

GUIDE TO INFORMAL MENTORING

Mentoring Myths

Myth #1: The mentor owns and manages the partnership.

Fact: Successful partnerships are owned and managed by the mentee. The mentee is responsible for scheduling the meetings and preparing for each meeting with an agenda and questions for the mentor. The mentor is responsible for finding time to meet with his/her mentor and provide advice and feedback to help the mentee meet his/her goal.

Myth #2: Mentoring is something a mentor does to a mentee.

Fact: Mentoring arises out of an effective relationship between two people. Both the mentee and mentor have a mutual commitment to build the partnership in order to meet the mentee's goals.

Myth #3: Mentoring partnerships are always a perfect match.

Fact: Not all matches are a perfect fit. It is the responsibility of the mentee and mentor to communicate with each other if the relationship is not working well. Agreeing to have a no fault-out option is an excellent idea. For example, if things are not working out, you can both respectfully agree to discontinue the relationship. This should not reflect negatively on either person.

Myth #4: Mentoring is time consuming.

Fact: Mentoring is a partnership and like any type of relationship, it requires dedicated time. However, you can optimize your time together by agreeing on a set agenda, clear goals, level of confidentiality, and a meeting schedule. Both the mentee and mentor should identify ways to integrate mentoring activities into daily work experiences.

Myth #5: Mentoring partnerships last a lifetime.

Fact: Mentoring partnerships should only last as long as it takes for the mentee to achieve his/her goals. At the end of the agreed upon timeframe of the partnership, the mentee and mentor may decide to continue or end the partnership.

Myth #6: Mentoring is based on chemistry.

Fact: An effective mentoring partnership is a relationship built on mutual respect, trust and honesty.

Myth #7: Mentors are many years older than the mentee.

Fact: Mentors should be selected based on their experience, knowledge, skills, and ability to share what they know. Some of these qualities come with age but not always.

Myth #8: Mentoring meetings must be face-to-face.

Fact: Mentoring can be accomplished through means other than face-to-face meetings. Once a solid foundation for the partnership is established, meeting via telephone or e-mail becomes easier.