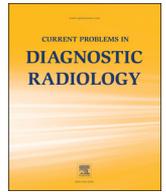




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How Effective are Your Mentoring Relationships? Mentoring Quiz for Residents[☆]



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Mentoring is an essential part of a resident's career development. It plays an important role in nurturing, and sustaining success along the career path of a young physician. Mentoring is a long-term goal that is development-driven rather than performance-driven. Although specific learning goals may be used as a basis, the focus of mentoring may also include self-confidence, self-perception, and work-life balance. A number of residency programs have implemented mentoring programs in their institutions. This article discusses the importance of mentoring, illustrates “do's and don'ts” for mentees and demonstrates how to choose the ideal mentor. Finally, a “mentoring quiz” is designed to evaluate your mentoring relationship.

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Why is Mentoring Important to Radiologists?

Mentoring is a multifaceted collaboration between junior and senior professionals with the primary goal being the nurturing of the junior professional's development. Effective mentoring relationships are fundamental for sustaining and advancing all specialties of medicine, including radiology.¹ The role of the mentor is focused on professional and personal development of the mentee based on their interests and expressed needs and driven by a specific learning agenda. The 2010 survey of radiology residency program directors showed that mentoring relationships are critical for resident professional development and career advancement.² Mentoring programs have also been linked with increased involvement in research, enhanced career satisfaction, and pursuit for an academic career.³ Dedicated and skilled mentors are required to ensure success in clinical and transitional research and it is imperative that the academic faculty be trained to be effective mentors. A robust mentoring program helps promote institution-wide networking and cross-disciplinary research and clinical collaborations.

Characteristics of an Effective Mentor (The 3 C's)

The essential characteristics of an effective mentor are—competence, confidence, and commitment (Fig).

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Competence

Professional knowledge, skill, and experience are the foundations of being an effective mentor. It is essential that mentors be deliberate role models. They offer their protégés a powerful example of competence in their fields of expertise. The virtues of integrity, care, and prudence for their mentees are the essential character traits imperative for a mentor. Caring is best evidenced by a pattern of respect and sensitivity to the welfare and needs of others. In addition, good interpersonal skills and sound judgments are primary attractants for protégés toward effective mentors.

Confidence

An effective mentor shares a network of contacts and resources that they perceive to be beneficial to the mentee. The mentor should have confidence in the protégé to develop the mentoring relationship and supplement it with his or her expertise. A confident mentor demonstrates initiative and takes risks for the welfare of the mentee, and always gives credit where it is due.

Commitment

An effective mentor is committed to the success of their protégé. They invest time, energy, and effort to mentoring and relate the accomplishments of the mentee to their own.

How to Choose the Right Mentor?

Choosing the right mentor is one of the most important career decisions for young academics. A mentoring relationship during

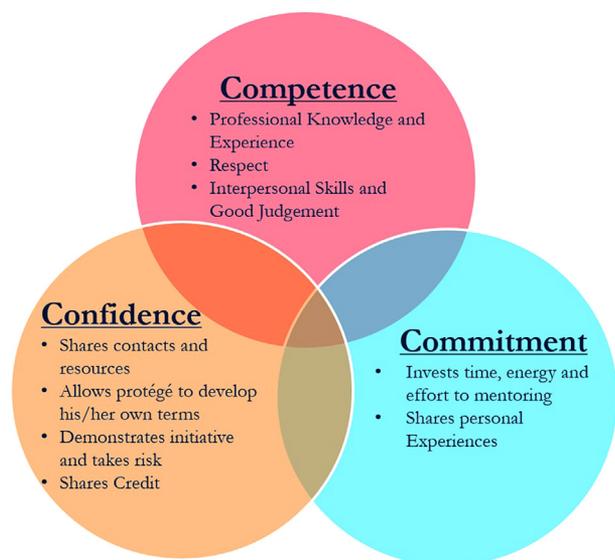


Fig. The 3 C's of an effective mentor. (Color version of figure is available online.)

residency often happens by choice or as the result of a formal mentorship program.^{4,5} Successful mentoring requires understanding between both individuals, which best takes place out of free-will, rather than on request.³ A structured mentoring program may also have positive effects and be an asset to an academic radiology department.⁶ Mentoring is a personal relationship, but is not mutually exclusive. Thus, 1 mentor may have multiple protégés and 1 resident may be mentored by several different mentors. Having multiple mentors is helpful because of changing needs of the resident as they progress through the residency program. Further, residents need not seek mentors in their desired specialty, but a faculty member in other subspecialties can also serve as effective mentors. This would also be applicable outside of

