

GWIMS Mentoring Women Toolkit for Mentees

Mentoring for Your Academic Career Success

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GWIMS Toolkit

Types of Mentoring

Mentoring comes in many forms and you may find that one or several work best for you, for example:

- One-on-one or Dyadic
- Group (e.g., facilitated, workshops)
- Peer
- Informal (e.g., socials, hallway conversations)
- Distance or Virtual
- Multiple Mentors (e.g., committee, team)
- Situational (e.g., putting in a catheter)
- Supervisory (e.g., with one of your students)

How to Identify Mentors Committed to the Professional Success of Women in Medicine and Science



Finding Your Mentor(s)

Define your needs for a mentoring relationship

- Do you need an **advisor/sponsor** to provide general career advice and networking?
- Do you need a **coach** to learn new skills, knowledge and/or behaviors?
- Do you need a **counselor** for guidance on personal and professional situations?

Consider finding multiple mentors

- You may need specialized expertise
- One individual may be able to address some, but not all, of your mentoring needs
- Your mentoring needs will likely change over time

The Critical First Step: Know Your Goals

Begin your search for a mentor by asking yourself questions regarding your goals, challenges and aspirations – self reflection is essential

- “What support do I need?”
- “Where do I feel the need for improvement in professional competencies?”
- “Where am I struggling?”
- “Do I need someone to help me navigate diversity-related issues?”
- “What am I enjoying?”

With Your Goals in Hand Search for the Mentor Who is a Match

So how and where to search?

Keep in mind that you are seeking a new relationship that will guide and support you as a professional in academic medicine...

... and you have great insights and unique experiences to share with your mentors

Two basic types of mentors are:

A) **Within** your organization

B) **Outside** your organization

Mentor Searching Within Your Organization

Places to Look:

- 1) **Within** your department
- 2) **Outside** your department

It is essential is to look for an individual with high professional standards and values – and an interest in supporting **your professional development and growth**

Choosing a Mentor Within Your Department

Should your goals be focused on moving through a promotion and/or tenure process, a fellow senior faculty colleague may best meet your needs

- This senior colleague will likely know your institutional process – and can provide you with feedback on your portfolio (both strengths and weaknesses)
- Keep in mind that having your Chair as your mentor can be effective but is not ideal due to potential conflicts of interest in reporting roles

Choosing a Mentor Outside Your Department

Among the advantages of a mentor who is not a member of your department and/or unit, is their unique perspective

- Often a mentor outside your academic home is a key content expert in your field – someone who can be a sponsor for you and/or you can utilize their respective networks
- A mentor outside your daily environment can provide fresh insights – from a different vantage point

Mentor Searching Outside Your Organization

Looking closely at your goals consider a colleague from the following:

- A) Your professional societies
- B) Your professional organizations
- C) Your external community
- D) Within your personal community



Outside Mentors: Professional Contacts

Should you be in an early stage of your career, you may need assistance with developing your niche and unique professional expertise and identity

Often a key experienced leader in your professional world can be a critical resource for your mentoring needs

- Keep in mind that face-to-face meetings may be more limited to the times you cross paths on a professional basis, i.e. conferences that you both attend, but the network and knowledge base of this senior leader in your specialty and/or field can be an outstanding resource
- Seek out individuals in your professional societies and organizations who share common interests with you – perhaps you have even seen them “in action” by serving on a committee with them

Outside Mentors: Your Communities

Consider a mentor who is a role model in your community but perhaps in another field – i.e. a woman who is in a leadership position in her respective profession

- Often times the skills needed to navigate professional relationships can be provided from another experienced leader
- Frequently your neighbors in your local community are experts in many of the difficult tasks that are inherent in your daily activities as a professional – issues such as time management and/or work-life integration – individuals with whom you share common values and concerns

