

Mentoring Skills for Faculty

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The really great make you feel that you, too, can become great....Mark Twain

A. What is mentorship?

1. Origins in Ancient Greece. Odysseus left his son in the care of the wise Mentor when leaving for the Trojan War.
2. Strong similarities to parenting. A mentor nurtures and protects. Protégé comes from the French word to "protect".
3. Classically it is an intense, mutually beneficial personal relationship between a person older, wiser, more experienced and powerful with someone younger, less experienced and generally powerless that develops over time.
4. A Mentor sees in the protégé things the protégé does not see in himself and actively works to create success from this potential.
5. Academicians who have been mentored have greater career success and satisfaction.

B. Stages of Development in Mentoring Relationships

1. Novice – beginning in one's career, one primarily needs a mentor who is a teacher to provide information on tasks and the organization.
2. Apprentice – Teaching is still important but less so. Mentor offers encouragement and motivation.
3. Journeyman – Protégé is skilled and competent. Mentor offers encouragement and champion's efforts.
4. Master – Mastery of skills has been accomplished but needs final career path doors opened in organization for advancement.
5. Mentor – Protégé becomes mentor and helps others.

C. What new people in an organization need to know

1. unique politics
2. acceptable methods for gaining visibility
3. characteristic stumbling blocks
4. skills and competencies needed for success
5. norms, standards, values, and history of heroes and heroines in the organization

D. Establishing a mentoring relationship

It is a mutual process, protégé's are not chosen.

1. begins with trust
2. mutual respect is the cornerstone
3. know your goals
4. identify a successful person consistent with your goals
5. arrange a meeting, ask for advice first. If the relationship is comfortable, it will develop into mentoring.
6. complementary skills and interests likely provide initial attraction
7. be willing to set aside arrogance and superficial ego to receive both constructive criticism and positive feedback in order to grow
8. can occur over distances (email, national meetings)
9. look for someone in your chosen area whose personality enhances your own

E. Benefits to the Protégé

1. improved technical knowledge
2. better performance and increased productivity
3. greater sense of mission and purpose
4. greater organizational understanding
5. increased self-confidence
6. improved chances of success and career advancement
7. improved personal growth and development

F. Benefits to the Mentor

1. perpetuates ideas
2. helps generational transition
3. synergistic advantages
4. benefits both careers (mentor from work ethic of recent training and protégé from experience)
5. sense of pride in protégé's accomplishments
6. personal satisfaction that comes from being needed
7. new knowledge about interpersonal skills, cultural diversity, and personal development

G. Choosing a Mentor

Qualities to look for:

- Competence
- Political acceptance
- Respected
- Power and influence
- Teaching skills
- Security
- Availability
- Approachability

H. Qualities of a good mentor

- Keeps promises
- Treats everyone with respect
- Encourages positive behaviors
- Has realistic expectations
- Non-judgemental
- Accepts personal differences
- Enjoys watching protégé develop
- Exhibits high professional and moral character
- Maintains confidentiality
- Demonstrates sensitivity to protégé's needs
- Holds protégé to high but reachable standards

I. What good mentors provide

- Advice
- Teaching/ information source
- Coaching/ encouragement
- Open, honest feedback
- Reduce frustration
- Identifies resources
- Provides opportunities and opens doors
- Role-modeling
- Inspiration
- Eliminates barriers to effective performance and career success

Good mentors give their protégé's the edge by the 3 "P" 's:

1. Process – how to strategies
2. Permission – it's okay to try new ideas
3. Protection – shield from outside attacks

J. Mentoring across gender and cultural issues

1. most organizations do not have enough experiences mentor to develop relationships based on gender or race.
2. goals of diversity is to recognize unique talents and attributes of all
3. take into account the atmosphere and culture of the organization and demeanor and motives of the mentor
4. women's issues – women traditionally are taught that it is unbecoming to be aggressive, think of their own needs, or go after what they want, while men are taught just the opposite. Women must find a way to combine work identities with identity as women. Although this is easier with a female mentor, powerful successful women are rare and frequently over-extended. Therefore women must seek male mentors and reject those qualities that re inconsistent with self-image. Women then seek a secondary female mentor who posses the traits most admired and lacking in the male counterpart.

