Positivity.** Rather than focusing on the skills that a mentee lacks, an inspirational mentor will help them develop their strengths. Be realistic about your mentee's weak points and help them focus on developing the things they're good at.
- **Give.** Good mentors are in it to help others rather than gain something for themselves. If you give of yourself without expecting something in return, it can make a big difference in your mentoring relationship.
- **Be real and authentic.** Connect with your mentee by sharing some of your struggles. Mentors that have stories to share can convey that overcoming hurdles and obstacles is possible. It can encourage your mentee to keep going when they are struggling.
- **Engage.** Talented mentors know what it takes to engage with others. They are skilled at drawing out the best from their mentees.

Mentoring Plan

A mentoring plan is a formal agreement between a mentor and a mentee that establishes guidelines for the relationship (see Appendix B). It's essential to draft a mentoring plan at the beginning of the relationship so that both the mentee and the mentor are set up for success and there aren't any major misunderstandings.

You probably would not want to enter an employment relationship without knowing when you needed to show up for work, what you were to be paid, or what you were expected to do. Without knowing these things, both you and your employer aren't likely to have your unspoken expectations

met and are likely to be disappointed as a result. For the same reasons, it makes sense to have a mentoring plan. A mentoring plan might answer the following questions for the mentor and the mentee:

- How often should we meet? How long do we anticipate this mentoring relationship to last? If a mentee wants to meet once per week while a mentor only has time for once-a-month meetings, it's going to be difficult for the relationship to be successful. By agreeing on the frequency of meetings, both the mentor and mentee can be clear about their availability and their needs. In addition, some mentoring relationships may have a natural endpoint, like the end of the calendar year or when the mentee graduates from business school. Other times, it might not be so clear how long the relationship will last, and in this case it will be more important for the mentor and mentee to voice their expectations.
- Where will we meet and how will we interact? While traditionally mentoring pairs meet face-to-face, a mentor no longer needs to be local to the mentee for the relationship to be effective. Many mentors and mentees utilize online mentoring to connect, saving time and making possible relationships across long distances.
- What specific activities will the mentor and the mentee undertake? Most often, a mentor and mentee will simply have conversations. However, there are many more activities that the mentoring pair can engage in that can support the mentee's career development. For example, a mentor might bring a mentee to a conference as a guest, the mentee might shadow the mentor for a day, or the pair might work on a specific project together.
- What are the mentee's goals for the relationship? This is one of the most important questions for the mentoring plan to answer, as the role of the mentor changes due to the goals of the mentee. How is the mentee going to grow and change over the mentoring relationship? Sometimes, mentees may be focusing broadly on developing their leadership skills, or they may be focused on developing a narrow set of skills, or they might be focused on making a critical career decision. Depending on the mentee's goals, the mentor may be more passive and act as a sounding board for the mentee or take a more active role and focus on providing feedback to the mentee.
- How will we evaluate the success of the mentoring relationship? While every effort should be made to pair up each mentee with the right mentor, sometimes a mentoring pair just doesn't click. A solid mentoring plan should have opportunities for the mentee to check in and evaluate how the relationship is supporting their development goals as well as opportunities for the mentor to give feedback. If the stated goals of the mentoring plan aren't being achieved, the mentor and mentee should make adjustments or consider ending the relationship.

The beginning of the mentoring relationship in which you engage in the tasks of onboarding, trust building, and motivation techniques play a part in determining the success of the entire mentoring relationship. As a mentor, having a plan with the mentee may assist in avoiding miscommunication, misalignment of goals, as well as misaligned expectations. The next section will review the role emotional intelligence plays in establishing and sustaining the mentoring relationship with mentees.

Emotional Intelligence in the Mentoring Process

Emotional intelligence (EI) is how well a person understands and manages their emotions and the emotions of others and how they use this knowledge to manage relationships. Developing these skills is critical in the workplace, with strong emotional intelligence being linked to high performance. Emotional intelligence assessments typically provide answers to questions such as:

- How aware is this person of their strengths and limitations?
- How well can this person understand the emotions of others?
- Does this person excel at developing relationships?
- How self-motivated and adaptable is this person?
- How does this person react to pressure?

For a mentor, emotional intelligence is important. It has been found that in mentors there is a positive relationship between emotional intelligence and the degree of confidence that a mentee has in them (Chun et al., 2010). Researchers suggest that to get the most out of a mentor-mentee relationship, emotional intelligence should be measured and discussed, and both parties should develop self-awareness of their own emotional intelligence. They argue that this may result in heightened learning, more successful mentoring relationships, and improved retention.