Considerations of Your Mentor

Key to an effective mentoring relationship is knowing your goals and needs

- Seek out individuals who are interested in your success and professional growth
- Sometimes you may seek a mentor who has common life experiences and other times you may look for a mentor with a totally different vantage point that can challenge and stimulate your thinking

Searching Tips: Key Mentor Qualities

Look for individuals as mentors:

- who enjoy their roles and responsibilities
- are experienced yet willing to listen to your concerns and needs
- with whom you can build a relationship on trust, mutual respect and confidentiality
- who don't have any personal and/or professional biases that they may bring to your mentoring relationship

Mentoring vs Sponsorship

Mentoring and sponsorship are different, and you should know the difference and recognize the importance of having both (Ayyala et al., 2019; Gottlieb and Travis. 2018)

Mentors provide advice, feedback, and coaching

Sponsors are advocates in positions of authority who use their influence intentionally to help others advance

Sometimes mentors can act as sponsors depending on their level within the organization

Both mentors and sponsors are important to advancement as employees navigate the workplace and earn opportunities for growth

Inviting a Mentoring Relationship

You have considered your goals and needs for a mentoring relationship...

and also developed a short list of potential excellent mentor candidates...

So, take a deep breath and invite them...



Tips for Contacting a Potential Mentor

You can send an email but personal contact is best

A) Introduce yourself

- Include brief personal information and a CV

B) Be specific about your need for guidance

- Define how the mentor can help you

C) Describe why you are asking this person for assistance as a mentor

- What is the mentor's relevant professional expertise?

Creating a New Mentoring Relationship

Ideally, find an opportunity to ask for a mentoring relationship **in person**; if not possible, use email as asking is better than not asking

- **Asking someone to serve as your mentor is a *sign of great strength* on your part as a mentee**
- Mentors will be flattered that you have found a quality within them that is attractive and can meet your needs as a professional

Keep in mind that someone who will make an excellent mentor for you will need to listen to your needs and then decide for her/him-self if this is a responsibility they would enjoy as they make a professional commitment to your development and growth

There are many individuals committed to the professional success of women in medicine and science – find a mentor committed to your success!

Essential Elements of Mentoring to Achieve Career Satisfaction and Success

Essential Elements of Mentoring: The Mentee Perspective

To achieve the maximum benefits of a new mentoring relationship, the mentee must “**drive**” the relationship by knowing her goals, concerns and professional development support needs

- As the “owner” of the relationship, be sure to review your roles and responsibilities as a mentee.
- Likewise, keep in mind the benefits that you can obtain from your investment in this customized professional development relationship

Roles and Responsibilities of a Mentee

To develop and sustain a dynamic mentoring relationship, mentees should demonstrate the following:

- Arrive prepared to meet with your mentor
- Respect each other's time
- Follow through and accept responsibility for your choices
- Demonstrate insight and self-knowledge
- Bring solutions and options – not just problems
- Seek clarification in communications with your mentor
- Give, request and honor feedback from your mentor

An Effective Mentee Considers the Mentor's Perspective

What should mentors expect of a mentee?

1) Professionalism

- Responds to messages
- Keeps scheduled appointments or gives notice in appropriate time to reschedule if needed
- Strives for honesty regarding needs

2) Listening to advice

- Listening does not imply acceptance of all advice!

3) Providing feedback

- Mentors will need your feedback to know if they are meeting your needs as a mentee

Positive Benefits of Being a Mentee

Embarking on a dynamic relationship with a trusted professional colleague can bring lasting value and success to your academic career:

- growth in your knowledge of your profession
- expansion of self-knowledge
- deeper understanding of challenges that you face on a daily basis
- development of a broader understanding of academic medicine – both within and external to your organization
- support of your career success by a colleague who can provide you with support, confidence and encouragement

Consider the Organizational Perspective to Your Being a Mentee

Your institution/department/unit has invested a significant amount of resources in your recruitment and success in being an effective member of your new community

Mentoring can ensure a “return on this investment”