K. Evolving mentoring relationships

1. One may have many mentors throughout one's career.
2. Mentoring relationships are characterized by intense feelings similar to other human relationships such as love. This includes admiration, respect, and gratitude.
3. Bad relationships can engender feelings of envy, bitterness, rancor, and abandonment ultimately leading to liberation and rejuvenation.
4. Protégé's can be selective in what they learn and absorb from a mentor, emulating some and rejecting other behaviors.
5. Remember to follow through on tasks and provide follow-up
6. Show appreciation to the mentor and thanks for help
7. Protégé is ultimately responsible for success and failure – not the mentor

L. Pitfalls in mentoring relationships

1. Over-identification (difficulty in letting go of relationship for further growth)
2. Reliance or enmeshment (mentor is adopted to exclusion of all other secondary relationships. This may be demanded by mentor)
3. Exploitation (Protégé is used for mentor's advancement)
4. Boundary violations
(* Look at previous track record of mentor and other personal relationships)


You can impress people at a distance, but you can impact them only up close – Howard Hendricks

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Prophylaxis Against Academic Burnout

Author: Carey D Chisholm

Introduction

The academic career has many unique challenges and sources of stress. Over time the risk of "academic burn-out" will confront many if not most emergency physicians engaged in academics. Fortunately, many of the very sources of burn-out may in fact serve as resources for career longevity and fulfillment.

Potential sources of stress in academic emergency medicine revolve around the lack of set limits within one's job setting. The job is simply never "finished". In fact, there are frequently simultaneous and possibly conflicting tasks that may pull one in multiple directions. The grant deadline, manuscript revision, textbook chapter deadline, national committee task, hospital and departmental committees, medical student letter of recommendation and resident counseling are simply layers added onto one's clinical responsibilities. Without proper planning and the correct frame of mind, these constant deadlines and tasks can create a sense of personal chaos and job dissatisfaction. Furthermore, one's ethical responsibilities to mentor and teach medical students and residents creates the need to approach tasks with a perfectionistic inclination.

Fortunately, there are many components of an academic career that can counterbalance these stressors and perhaps assist in preventing job dissatisfaction and burn-out. While multiple jobs may be taxing, they also prevent one from becoming numbed by repetition and the rut of routine. Intellectually, the myriad of challenges poised by our patient population, inquisitive medical students and assertive, intelligent EM residents serve as daily challenges for us to remain a student for life. Intellectual curiosity is valued and cherished in the academic setting. As one progresses in their career, areas of true expertise are developed, and are highly valued by medical students, residents and colleagues at a national or international level. Opportunities abound to learn new skill sets, accept new administrative or teaching challenges, and engage in professional growth opportunities.

Have a mission statement or a personal vision. Ideally this integrates your personal and professional life with both the home and work environment. Failure to do so will result in conflicts, often subconscious, that result in long term insidious stressors. Without this personal mission statement, it becomes impossible to prioritize tasks and budget how one should allocate their time. The personal mission statement is your rudder, and those who fail to have one will risk drifting aimlessly through their career.

Develop Time Management skills. This is the most important stress management and productivity tool that one can have. If you have not had formal training in time management, it is almost certain that you are working twice as hard and accomplishing only two-thirds of what you are capable of doing. Learn and develop this skill set for your professional future and family sanity. You must have a personal mission statement, a prioritized task list and a planning device that is comfortable for you to carry and use. Time management experts estimate that for every hour spent "planning" you "save" an additional 3 hours. Perhaps most important is the sense of personal control that comes with time management.

