

Do's and Don'ts for Mentors and Mentees

What makes a good mentor?

What a mentor DOES	What a mentor DOES NOT do
Listen: function as a sounding board for problems and ideas	Protect from experience: do not assume the role of problem solver for the mentees
Criticize constructively: point out areas that need improvement, always focusing on the mentee's behavior, never his/her character.	Take over: do not do what the mentees should be doing themselves
Support and facilitate: provide networking experience; share knowledge of the system; offer assistance where needed	Force: do not attempt to force a mentee in one direction
Teach by example: serve as a model for adhering to the highest values in every area of life	Use undue influence: do not use a sense of obligation to influence the mentee's professional decisions
Encourage and motivate: help mentees to consistently move beyond their comfort zone	Lose critical oversight: do not allow friendship to shade over into favoritism
Promote independence: give their mentees every opportunity to learn by experience	Condemn: do not convey to the mentees that honest mistakes are career-altering disasters
Promote balance: serve as a model for balance between professional and personal needs and obligations	
Take pride in the success of their mentees: recognize that students may rise to greater levels than those who trained them	

What makes a good mentee?

What a mentee DOES	What mentee DOES NOT do
Take the initiative: recognize the need for mentoring and seek it out	Avoid difficulties: do not expect mentors to solve all your problems for you
Avoid perfectionism: accept that you will make mistakes, and learn from them	Sidestep work: do not expect mentors to do work that you should be doing yourselves
Maintain balance: preserve time for family and friends	Stay in your comfort zone: do not shy away from new learning experiences
Work hard: are prepared to give your best	Take advantage: do not use friendship with a mentor as a tool to avoid work or escape consequences of your own activities
Support your peers: exchange personal and professional support with fellow trainees	Bottle it up: do not avoid talking about problems, anxieties, or grief because it makes you seem less than perfect

What a mentee DOES

Take responsibility for the long-term results of patient care: accept that your job does not begin and end in the operating room

Welcome experience: are enthusiastic about pursuing the widest range of professional experience

Seek counseling: solicit advice or counseling if you experience problems with depression, substance abuse, or burnout

What mentee DOES NOT do

Let your ego get in the way: recognize that everyone (faculty, residents, other trainees, nurses, and patients) has something to teach you