Roles and Responsibilities of Mentors in a Dynamic Mentoring Relationship

Without question, your mentor has a critical obligation to you if they have agreed to join in a new mentoring relationship with you

This is a mutually beneficial relationship – do not forget that you are also providing important stimulation and insights to your mentor

Mentoring is a “two-way street” relationship

See the [GWIMS Toolkit: Mentoring Women – A Guide for Mentors](#) for an in-depth discussion of the roles and responsibilities of mentors

Mentoring Women Faculty: Cross-Gender and Race Mentoring

Mentoring Women Faculty: Cross-Gender and Race Mentoring

There are important aspects to mentoring across differences, including gender and race

You as a mentee need to be aware of the issues related to cross-gender/race mentoring, for yourself and for your mentor

By being aware of these mentoring challenges, you will be able to help your mentor understand the differences between yourselves so that you can obtain the most reward from your mentoring relationship

You also will become aware of the limitations of your mentor if they are unable to work through the differences between yourselves

Mentoring Women Faculty: Cross-Gender Mentoring

- All faculty regardless of gender encounter challenges in their paths to a successful career in academic medicine
- Now more than ever, significant changes in healthcare delivery, clinical reimbursement, research funding, and medical curriculum models, stress our systems and our faculty
- In addition to these challenges, women in academic medicine face additional issues and decisions that can add weight and stress to their already burdened shoulders, leading to burn out and departure from an academic medical career

Mentoring Women Faculty: Cross-Gender Mentoring

➤ Some of these added challenges include:

- 1) Some male faculty can be primarily “career oriented” while many female faculty are both “career and family oriented” (Bland et al., 2009; Fernandez et al., 2021; Humphrey & Smith, 2010; NASEM, 2020)
- 2) Women have to take into consideration promotion and tenure clock limits and provisions while navigating their personal decisions regarding family time (Anecol et al., 2018; Bland et al., 2009; Humphrey & Smith, 2010; NASEM, 2020)
- 3) Gender bias, discrimination, intersectionality, and sexual harassment remain challenging for women faculty in academic medicine (Bland et al., 2009; Humphrey & Smith, 2010; Kram, 1988; NASEM, 2020; Raj et al., 2019)

Mentoring Women Faculty: Cross-Gender Mentoring

- 4) Women often negotiate poorly for resources (e.g., staff/technical support, laboratory space, research support, or salary) (Humphrey & Smith, 2010; NASEM, 2020; Sege et al., 2015; Zakaras et al., 2021; also see [GWIMS Negotiating Toolkit](#))
- 5) Women faculty are less likely to be networked and are less likely to be sponsored/nominated or to proclaim their accomplishments (Ayyala et al., 2019; Bland et al., 2009; Gottlieb & Travis, 2018; Humphrey & Smith, 2010; Murphy et al., 2022; NASEM, 2020)

These issues are discussed further in the [**GWIMS Toolkit – A Guide for Mentors**](#). Other related references are listed in the Additional Resource section of this toolkit.

Mentoring Women Faculty: Cross-Race Mentoring

In addition to cross-gender, there are aspects that need to be considered when mentoring underrepresented minority women

Given the low general representation of minority faculty in academic medicine, it is likely that your mentor may not share your racial identity

Thus, if you are an underrepresented minority woman faculty member, you will need to discuss with your mentor the additional challenges that you experience because of **your race** (Campbell et al, 2020; Nivet et al, 2008; Pololi et al, 2010; Rodriguez et al, 2015)

Mentoring Women Faculty: Cross-Race Mentoring

It would be especially useful for your mentor to be aware of the following challenges you likely experience:

- Overt or covert racial discrimination
- Isolation or marginalization
- Expected participation in promoting diversity efforts
- Overwhelming clinical work for underserved or disadvantaged populations
- Mentoring of primarily minority students with academic or personal difficulties