Personal Planner (Organizer)

This device must be portable and kept with you at all times. Computer based models are popular, but the bottom line is that no device is effective if not used, and there's nothing "wrong" with a paper based system if preferred. A month at a glance scheduling calendar is the minimum, although most academic physicians will need a week or even a day at a glance. Recurring dates such as monthly committee meetings must be entered (include social events such as birthdays too). "Retrograde planning" of preparatory steps can then be entered into the task planner. This critical skill begins with a final product deadline (e.g. presentation at a national meeting) and breaks it into component parts. Each component part is then assigned a deadline in your planner, allowing a stepwise progression towards the final goal. The more specific each component part, the better. Building in a buffer for each component completion deadline allows unexpected crises (or opportunities) to be addressed. Tasks are prioritized each day to channel your activities towards obtaining your most important goals and meeting upcoming deadlines. This is not simply a "to do" list, as it isn't the number, but rather the quality, of the tasks accomplished that is important. Such a device should also contain contacts (never look up a phone number more than once) and serve as a repository for "brainstorms" that fleetingly emerge from our subconscious. At least weekly you need to sit down and plan your upcoming week in some detail, while looking ahead over the next month. At least once a month, look ahead for the next 6 months to refresh your memory about upcoming projects and deadlines.

Learn to say "NO". This is a common skill among almost all successful academic faculty members. At some point, usually about the 5-10th year of our career, we realize that we cannot continue to add new responsibilities and fulfill existing obligations and tasks well. As more and more tasks are added, projects become rushed and deadlines are missed. Frustration mounts as it becomes evident that we are no longer producing high quality work. Before taking on a new task or responsibility, examine it critically to see if it meets your professional (and personal) mission statement. If it does, develop an accurate assessment of the time commitment. Where will those hours come from? Select another current activity of equal time commitment and off-load it before accepting the new challenge. And be careful to maintain a "crisis buffer" of time as invariably family illnesses, or other unexpected events will develop. Failure to do so assures that the "crisis management" comes out of personal (family) time or means missed deadlines.

Delegation: Many of us do not delegate tasks well. This is often rationalized by thinking that only you are capable of performing the task (correctly), or concern that your value to the organization may be diminished (and you therefore may become expendable) if others are taught to do tasks for which you are responsible. Remember however that you can

delegate authority to do a task, but you cannot delegate responsibility for assuring the product is completed. Learn what items can be assigned to others to accomplish for you. The time invested in training an assistant will pay off many times over in the time you save by effective delegation. This is also key in developing our future leaders and an invaluable component of the mentoring process. Develop priorities and stick to them. Decide the time with which projects need to be accomplished, and request weekly updates of the progress made.

Work smarter, not longer. Americans work longer hours than any other industrialized nation. Our ability to work hard serves as a source of pride and has been integral to our productivity. However, the candle can be burned at both ends for only a finite period of time. By focusing 80% of our efforts on the critical 20% of high priority tasks, we can increase productivity without increasing our work week. Indeed, as one progresses in their career, prolonged work hours may serve more as a red flag of personal disorganization rather than a badge of honor. It's not how many hours you work that matters...it's how productive you are with your hours worked. Almost everyone can easily learn to work more efficiently through the application of basic time management skills. Workaholics develop dysfunctional coping strategies and ultimately lose their creativity and productivity. The Starling curve analogy applies here.

Block out "protected time" every week. This should include both personal as well as professional time. During such times, accept no phone calls or office visits. This is your private, focused time. Whenever possible, arrange this during periods of intellectual and physiologic peaks in terms of your circadian rhythm. Your office door must remain closed in order to discourage passersby from interrupting you. Use this time also to protect yourself physiologically from the stress of shift work. For instance, if you are between 2 night shifts, do not allow yourself to be scheduled for a committee meeting in the mid-afternoon. How many of those attending would be willing to meet with you at 0200 hours in the morning? Use e-mail or a telephone call to convey critical information that may impact decisions at the meeting. A well run meeting will have both an agenda as well as good minutes, allowing two opportunities for your input if you choose to miss the meeting. Time for aerobic exercise (minimum of 20 minutes 3 times a week) should also be guarded from intrusion.