Table 1
The mentoring quiz

Question	Score
Having a mentor has helped build my confidence and satisfaction with my professional career	0-5
I feel that my mentor is equally focused on my performance, career development as well as personal well-being	0-5
My mentor's interactions with me are driven by a specific learning agenda identified by me, and not the organizational or his/her own needs	0-5
I feel that the content of our conversations is completely confidential	0-5
I am able to give my feedback to my mentor in an honest, direct and respectful manner	0-5
We practice active listening skills and agree to disagree on some points	0-5
I can openly share my concerns, insecurities and doubts with my mentor	0-5
I am free to admit my mistakes and errors without the fear of being penalized	0-5
We meet on a regular basis, being thoughtful about each other's time	0-5
I consistently follow through on commitments made in this relationship	0-5
My mentor is open to hearing new ideas and perspectives	0-5
I openly show appreciation and gratitude towards my mentor	0-5
I have identified an action plan in consultation with my mentor with realistic objectives and measurable outcome	0-5
My mentor encourages and motivates me to move beyond my comfort zone	0-5
<i>Score your questions on a scale of 0-5: 0 = "strongly disagree" and 5 = "strongly agree".</i>	
<i>Add your score and turn to Table 2 for results.</i>	

Table 2
How to interpret your score

Score	Interpretation	Suggestions for future improvement
51-70	Excellent! You are in an effective mentoring relationship and have fully benefit from this relationship in personal and professional development.	Keep up the great work and read on for some more thoughts about maintaining an excellent mentoring relationship.
31-50	Strong work! You are a good mentor or mentee, but you sometimes experience problems understanding each other's needs.	Take some time to rethink your communication method and focus on sharing accurate feedback in a timely fashion.
0-30	You need to work on this. You are not benefiting from this relationship and should consider improving the existing or finding a new mentoring relationship.	Read on for some great tools for improving existing and identifying new mentoring relationships.

radiology, that is, residents may find additional mentors in other closely related departments in an academic medical center.

Evaluating a Mentoring Relationship

Although it is important to have a mentoring relationship for residents, it is also important that the relationship is effective and serves the needs of both the mentor and the mentee. Often times, academic departments spend much time and energy in establishing a mentoring program for their residency programs. But because of a variety of reasons, it may not achieve the desired results. The authors devise a "mentoring quiz" for residents, who can use this to evaluate the effectiveness of their mentoring relationship (Tables 1 and 2).

Responsibilities of a Mentee

In addition to evaluating their mentors, the residents ("mentees") have certain responsibilities themselves (Table 3). The mentee should listen and respect the opportunities a mentor is able to provide, and also understand the limitations, without being judgmental. Having an open line of communication enables the mentees to share their thoughts openly and freely admit mistakes and errors. If a mentor has more than 1 mentee, all mentees should cooperate with each other, but still honor and respect confidentiality of their own relationship.

Table 3
Do's and don'ts for a mentee

Do's	Don'ts
Be a proactive listener	Not paying attention
Cooperate with others	Be competitive with others
Openly share thoughts	Withhold thoughts and keep people out
Act parallel to your words	Act contrary to words
Be nonjudgmental	Criticize and disapprove
Be authentic and true to yourself	Act with hidden agenda
Freely admit mistakes and errors	Blame others for mistakes
Seek out different perspectives	Keep a closed mind to new ideas
Encourage others to succeed	Discourage others from taking risks
Have a positive and upbeat outlook	Project a negative perspective
Honor and respect confidentiality	Break confidence
Demonstrate commitment	
Act on decisions between meetings	

Four Phases of the Mentoring Relationship

Kram, in 1983, defined the mentoring relationship as the following 4 phases⁷:

- (1) Initiation (6-12 months)—a mentor is admired and respected for competence and ability to provide support and guidance. They also demonstrate the 3C's of an effective mentor. A mentee is a resident or fellow with potential and willingness to work hard on the tasks assigned.
- (2) Cultivation (2-5 years)—in this phase, the positive expectations of the mentee and the mentor are tested against reality. The career functions emerge first as the senior manager provides challenging work and exposure, followed by psychosocial purposes as the interpersonal bond between the mentor and the mentee strengthens.
- (3) Separation—the relationship now becomes a less central part of each individual's life at work. The young mentee experiences new independence and autonomy, related to his or her professional development in the field.
- (4) Redefinition—in this phase, the relationship primarily becomes a friendship. Both individuals continue to have informal contact and have mutual support.

Conclusion

Successful mentoring relationships are dependent on both the mentor and the mentee. The mentoring quiz may help the residents to evaluate the effectiveness of their mentoring relationships.

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