The previous sections reviewed information for establishing and maintaining the mentoring relationship. The next section involves reviewing steps for designing a mentoring curriculum from the analysis to the evaluation. An expansion of each section mentioned in the design curriculum can be found in other chapters of this handbook.

Designing the Curriculum

Mentoring programs are a great strategy for improving retention with faculty, staff, and students. Implementing a mentoring program within your organization requires thoughtful planning and sustained commitment to frequently evaluating the program structure. The guidance and support that mentors provide can help mentees achieve both personally and professionally. Additionally, the function of the mentoring program is to align with an organization's overarching mission (see Chapter 6) and strategic plan. Mentoring programs are a valuable tool that can be used to build an effective and diverse organization as it assists to ensure that all mentees are given equal opportunity to be successful.

For mentor workshops, organizations will need to focus on what characteristics or competencies are desirable for mentors in their environment. While mentoring competencies like communication skills are likely included across most mentoring programs, characteristics about mentees may drastically differ across locations. In an effort to deliver the best program, mentoring competencies should be selected based off the needs of the mentoring climate and mentees. The mentoring program should also allow the mentors to share their personal insights and provides additional guidance that has assisted them in reaching a mentee's professional goals. Lastly, the mentoring program should include an opportunity for mentors to discuss when partnerships aren't working and give the space to articulate unique concerns or lessons learned.

The following sections are essential factors to explore when designing the curriculum for a mentor

program. The first section will briefly examine the analysis stage in which you will define the purpose, audience, and structure of the program. Next, defining what competencies, tools, and activities will be presented in the curriculum. And, last, considering an evaluation plan to assist with frequent and summative evaluation.

Analysis

Mentoring programs require a thorough analysis of the specific aims and outcomes before implementation (see Chapter 8). Gathering a detailed amount of information from leadership in your organization will assist in meeting organizational goals, which include: recruitment, retention, engagement, and professional development. Leadership stakeholders can also provide great support and feedback for mentoring programs. Having leadership members publicly endorse an organization's mentoring program conveys the importance of mentoring for everyone (see Chapter 6).

A strong framework will help your mentoring program succeed and establish a foundation participants can rally behind. Frameworks also provide clear expectations for mentoring programs by explicitly stating the theoretical research of mentoring, parameters of the program (e.g., time commitment, frequency, and benefits), curriculum, and recruitment. The framework should also include the benefits of establishing the mentor programs. Mentoring is an opportunity for an organization to grow and educate the next generation. Mentoring programs also provide a way for mentors and mentees to establish a mutual respect through shared experiences, common interests, and social interactions.

Mentoring Components

The mentor skills, tools, and behaviors included in a mentoring program should be slightly unique in every organization. Core principles of mentoring (i.e., communication, expectations, and trust) are essential; however, adding unique mentoring skills to review according to your environment is also crucial. Providing skills for mentors that can assist addressing mentees' psychological and organizational barriers tend to be favorable because they provide mentors with tools that aren't typically included in mentoring programs.

When creating goals (see Chapter 8) for mentors in the program, think of the SMART goal model. Using this framework, your goals should be:

- Specific—Achievements of the mentoring program for mentors.
- Measurable—How will the program be quantified in order to track progress?
- Achievable—Reaching this goal should be realistic in the time frame allocated. The mentor should have the necessary skills and resources to achieve the goals of the program.
- Relevant—The goals should line up with your organization's mission and strategic plan.
- Time-bound—Creating time frames for accomplishing the goal should be realistic given that mentors have other professional responsibilities outside of the mentoring program.

Evaluation

A requirement for all mentoring programs is the ability to measure its success. The inability to prove the program is successful can result in the suspension of the program or, even worse, both mentors and mentees losing interest in participating. Establishing distinctive metrics for evaluating mentoring programs will help ensure the success of a program. Key performance indicators (KPIs) of a mentoring program should be both observable and measurable. For example, if an organization is focused on retention of their employees, a KPI could review if the annual turnover rate has decreased after implementation.

Monitoring a mentoring program involves tracking and measuring how the program is delivered as opposed to the goals of the program. When executed throughout the entire program rather than at the end, minor adjustments can be done as a way to continually improve the mentorship program. Quick feedback assessments after every programmatic occurrence should allow for ample feedback for adjustments.