Mentoring Women Faculty: Cross-Race Mentoring

In your mentoring relationship, be aware of the potential for “protective hesitation” in which both you and your mentor refrain from discussing sensitive race-related issues (Thomas, 2001)

It is important to have open and frank discussions with your mentor about how racial issues are affecting you and identify strategies for addressing them

Communication is Key in Mentoring

***Active Listening Skills are
Essential***



Active Listening Skills

Active listening is a very important communication skill that you should be facile in as it will serve you extremely well in any relationship and any interaction

When you are an active listener, you are totally engaged in the conversation with another individual



Be an Active Listener

- **Pay attention**
 - Look at them directly
 - Don't be distracted
 - Watch their body language
 - Don't be thinking about your response

- **Show that you are listening**
 - Nod occasionally
 - Use facial expressions to mirror theirs
 - Make small verbal comments (uh uh..)
 - Watch your posture

- **Provide feedback**
 - Paraphrase, reflect back to them
 - Summarize points
 - Ask clarifying questions

Be an Active Listener

- **Defer judgement**
 - Allow them to finish before asking questions
 - Don't interrupt
- **Respond appropriately**
 - Be open, honest, and candid
 - Assert your opinions respectfully
 - Treat them in a way that you would want to be treated

Active listening is not easy but with practice becomes more natural

Maximizing Your Success as a Mentee

***How to Begin, Sustain, and
End Mentoring Relationships***



Maximizing Your Success as a Mentee: *Stages of Mentoring Relationships*

Mentoring relationships transition through phases of development

- **Initiation** = mentor admired/respected, and mentee feels supported/cared for; both motivated/committed by relationship
- **Cultivation** = time of great growth of mentee with more self-confidence, satisfaction, and observable changes
- **Separation** = mentee gains independence/autonomy; relationship becomes less important to mentee as they gained ability and are ready to move on
- **Redefinition** = become peers, friends or end contact; mentee now mentors

Initiation (6-12 mos)--- Apprentice



Cultivation (2-5 yrs)---Colleague



Separation (6 mos-2 yrs)---Mentor



Redefinition

Kram, 1983

Maximizing Your Success as a Mentee: *Starting Your Relationship*

- Get to know each other
 - establish rapport; identify points of connection; CVs
- Talk about mentoring in general
 - views of mentoring; previous experiences
- Determine general mentoring goals and needs
 - goals (broad statements e.g., promotion)
 - objectives (measurable e.g., obtain grant in 2 years, write manuscript in 8 months)
- Talk about desired outcomes (for both)

Maximizing Your Success as a Mentee: *Starting Your Relationship*

- Establish and communicate expectations at the start of the mentoring relationship:
 - Develop a schedule that includes frequency of meetings
 - Agree on communications between meetings
 - Own that the mentee schedules the meetings
 - Agree on confidentiality
 - Discuss boundaries, including what may be “out of bounds”
 - Agree to give and receive feedback

Maximizing Your Success as a Mentee: *Potential Mentoring Discussion Topics*

- Promotion and Tenure
- Networking
- Scholarship
- Teaching
- Professional and Career Development
- Diversity/Inclusion/Intersectionality
- Research
- Clinical
- Work-Life Integration
- Work-Work Integration
- Service or Administrative

