

Characteristics of Successful and Failed Mentoring Relationships: A Qualitative Study Across Two Academic Health Centers*

Effective mentors:

- Altruistic and honest
- Have professional experience and networks to facilitate mentee development
- Are accessible ie for regular meetings
- Help mentees reflect on work-life balance, offer emotional support

Effective mentees:

- Open to feedback and are active listeners
- Take responsibility for “driving the relationship”
- Come prepared with lists of topics for discussion including timelines for projects
- Respectful of competing demands on mentors

Failed mentoring relationships:

- Poor communication, inability to listen
- Lack of time or waning interest over time
- Personality differences, incompatibility, perceived (or real) competition
- Conflicts of interest – Mentor should not be in a position of authority over mentee
- Lack of experience