Evaluating the entire mentor program involves reviewing the goals and objectives defined in the initial stages of the proposal. Choosing to use an evaluation tool will make the process of measuring and evaluating goals much easier and seamless. Utilizing milestones to show how much progress is made in obtaining the mentoring program's goals can be key. Milestones are steps or achievements necessary to make progress toward goals. When goals aren't met, stakeholders will be able to understand the progress and give specific performance feedback. Be sure to provide explanations that will provide additional information and context to your stakeholders that provides context for the outcomes of the mentoring program. Some programmatic goals take years to complete, so demonstrating improved progress, no matter how incremental, is what amounts to success (for more details on program evaluation, see Chapter 13).

Environmental Issues That Impact the Mentoring Relationship

Organizational environments can affect mentoring relationships across various academic fields. If informal mentoring has been implemented in an organization for a period of time, introducing a forced formal mentoring program could produce negativity. It's important to evaluate and understand the mentoring climate of an organization before a mentoring program is implemented. Research indicates there are a small number of instruments available to measure organizational mentoring climate. Tigges et al. (2020) developed a scale that examines an organizations mentoring climate across four dimensions, which include: structure, programs/activities, policies/guidelines, and value. The scale shows how organizational climate may affect mentoring behavior and if the climate can be altered to improve faculty mentoring outcomes. Although specifically geared toward faculty, components of scales measuring mentoring climate is recommended no matter the target participant group. Assessing and ultimately changing a mentoring climate may be difficult, but it could have a serious impact of the success of a mentoring program.

Conclusion

Mentors are an integral part of implementing mentoring programs. Although mentoring is deemed a reciprocal relationship, it's the mentor's role to guide the mentee through areas of growth, which include: career development, learning opportunities, strategic thinking, and mentor network expansions. A mentor's accumulated wisdom and expertise must be passed on to the next generation. Good mentors make this process conscious, discussing challenges and satisfactions of mentorship with mentees.

Mentorship is integral to recruiting and retaining faculty, staff, and students in higher education. Mentoring is especially important to support and recruit underrepresented individuals within higher education (Tigges et al., 2020). As we push to retain individuals across academic institutions, it may serve our institutions well to instruct mentors on how to support mentees at different stages of academic careers. In particular, mentees that are underrepresented minorities face challenges of career advancement and grant attainment. For faculty members without a mentor or for those that have an unskilled mentor, they may not have the support needed as they continually strive to obtain promotion as well as preserve personal and professional integration.

Mentors can also be helpful in identifying critical skills for potential future roles for the mentee. Mentors can help uncover these professional blind spots, which can help professionals target their developmental efforts. In addition to these external challenges in their career, they may also face internal challenges that may negatively impact their ability to overcome the environmental challenges. By designing mentorship programs with inclusion and diversity in mind (see chapter 12), we can more easily foster an inclusive workplace where opportunities to succeed are available to everyone.

As a researcher, I have worked on implementing mentoring workshops and strategic plans to enhance mentoring at an academic medical institution for the past several years. Mentoring is something that feels natural to most faculty members, however it's important to convey that not all ways of mentoring are the correct way for all mentees. Just like we have students with different learning needs, we encounter mentees that will have different mentoring needs. As mentors, a strong point is that they are not born mentors; just like professionals, you have to work hard at your craft and continue to mentor to gain insight in becoming successful. As a mentor, you will enhance your leadership and communication skills with every mentee interaction. The best mentors are able to work in a creative way to help a mentee envision and strive for an integrated personal and professional career. Lastly, a mentor should strive to practice storytelling with their mentees. Sharing personal stories and adversities with your career will enhance relatability with your mentee. For a mentor, the single most important principle to follow is that no one cares how much you know until they know how much you care.

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Appendix A

Mentorship Alignment Tool: Priorities for Mentoring Planning Document (McDaniels, 2019)

Instructions: This planning document should be completed by both a research mentor and mentee. After completed individually, research mentor and mentee should come together to discuss the results.

Prompt for Mentee: It is important to become clear about what your priorities are for professional development. This will enable mentor-mentee pairs to make priorities for how they will use their time together. Identify your top 4 or 5 areas of need by adding checkmarks (√) into boxes in *Column 2*.

Prompt for Mentor: It is important to become clear about what areas you feel you are most able to support in a mentee's development. There may be other mentors that are more suited to support a mentee in certain areas than you. Identify the top 4 or 5 areas you feel most able to provide support to your mentee by adding checkmarks (√) into boxes in *Column 3*.