See [GWIMS Toolkits](#) on several of these topics

How to Sustain Your Relationship

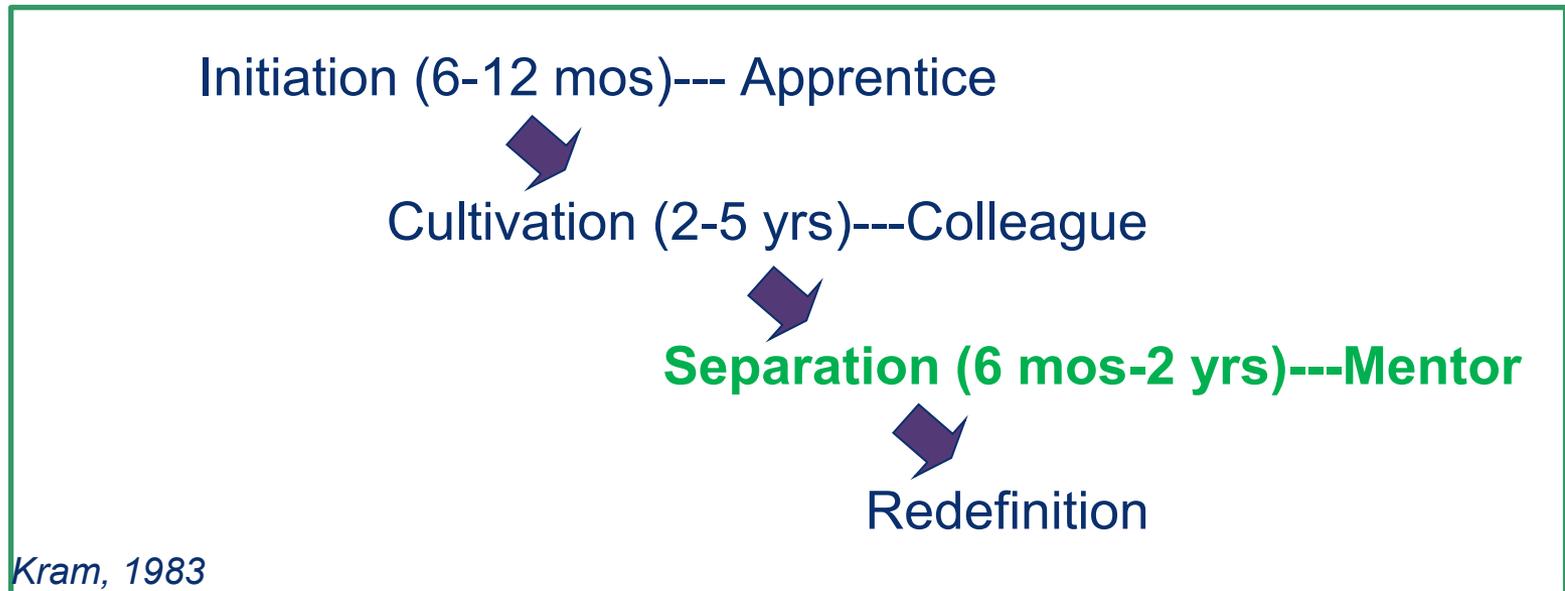
Here are some tips for keeping your mentoring relationship fresh and active over time:

- Formulate and review 1-, 3-, and 5-year goals
- Reexamine goals to determine if on target
- Keep ongoing record of activities and progress
- Assess gaps in professional development and seek opportunities for training
- Identify conference/society participation
- Engage in socials for networking with other senior faculty
- Identify additional mentors as needed
- Discuss strategies for dealing with stress

Maximizing Your Success As A Mentee: *Time For Separation*

With most mentoring relationships there comes a time when the relationship should end

This stage is the **Separation** stage and can take some time to mature enough that the relationship partners realize it is time for a change



Recognizing Signals That a Change is Needed in a Mentoring Relationship

Mentee

- Run out of things to talk about
- Feel like your concerns are not being listened to
- Do not feel like making progress
- Been consistent breach of confidence
- Feel drained when meet with mentor
- Appears to be 1-way relationship; mentor is never available

Mentor

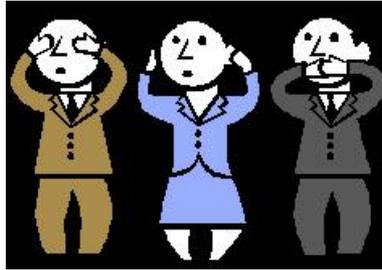
- Mentee is high maintenance
- Mentee not making progress
- Mentee listens to advice but never follows through
- Begrudge time must spend to maintain relationship
- Mentee never responds

