

DOD Mentoring Resource Portal

MENTORING PROCESS

Mentor/Mentee Relationship Management

MENTORING CLOSURE AND TRANSITION

Purpose:

To offer a set of steps to guide Mentors and Mentees through the mentoring process.

Audience:

Mentors and Mentees

Context:

Formal Mentoring Programs normally pair Mentors/Mentees for six months to one-year. Good mentoring relationships might not ever end or could end when the Mentee has changed expectations or the need for the Mentor's guidance and direction has changed. This document provides general guidelines about how to close and transition mentoring relationships.

How to Use:

- Customize the resource and make any adjustments to fit specific DOD Component/Agency mentoring needs.
- Share the resource with the appropriate audience.

Common Terms

The following are common terms associated with the DOD Mentoring Resource Portal:

Mentor, also known as Advisor, is a trusted counselor or guide who is involved in the development and support of one who is less experienced.

Mentee, also known as Protégé or Learner, is the more junior person being mentored.

Mentoring Program Coordinator, also known as Mentoring Program Manager, is responsible for the overall management of the mentoring program.

Information Source Disclaimer

Most of the information on this mentoring resource was obtained and adapted from the following documents: [WHS Director of Administration and Management Enterprise Mentoring, Tools for Advisors. Headquarters, Department of Army, DCS, G-1 ARMY MENTORSHIP HANDBOOK. United States Marine Corps, Marine Corps University – Mentoring.](#) All content is provided for informational purposes only.

MENTORING PROCESS – HOW TO ESTABLISH, MAINTAIN AND CLOSE A MENTORING CONNECTION

Formal Mentoring Programs normally pair Mentors/Mentees for six months to one-year. Good mentoring relationships might not ever end or could end when the Mentee has changed expectations or the need for the Mentor's guidance and direction has changed. In the event the mentoring partnership is not a good match or working effectively as it could, you may seek a new Mentor and/or notify the Mentoring Program Coordinator to express your concerns and find a potential solution. There are six potential steps to developing, maintaining, and terminating a mentoring connection.

1.0 IDENTIFICATION STAGE

Most mentoring associations are formed haphazardly, except where a Mentoring Program is in place. Where no program exists, either a Mentor or Mentee may initiate the mentoring connection. Mentors look for Mentees with potential for improvement who need guidance. Mentees recognize that they need assistance with some facet of their professional development and seek help to improve. There may be some common bond between Mentor and Mentee such as gender, race, hometown, profession, hobbies, unit, etc.

2.0 PREPARATION STAGE

Both Mentor and Mentee must want to establish the mentoring association. They should understand the purpose of the relationship, expectations, goals, risks, and rewards.

3.0 INITIATION STAGE

The Mentor and Mentee set the parameters, discuss and set goals, decide on time-frames, and write a plan with a time-frame.

4.0 CULTIVATION STAGE

This is the stage where the Mentor teaches job skills, provides guidance, lends psychological support, opens doors, and provides counsel. The Mentee works to improve performance, learn new skills, follow guidance, and actively learn the organization, its goals and "ethos."

5.0 REDEFINITION/TRANSITION STAGE

During the transition process, there are a few activities to complete. Mentees, touch-base with the Mentors to:

- Review the Mentee's Action Plan and developmental goals to measure progress, and to determine if you should engage in any subsequent follow-on developmental activities post mentoring relationship.

- Celebrate your successes! Boast about your accomplishments. Revisit the journey. Share your appreciations about each other. There is an old saying “If you don’t have a sense of where you come from, going backward looks like progress.”
- Discuss your relationship transition. Stay in touch on an informal basis.

The transition stage offers the opportunity for reflection and growth, allowing the harvesting of our learning.

Some questions to discuss when you meet include:

- What did you learn?
- What were the implications of that learning?
- How can I apply and integrate that learning?
- What other development opportunities could be helpful?
- What did we learn about each other? What are our gifts and strengths? “I admire you’re...”
- “You have a real knack for...”
- “I especially appreciated it when you...”
- What didn’t work so well and why? What did you learn from these experiences? Missteps offer rich experiences for learning.
- Having a reflective conversation about specific learning that has taken place during, and as a result of the mentoring partnership, encourages the relationship to come to a learning conclusion.
- What worked well in our partnership? What did we learn about ourselves?

6.0 TERMINATION/CLOSURE STAGE - WHEN DOES A MENTORING RELATIONSHIP END?

Parties may decide during the redefinition stage to terminate the association due to positive or negative factors or at this point, the relationship may evolve into a friendship. Other mentoring relationships end because they fail to become productive and comfortable. The Mentor and Mentee may never establish rapport, or one or both parties may not commit adequate time or effort. There may be a failure to communicate goals, needs, intentions, or expectations. The likelihood of this happening is greatest when Mentees and Mentors are “matched” by a third party, or agree to the relationship without much consideration and discussion of needs and expectations. In the event the mentoring partnership is not a good match or working effectively as it could, you may seek a new Mentor/Mentee and/or notify the Mentoring Program Coordinator to express your concerns.

The relationship may also end if either the Mentor or Mentee relocates to another area or leaves the organization. It is not necessary for the relationship to end in these instances, but is possible.

Both Mentors and Mentees should feel free to end mentoring relationships that do not meet their expectations. In most cases, if one party feels it is not working, the other feels the same. At this point, the Mentee should be encouraged to find a new Mentor and terminate the relationship as a “no fault” termination.