Prompt to Both: Compare your results. A "good" mentor-mentee relationship does not require a match between responses. The results (as indicated by degree of alignment between mentee needs and mentor ability) will help you start a conversation about the areas within which: (1) the mentor can provide the mentee with direct support; or (2) the mentor is better suited to focus their efforts on helping the mentee seek out resources they need from other mentors.

Column 1: Domain of Mentoring Need	Column 2: Mentee Need	Column 3: Mentor Ability	Column 4: Notes (may include next steps)
Oral Communication			
Written Communication			
Managing Difficult Conversations			
Managing Expectations			
Column 1: Domain of Mentoring Need	Column 2: Mentee Need	Column 3: Mentor Ability	Column 4: Notes (may include next steps)
Work-Life Balance			
Affective (e.g., motivation, self-confidence, emotional support)			
Public Speaking			
Networking with Funding Sources			
Networking with Community Stakeholders			

Networking with Research Community			
Data Analysis			
Methods and Research Skills			
Column 1: Domain of Mentoring Need	Column 2: Mentee Need	Column 3: Mentor Ability	Column 4: Notes (may include next steps)
Frameworks, Models			
Collaborating with Community Stakeholders			
Grant Writing			
Evaluation			
Writing for Community and/or Non-Academic Stakeholders			
Research Resources			
Research Integrity and Ethics			

Authorship			
Column 1: Domain of Mentoring Need	Column 2: Mentee Need	Column 3: Mentor Ability	Column 4: Notes (may include next steps)
Career Options			
Job Opportunities			
Professional Organizations with Which to Affiliate			
Other:			
Other:			

Appendix B

Mentorship Alignment Tool: The Process of Mentoring (The “How” of Mentoring) Planning Document (McDaniels, 2019)

Instructions: This planning document should be completed separately by both a research mentor and mentee. After completed individually, research mentor and mentee should come together to discuss the results.

Prompt for Mentee: It is important to become clear about what your preferences for communication and collaboration with your mentor. Once you make your preferences explicit, you can engage in a conversation with your mentor that can involve learning about each other and *negotiating* communication and collaboration strategies for your relationship.

Prompt for Mentor: It is important to become clear about what your preferences for communication and collaboration with your mentee. Once you make your preferences explicit, you can engage in a conversation with your mentee that can involve learning about each other and *negotiating* communication and collaboration strategies for this relationship.

Prompt to Both: Compare your results. A “good” mentor-mentee relationship does not require a match between preferred communication and collaboration styles. Comparing your responses will help you start a conversation about preferred communication and collaboration strategies for this particular relationship and will involve negotiating approaches that work for both of you.

Column 1: Expectations for General Communication	Column 2: Notes (may include the approaches you and your mentor/mentee decide to utilize in your mentoring relationship)
Through what channel will we communicate? (e.g., email, text, cell phone, other)	
What is our expectation for a timely response?	
Are there certain days of the week or times of the day we prefer to communicate? Are there "sacred" times during which no communication should occur?	
To what degree is the content/context of our conversations confidential?	
What should we do if confidentiality is a concern?	
How should we handle conflict if it arises?	
Column 1: Expectations of Project Meetings	Column 2: Notes (may include the approaches you and your mentor/mentee decide to utilize in your mentoring relationship)
How often should we meet and for how long?	
What channel should we use for these meetings (e.g., Skype, Zoom, other)?	
What should a mentor do in preparation for a project meeting?	
What should a mentee do in preparation for a project meeting?	

How goal oriented or free form should our meetings be?	
If one of us needs to cancel, what should we do?	
How should we follow-up on meetings? (e.g., communicate advice taken, information promised, support offered)	
Column 1: Expectations for Formal Feedback	Column 2: Notes (may include the approaches you and your mentor/mentee decide to utilize in your mentoring relationship)
In what form and how often will a mentor give the mentee feedback on project progress?	
How much time should be allowed to review short documents?	
How much time should be allowed to review longer documents? (e.g., grants, manuscripts)	
Column 1: Expectations for Working with Other Mentors	Column 2: Notes (may include the approaches you and your mentor/mentee decide to utilize in your mentoring relationship)
What other mentors will be involved in the mentee's experience?	
How will the mentor interact with other mentors (if at all)?	
Column 1: Expectations for Collaboration	Column 2: Notes (may include the approaches you and your mentor/mentee decide to utilize in your mentoring relationship)

Co-Authorship: Will we consider it? Under what circumstances?	
Grant Collaboration: Will we consider it? Under what circumstances?	
Column 1: Other Expectations	Column 2: <i>Notes (may include the approaches you and your mentor/mentee decide to utilize in your mentoring relationship)</i>