

## Developing a circle of advisors

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- rationale for having a circle of advisors instead of a single mentor
  - no single person can provide all the information, constructive criticism, emotional support, and challenges that you need in order to have the best chance of reaching your goals
  - multiple or mosaic or composite mentoring is a better approach
- what you might get from advisors
  1. suggestions for places you can apply to for research funding
  2. knowledgeable critiques of your grant proposals
  3. constructive criticism of your papers
  4. analysis of your rejection letters
  5. suggestions about writing the diplomatic cover letter after you have revised a manuscript
  6. information about prizes and awards you might be eligible for
  7. information about how to advance into academic leadership positions
  8. advocacy on your behalf
  9. challenges to do better
  10. reassurance that you can be successful when you doubt yourself
  11. specific courses of action for various problems
  12. help with time-management and procrastination problems
  13. suggestions about items to negotiate for
  14. experience role-playing negotiation scenarios
  15. sympathetic critiques of your self-presentational style
- for each need, determine who can fulfill it and how to approach the potential advisor
  - potential advisors can come from anywhere
  - people enjoy providing advice and information in limited quantities
  - aim for limited and specific questions
- separate professional from personal goals
  - reassurance is best obtained from people who have no say over your future
- consider what topics could be handled well by a workshop
  - get an expert to lead the workshop
- consider how you might help others; have reciprocal relationships
  - e.g., you can have an ally with whom you plan out each week; you help him or her and he or she helps you

- composition of circle
  - people in the circle will change as needs change
  - you will add and subtract advisors as your circumstances change
  - you never outgrow your need for advisors
- when you "mentor" others, help them construct a circle of advisors
- remember your overall goals
  - be as effective as possible in all aspects of your work
  - enjoy your work and your life as a whole

### **Partial Reference List**

Blake-Beard, S., Bayne, M. L., Crosby, F. J., & Muller, C. B. (2011). Matching by race and gender in mentoring relationships: Keeping our eyes on the prize. *Journal of Social Issues, 67*, 622-643.

Although students of color and women students in STEM tend to prefer having mentors of their own race and gender, and believe that they receive more help from matched mentors, academic outcomes (GPA, efficacy, and confidence) are not affected by matching. Any demographic group can mentor, and any demographic group can be successfully mentored by any demographic group.

Eby, L. T., Allen, T. D., Evans, S. C., Ng, T., & DuBois, D. (2008). Does mentoring matter? A multidisciplinary meta-analysis comparing mentored and non-mentored individuals. *Journal of Vocational Behavior, 72*, 254–267.

Some positive evidence for mentoring, but less for career outcomes than for attitudes; small effect sizes.

Sambunjak, D., Straus, S. E., & Marušić, A. (2006). Mentoring in academic medicine: A systematic review. *Journal of the American Medical Association, 296*, 1103-1115.

No solid evidence in favor of (classical) mentoring, partly because of difficulties in separating effects of mentoring from individual characteristics of mentee.

Zellers, D. F., Howard, V. M., & Barcic, M. A. (2008). Faculty mentoring programs: Reenvisioning rather than reinventing the wheel. *Review of Educational Research, 78*, 552-588.

Most research is unable to determine the effectiveness of mentoring because of study design (e.g., lack of control group). Most mentoring programs are structured without knowledge of the literature and without clear measures of success.