

Closing the Mentoring Relationship

A NEW BEGINNINGS MENTORING PROGRAM TRAINING

Successful Mentor/Mentee Relationships

- Keep Communications Open
- Offer Support
- Define Expectations
- Maintain Contact
- Be Honest
- Actively Participate
- Get to Know Each Other
- Be Reliable and Consistent
- Stay Positive

What is the Importance of Formally Bringing Closure to Matches

A mentor-mentee relationship may end earlier than anticipated for a variety of reasons:

- **Loss of interest**
- **Unfulfilled expectations**
 - If the mentee or mentor have expectations for the relationship that are not met they are likely to feel dissatisfied and may end the relationship.
- **Difficulty connecting**
 - Mentors and mentees may not be able to establish a close relationship. One or both may not have the skills to communicate effectively with the other person. It is also possible that mentors may not understand their mentee's cultural background, making it hard for the two to bond
- **Lack of support**
 - The mentor and/or mentee may not have the support they need from mentoring program staff or from the mentee's family to continue the relationship.
- **Behavior issues**
 - The mentor or mentee may violate a program policy or refuse to cooperate with program staff.
- **Changing life circumstances:** The mentor or mentee may move, experience a personal crisis, or find that their schedule is too full to continue meeting.

Closing the Relationship

FOR MENTORS

Alerting Your Mentee

- If you are a mentor who would like to end the mentoring relationship for any reason, please alert your mentee as soon as you are certain that this change is on the horizon for you.
- Your mentee will appreciate knowing that you can only offer a few more mentoring conversations. With this advance notice, the mentee will be able to use these last sessions strategically and can also begin to seek another mentor if needed.
- We encourage you to be straightforward and clear when you communicate about the end of your commitment as a mentor. While you may regret ending the mentoring and have the urge to offer to continue informally, it is best to be honest about what you can realistically provide. For example, rather than stating, “Call me anytime,” you might simply say, “I wish you well. Please keep me posted about your progress with an occasional email.”

Concluding Your Support as a Mentor

- As you conclude your support as a mentor, your mentee will appreciate if you reflect back on progress and changes since the beginning. By drawing attention to the mentee's progress you will provide encouragement that is likely to motivate more growth on the part of the mentee.
- Your recognition of the mentee's efforts will help the mentee to see his or her efficacy and capability in a new light.
- Many people find it helpful to end a mentoring relationship with a sense of purpose and direction for the future. We encourage you to use the last session to focus on future goals and the support systems that the mentee will put in place to support continued development.
- **Do not make promises.** Mentors should not make promises they are unlikely to keep (e.g., that they will stay in regular touch with the mentee). Breaking a promise can have very negative effects on youth who have experienced abandonment or been seriously disappointed by adults.

In Summary

In summary, you can conclude your responsibilities as a mentor in a positive and productive manner by:

- Giving as much advance notice as possible.
- Being clear about how you would like to relationship to work after the formal mentoring is completed.
- Acknowledging specific areas of progress and growth that you have observed in the mentee during the mentoring period.
- Giving verbal recognition of challenges that your mentee has faced and/or overcome.
- Helping your mentee set goals for the future.
- Asking your mentee to identify the support system and resources that will support achievement of those goals in the future.
- Encouraging your mentee to continue on the journey of his life as a lifelong learner.

Closing the Relationship

FOR MENTEES

Talking to your Mentor

- If you are a mentee who would like to conclude your mentoring relationship, you may feel awkward about telling your mentor.
- Many people feel confusion about how to express gratitude for a mentor's voluntary commitment and also to let the mentor know that the mentoring conversations are no longer needed.
- The good news is your mentor will understand!
- By communicating that you would like a change, you are freeing up yourself and your mentor from a commitment that may have served its purpose.
- Remember that ending the formal mentor relationship may not mean ending the relationship. Many mentors and mentees continue to stay in touch informally and support each other in a variety of ways over time.

The Process Begins by Talking to Your Mentor

- A best practice for communicating with your mentor about ending the formal mentoring is to tell the mentor in person.
- Plan to spend five to ten minutes at the end of your next session talking about it. While every person's situation is unique and requires individual explanation, here is a straightforward approach that may help you plan this conversation:
- Begin with a simple, clear statement about how you see your career and the mentor relationship at this time.
- Explain how your situation may have changed. Express gratitude to the mentor for his or her time and contribution to your progress.
- Let your mentor know how the mentorship has benefited you.
- Ask for the relationship to continue informally if you would like to maintain the relationship.
- Write a personal thank you note and mail it to your mentor within two days after your last session.

Questions

1. List three things you should consider while closing a relationship with your mentor/mentee.
2. What have you learned about your mentee? Or, if you are a mentee what have you learned about your mentor?
3. What have you learned about mentoring relationships?
4. List 3 characteristics of successful mentor/mentee relationships?

Please insert your answers below.