Potential Barriers to Mentoring

One needs to be aware of obstacles to mentoring that could play a role in a changing mentoring relationship or for mentoring to occur in an institution at all:

- Mentors time is not compensated
- Time threatened by increased clinical, research, teaching, administrative demands
- Mentoring concept undervalued
- Insufficient numbers of senior faculty who are women or underrepresented minorities to mentor junior faculty wishing for these types of mentors
- Senior faculty, not mentored themselves, may not feel qualified to mentor
- Junior faculty perceptions they will be viewed as weak

Dysfunctional Mentoring Relationships



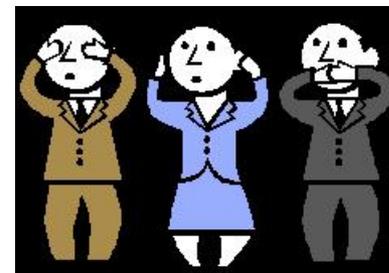
A definite time to separate out of a mentoring relationship is when/if it becomes a dysfunctional mentoring environment. It is dysfunctional when:

- Mentor/mentee perceive costs outweigh benefits over the long-term
- One or other engage in specific concrete behaviors to sabotage work or career of other

Consequences of Dysfunctional Relationships

For Mentees:

- Greater stress and anxiety
- Lower self-esteem
- Exit organization



For Mentors:

- Feelings of betrayal and anger
- Less interest in mentoring again
- Less interest in involvement in other activities

For Institution:

- Decreased levels of trust
- Less collaborative behavior/teamwork

Toxic Mentoring

Mentor's own needs take precedence

Types of Toxic Mentoring:

- **Cloggers**
 - leave you out of loop
- **Wreckers**
 - initially take pride, but then nothing is right
- **Escape Artists**
 - brag about mentoring but are never around



Toxic Mentoring



- **Passive Negative Mentoring**
(= neglectful mentors)
 - Ambivalent/inattentive
 - Inaccessible
 - Insecure in own career; ? knows how to mentor
 - Has unrealistic expectations leading to “guaranteed failure” of mentee
 - Undervalues mentee’s abilities

Toxic Mentoring



- Active Negative Mentoring:
 - Displays inappropriate behaviors
 - Gives only negative feedback
 - Squelches enthusiasm or initiatives of mentee
 - Takes credit for mentee's work
 - Places mentee in perpetual underling role
 - Unsupportive of independent efforts
 - Doesn't set up and keep regular meetings
 - Uses the relationship to advance own projects
 - Undermines mentee to others
 - Fails to fulfill essential mentoring responsibilities

How To End a Mentoring Relationship

- Need to bring closure and have a conversation
 - show appreciation
 - express that you need a change
 - do not just stop meeting as this often leaves the mentor wondering what happened

- Tell your mentor any benefits you achieved from the relationship (if any)
 - goals achieved
 - new experiences or skills
 - enjoyment of interactions
 - appreciated getting to know someone outside of the department

How To End a Mentoring Relationship

- As a mentee, reflect on what you learned from the relationship
 - about being a mentee
 - about how to mentor (good or bad)

- What will you do differently in the next relationship?
 - especially as you become a mentor to others
 - if you take on a new mentor

- Next steps?
 - any further interactions between selves?
 - has the relationship become more of a peer relationship?

Concluding Statements

It is a fact that mentoring increases faculty productivity, career advancement, and career satisfaction (e.g., Farkas et al., 2019; NASEM, 2019; Pololi et al., 2002; Shen et al., 2022; Shollen et al., 2014; Voytko et al, 2018)

Regardless at what stage you are as a junior faculty member, if you do not have a mentor now you need to do your best to find one so that you too can reap the rewards of being mentored

Hopefully, we have provided you a guide to get you on your way successfully!

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