

Benefits to the Mentors and Mentees

The benefits to both mentor and mentee should be emphasized during the training. Mentoring is a two-way relationship; both the mentors and mentees should experience benefits. Often the role of mentor and mentee will change as the relationship develops. Mentors should view a mentoring relationship as both an opportunity to teach their mentees and to learn from them.

Mentoring benefits both the mentor and mentee.

In a mentoring relationship, an exchange of information may prompt the mentor to examine his or her own standards and philosophy. The mentor gains satisfaction by sharing knowledge, expertise, and influence, and seeing the student develop. The mentor may earn the mentee's respect and receive a well-desired boost in self-esteem (Washington State Department of Personnel, 1993).

The benefits for mentor and mentee are described in the mentor and mentee handbooks (Brainard and Ailes-Sengers, 1994). As part of the training session, you may want to use the Mentors in My Life Activity to ~ brainstorm the benefits of mentoring. Suggest that the participants write additional ideas in their handbooks.

Benefits of Having a Mentor	Benefits of Being a Mentor
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Individual recognition, encouragement, and support • Increased self-esteem and confidence when dealing with professionals • Confidence to challenge oneself to achieve new goals and explore alternatives • A realistic perspective of the workplace • Advice on how to balance work and other responsibilities and set priorities • Knowledge of workplace "do's and don'ts" • Experience in networking 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Satisfaction of helping a student reach her academic and professional goals • Recognition at work for participation in a job-related activity • An expanded network of professional colleagues • Recognition for service to the community • Increased self-esteem, self-confidence and affirmation of professional competence

Responsibilities of Mentors and Mentees

In addition to clarifying the objectives of mentoring, both mentors and mentees need to understand their responsibilities in the mentoring relationship. Since this is a two-way relationship, both parties need to be accountable for their actions or neither party will benefit. The Mentors In My Life Activity works well in this training section also. Being responsible in any relationship requires adhering to common and professional courtesies such as:

- . Being considerate;
- . Returning phone calls;
- . Scheduling the next contact each time you meet;
- . Attending scheduled meetings or calling to cancel;
- . Notifying change of address or change of phone number;
- . Contacting each other on a regular basis;
- . Following through on agreed upon responsibilities;
- . Verbally ending the relationship if it does not work.

Mentees need to show interest in the mentoring relationship.

Mentors and mentees may decide upon specific responsibilities that need to be met during the mentorship. For example, a mentor may suggest that the mentee read and discuss a book or article that will give her some insight on a particular topic. If the mentee agrees to this suggestion and does not follow through, her inaction may seem like disinterest or disregard for the mentor's advice. Both mentor and mentee need to follow through on any of the responsibilities that they agree upon.

Being responsible in a mentoring relationship builds respect and trust.

Qualities

It may help mentors to reflect on some of the qualities of successful mentors. Above all, mentors should enjoy helping and watching others achieve their goals. Mentees need a mentor who is knowledgeable and maintains a balance between praise, criticism and advice. Some of the qualities of successful mentors are listed below; however, one person rarely possesses all of these qualities.

Mentors should be:

- . Committed to the mentoring relationship;
- . Respectful of individuals and alternate lifestyles;
- . Good listeners;
- . Non-judgmental;
- . Sensitive to another person's struggle;
- . Stable and flexible;
- . Honest, patient and trustworthy.

Expectations

Before meeting for the first time, mentors and mentees should reflect on the expectations they have for their relationship. By first doing this individually, mentors and mentees can think freely about their own needs without being influenced by one another. Some questions that mentors and mentees should consider when thinking about expectations include:

Mentee	Mentor
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Why do you want a mentor?• What do you want to learn from your mentor?• What work-related skills would you like your mentor to have?• What interpersonal skills would you like your mentor to have?• Do you expect your mentor to find you a job?• Are there any specific activities you would like to do with your mentor?• How often do you want to meet with your mentor?• Would you like your conversations with your mentor to be confidential?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Why do you want to mentor?• What do you see as your role: to lead, to listen, or both?• How much time do you have to spend with your mentee?• What topics are you uncomfortable discussing?• Are you willing to have your mentee tour your workplace?• What activities would you like to do with your mentee?• How can you increase the comfort level of your mentee?• Is confidentiality an issue for you?

Expectations of mentors and mentees vary and should not be limited to the examples. As the mentoring relationship grows, expectations will change. Mentors and mentees should try to remain aware of their expectations and discuss them with one another on an on-going basis.

How To Define Mutual Expectations

Fundamental to the success of a mentoring relationship is a common understanding of the expectations each partner has for the relationship. Most conflicts that arise during mentoring relationships can be prevented with frank discussions at the outset. The mentee may find it hard to express expectations to the mentor until a level of trust is established. However difficult it may be, mentors and mentees should discuss their personal expectations, set the ground rules, and develop a clear and realistic set of expectations. These tasks should be completed at the first meeting.

The Expectation Worksheet provided in the handbooks will facilitate this discussion. The topics on the worksheet include: reasons for participating in mentoring; what participants hope to get out of mentoring and their desires for mentoring activities; any boundaries they wish to set on the relationship; and the amount of time they will commit to the relationship. A sample mentee expectation worksheet is included at the end of the Core Curriculum. If mentors and mentees prefer a formal method of setting these expectations, a mentoring contract can facilitate this. Mentoring contracts are discussed at the end of this section.

During their first meeting, the mentor and mentee should take the following steps (Washington State Department Personnel, 1993):

- Discuss why they want to be in a mentoring relationship. · Define their roles in the mentoring relationship.
- Share what they have to offer in the relationship, e.g., knowledge, skills, resources, etc.
- Outline the concrete skills the mentee hopes to learn.
- Review the specific information the mentee hopes to gain. · Clarify any limits that they may have for the relationship. · Discuss how they will deal with confidentiality issues.
- Determine any time constraints in the length of the mentoring relationship.
- Discuss preferred ways of interacting: phone calls, email, or face-to-face.
- Decide on the number and length of contacts per month.
- Plan the dates and times in advance.
- Agree on a procedure for notifying each other if one will be late or absent.
- Agree on the appropriateness of where and when to call.
- Discuss the mentee's attire or other behaviors for visiting the mentor's workplace.

Student Mentee Objectives

Remember to show interest in your mentor.

The objectives for having a mentor vary. As a student, you should expect mentoring to facilitate your personal and career development through a relationship with a role model in your field. Your specific objectives of being mentored should include gaining (Brainard and Ailes-Sengers, 1994):

- . Exposure to positive role models;
- . Access to the professional community;
- . Guidance that will ease the transition from school to work;
- . Personal and career guidance;
- . An expanded horizon.

Remember that mentoring will not cure problems, magically open doors or get you a job. Try to be realistic about your goals for being in a mentoring relationship.

A mentor can help you:

- . *Meet new people*
- . *Make career decisions*
- . *Increase technical knowledge*
- . *Develop career potential*
- . *Develop as a person*
- . *Learn career-related politics*

References:

Brainard, S.G. and Ailes-Sengers, L.A. (1994). Mentoring female engineering students: A model program at the University of Washington. *Journal of Women and Minorities in Science and Engineering*, 1, (2), 123-35.

Washington State Department of Personnel (1993). *A Guide to Planning and Conducting an Agency's Mentoring Program*. Olympia, WA.