

Evaluating Mentoring Relationships

Reflect

It's important to establish that you will both be evaluating the relationship yearly. Some mentorship relationships last for years, others are more associated with a specific career phase. And sometimes the relationship does not work out. If the relationship wanes, the annual review is your opportunity to transition from mentee to colleague. When a mentoring relationship ends, this does not necessarily mean that it has failed. Often by design, mentoring relationships are effective for specific, discrete phases of a mentee's career, and often both mentor and mentee will come to the same conclusion.

Consider Options

It may be time to move on if ...

- You can't think of anything you should discuss with your mentor
- You are not making progress
- Your mentor is not available to you
- You no longer receive feedback that is specific.
- When you leave a meeting with your mentor, you aren't sure about "next steps" that will help to advance a project, research and/or career goals.
- You just don't feel supported.

In the above situations, you may want to consider the following strategies for terminating the relationship.

- Avoid passive methods, such as distancing yourself and avoiding contact without explanation
- Specify for the mentor the goals you've achieved with his/her support
- Discuss the additional ways you've benefited from the relationship
- Be honest about your desire for a change in the relationship

If you are unsure how to terminate the relationship, seek advice from your other mentors, division/department leadership, and/or the Perelman School of Medicine Faculty Affairs and Professional Development.

It IS time to move on if ...

- You and your mentor have differing value systems
- Your interactions have included patterns of personality clashes or miscommunications
- Your mentor seems to lack content area expertise you need
- Your mentor does not deliver effective feedback for you

It is time to move on AND elevate your concerns if ...

- Your mentor has not kept your discussions confidential
 - Your mentor has taken credit for your work or not shared vital information with you
 - Your mentor does not manage conflicts of interest
 - Your mentor exhibits behavior that you consider unprofessional
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*Modified from the Group on Women in Medicine Toolkit, AAMC