F098: Closing the Gender Gap
Mentor-Mentee Relationship: The Good, The Bad, & The Ugly

Mentor: Teacher, advisor to less experienced person

- Important for career development: income, promotions, job satisfaction, critical thinking, scholarship & networking
- “The special skills & experience we develop (as physicians) ... become all the more valuable when shared w/ less experienced colleagues.”

Setness. Postgrad Med 1996;100:15-22

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Conflicts of Interest: NONE

Background

- Mentor-mentee relationship dates back in history
  - Socrates → Plato → Aristotle
  - Well-established efficacy of a seasoned leader cultivating the skills of a younger follower
- Found across many disciplines
  - Business, Science
  - >50% of 92 Nobel laureates worked under the mentorship of a previous laureate


Ethics of Mentorship

- Mentor-mentee relationships possess set of principles that dictate proper behavior among individuals in this relationship
- Role model
- Advisor
- Trusted confidant


Case 1

- Sally, 1st yr derm resident, finds a mentor in Dr. Male Attending (MA).
- Over her 1st yr of training, they publish several articles together.
- It is noted by fellow residents that the two spend lots of time together at work & outside of work.
- When confronted, both state nothing inappropriate is occurring.

Case 1

- 2 types of mentoring: Informal & Formal
- What type of mentorship relationship is this?
- What are the potential problems of this mentorship-mentee relationship?
  - Boundaries
  - Favoritism
  - COIs
Formal Mentoring

- Mentorships assigned
  - Different dynamic than those that develop naturally
- Typically more contractual
- Shorter duration & time limited

Informal Mentoring

- Analogous to apprenticeships
  - Trades learned by observation & teaching from someone with experience in a field
- Develop spontaneously
- Last several yrs
- More interpersonal connection between participants

Informal

- Informal relationships more common in small residencies
- Benefits 2° to mutual interests or from personality chemistry
  - Chemistry: integral part of successful mentor-mentee relationship

"I don’t believe in formal interviews miss Johnston."

Potential Pitfalls of Informality

- Obvious ethical boundaries
  - Sexual relationships; Financial relationships
- Other potential issues
  - Resentment among other residents
  - Favoritism
  - Damage camaraderie w/in program
  - Loss of respect for attending
  - Conflict of interest
  - Mentoring Vs supervisory & evaluating role

Case 2

- PGY-4 Carol is nearing the end of her residency
- Throughout her training, she has expressed interest in academics & has published extensively
- In April she informed Dr. MA that she has decided to join a cosmetic practice
- Since then, Dr. MA has been distant

What should Carol do?

Stages of Mentorship Growth

- Initiation
  - Varies depending on informal vs formal nature of relationship
- Cultivation
  - Bulk of relationship-building between mentor & mentee
- Termination/Separation
  - Dissolution of the mentoring hierarchy
- Redefinition
  - May result in long-lasting friendship or peer status
Termination Stage

- Typically preceded by
  - Increase in self-confidence
  - Autonomy
  - Realization of professional goals
- Commonly occurs at end of residency
- May be planned, unplanned, functional, or dysfunctional
- Intense emotions may come into play
  - Dependent on complexity & closeness of some relationships

Dysfunctional Relationship

- 2nd to disconnect between goals of mentor & mentee
- Mentee:
  - Too dependent
  - Fails to progress toward autonomy
- Mentor:
  - Overprotective
  - Jealous
  - Unhappy with independent decision made by mentee (judgmental)

What is a Successful Mentorship?

Too often most important mentorship criterion is thought to be success in the mentor’s field. Maloney. Clin Dermatol 2012;30:210-215

“The delicate balance of mentoring someone is not creating them in your own image, but giving them the opportunity to create themselves.” Steven Spielberg

Goal of Mentor-Mentee Relationship

- Mentee gains maturity & self-sufficiency
- Good mentor is non-judgmental & constructive, regardless of choices made by mentee


Case 2

What should Carol do?
A. Speak to Dr. MA
B. Make a change in her career plans
C. Find a different mentor that supports her plans
D. Speak to other faculty & staff about Dr. MA’s behavior


Canadian Nurse. 2010;106(7):34-35
Case 3

- Cathy (MSIII), interested in derm, has been working w/ Dr. MA on research projects & getting advice on how to increase her chances for matching into derm
- Dr. MA has many ongoing projects, hoping to advance his own career.
- He appreciates Cathy’s help with his projects.

Case 3 cont.

- Between 3rd yr clerkships, exams, & extra time spent on these projects, Cathy’s grades slip.
- She approaches Dr. MA & expresses her feelings of being overwhelmed.
- After a brief pep talk, Dr. MA asks Cathy to head up another project.

Case 3 cont.

- What should Cathy do?
  A. Speak to a medical school advisor about the situation
  B. Accept the next project in order to secure a position in dermatology
  C. Stop working on previous projects given Dr. MA’s behavior
  D. Re-address w/ Dr. MA how to manage her time to appropriately complete both her tasks as a MS & her projects in dermatology

Symbiotic Relationship

- Mentee is obvious beneficiary, but mentor also rewarded
  - Assistance w/ research & projects
  - Gain ally to support work
  - Develop larger circles of influence
  - Establish legacy as academic leaders
  - Fulfills genuine interest in helping others

Qualities of a Good Mentor

- Readily available
- Offer challenges
- Provide constructive criticism
- Set a good example
- LISTENS

Successful Mentor-Mentee

- Participation by both parties
  - Regularly scheduled meetings
  - Emphasis on good listening skills
  - Identifying important topics & challenges to be discussed
  - Assigning both short- & long-term goals
  - Celebrating successes
  - Feeling comfortable w/ one another
  - Complete confidentiality

Types of Mentorship Malpractice

- **Active Mentorship Malpractice**
  - The Hijacker: bully, label mentee’s ideas as own
  - The Exploiter: saddle mentee w/ low yield projects
  - The Possessor: domination, demeaning to mentee


- **Passive Mentorship Malpractice**
  - The Bottleneck: handcuff mentee to their timeline
  - The Country Clubber: avoid difficult conversations on behalf of mentee; avoid conflict
  - The World Traveler: never available


Preventing Mentorship Malpractice

- Don’t be complicit
- Set boundaries & communicate needs
- Establish a mentorship team
- Know when to walk away
- Mentee can also be guilty - not committed to being mentored


<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Good mentor</th>
<th>Bad mentor</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Promote independence/maturity</td>
<td>Promote dependence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Promote appropriate risk taking &amp; challenges to mentee</td>
<td>Overly protective</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Promote success of mentor</td>
<td>Jealous of mentee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Promote creativity</td>
<td>Trying to build a clone of self</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-Judgmental</td>
<td>Judgmental, “pontifical”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Constructive criticism</td>
<td>Non constructive (jealous, etc)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Readily available: TIME</td>
<td>Not available</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Promote career of mentee; not abuse power</td>
<td>Use mentee to promote own career: free labor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Good role model</td>
<td>Not good role model</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trust, comfort, integrity, perceptive, reciprocal</td>
<td>Lack of open communication</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Good Mentee | Bad Mentee
---|---
Choose mentor bc of shared values, goals, interests | Chose mentor bc think they are powerful
Willing to invest time; serious about relationship | Not willing to invest time, not serious relationship
Communicative | Not communicative
Good listening skills | Not a good listener
Willing to be receptive to learning & reciprocate! | Stubborn, unwilling to take advice, unwilling to share
Integrity, honest, trustworthy, respectful | Lack of integrity, etc.
Self-aware | Not insightful
Appropriate goals | Wants to resolve psychiatric issues: depression, etc

Case 3

- Dr. MA is preoccupied with own goals of advancing his career
- Fails to realize or acknowledge that Cathy is seeking guidance
- & that he is partly to blame for her distress
- Disregard weakens the mentor-mentee relationship
Case 3

- What should Cathy do?
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  B. Accept the next project in order to secure a position in dermatology
  C. Stop working on previous projects given Dr. MA’s behavior
  D. Re-address with Dr. MA how to manage her time to appropriately complete her tasks as a MS & her ongoing projects

Questions for Mentee Selecting Mentor

1. What is the achievement record of mentor?
2. What is mentor’s standard of excellence?
3. Is mentor respected in dept, nationally, internationally?
4. Does mentor have faith in mentee & support them?
5. Does mentor understand mentee’s needs & goals?
6. Is mentor perceptive enough to recognize when cannot give mentor what they need & get help?


Why Mentoring Helps Men More Than Women

- Research (of MBAs) from non-profit group Catalyst showed both men & women gain by having a mentor BUT men benefited more
  - Due to people that men choose as mentors & bc of what those mentors actually do
  - Most effective mentors go beyond typical description of mentoring → ‘sponsors’ who lobby to get ‘their’ hi-potential people promoted or into hi-visibility positions

Imberly Weisul, MONEYWATCH 3/25/2011 (cbsnews.com)

Male with Mentor

| 93% more likely to get 1st post-MBA job at mid-manager level or above |
| Raised his salary in his 1st post-MBA job by $9,260 |
| Mentors 91% male |
| Each promotion = extra 21% in compensation |

Female with Mentor

| 56% more likely to get 1st post-MBA job at mid-management or above |
| Raised her salary in her 1st post-MBA job by $661 |
| Mentors 9% male |
| Each promotion = extra 2% in compensation |

Who Benefits from Mentoring

- More likely to get a big bump in salary if you have a mentor higher up the ladder
  - women are much less likely than men to have mentors in senior executive positions
- Seek out mentors at CEO or senior executive level
- Seek out male mentors??!

Imberly Weisul, MONEYWATCH 3/25/2011 (cbsnews.com)

Conclusion

- Mentoring is important part of medical training
- Academic leaders need to value mentoring
- Mentoring should be mutually beneficial
- Mentees need to be equally committed
- Success is dependent on successful navigation thru stages & open communication between participants