Guard your schedule carefully

Once you create a daily schedule, try to stick to it. This will be extremely difficult as there are many interruptions that will rob you of time. Phone calls, impromptu meetings, non-scheduled visitors, and email are all "time robbers". Being available and flexible is important up to a point, but a complete "open door" policy will likely cause you so many interruptions that you will be left with little quality time to perform your daily tasks. Unless expecting a phone call, try letting voice mail take messages, batch them, and return them when taking a break from other tasks. If appropriate, answer by email, which takes considerably less time. Speaking of email, try to do this only once a day. Many individuals find that reading and answering email takes less mental concentration than writing publications, reviewing articles, or designing projects. Consider saving email for the end of the day thereby protecting the more mentally alert morning hours for important (higher priority) other tasks. If possible, spend some portion of your office time during off-hours. Many successful academicians will tell you that their most productive office time is before 9am or after 5pm as this minimizes interruptions and impromptu meetings by others who "just notice you" in the office.

Other Time Management Tricks

Use your commute time wisely: This can be a source for CME (educational tapes), the major venue to keep up with current events, an opportunity to plan your next week, or even accomplish work. The use of a small hand-held Dictaphone is particularly useful for generating letters or organizing your "to do" list. For drivers, be wary about the use of the phone while operating a vehicle. Books on tape can also create a recreational outlet.

Record TV programs: This allows you to watch them on your schedule, not theirs, and best of all allows you to fast forward through all of those mind-numbing commercials. For instance a 3.5 hour football game can be watched in 1.5 hours by recording it (while you're outside enjoying the sunshine at the park). By purchasing your own exercise equipment, you can multi-task even more by watching the tape while working out. DVD, with subtitles, offers a way to watch movies while exercising.

Take advantage of small chunks of time: Five or six minutes waiting in a line may seem only a minor annoyance. Ten such episodes in a day quickly add up (over 2 weeks a year!). EM physicians are masters of multi-tasking, and of turning attention from one thing to another. Capture these otherwise wasted minutes by keeping your personal planner at hand (or your cell phone, perhaps even that magazine, journal or novel).

Avoid procrastination: All of us are procrastinators up to a point. This is perhaps the greatest time sink of all. Deferring activities that we dislike, appear overwhelming, or make us uncomfortable is human nature. Divide such activities into small "bite-size" pieces, and work slowly (yet progressively) towards their completion. Build in a series of rewards for those particularly undesirable tasks ("I'll register the car today, but go to that movie afterwards"). Finally, a good rule of thumb is to try not to pick up a piece of paper more than twice without taking some sort of action on it. If you have let it lay for a week without taking action on it, then likely it isn't that important anyway. You should strongly consider throwing it away, or delegating it to someone else to save yourself time better spent in more productive pursuits.

Other Concepts About Burn-Out

EM is a clinical specialty. Accept this, and the clinical work in the ED that accompanies this. Clinical teaching remains a key activity for EM faculty, and should never be denigrated as a chore. Value your clinical time and protect it from incursions from other areas of your job. For instance, I do not accept any non-patient care telephone calls during ED shift time. Trying to solve a difficult administrative problem or plan a teaching event or committee meeting will result in two inadequate performances, and raise rather than lower one's stress levels. Your patients and your students/residents need your focused attention during these times, and your professional obligation lies with them. Caveat: one cannot maintain the same clinical work schedule as one's community colleagues and expect to be academically productive. Academicians often work unrealistically high clinical workloads.

Institutional alignment. Academicians who remain in their positions for extended periods of time have developed a sense of "alignment" with the values of their academic center. If the values diverge, conflict results and longevity is unlikely. New chairmen, Deans, or hospital CEO/CFO's all may impact an academic center's institutional values. Perhaps the best strategy to avoid unpleasant surprises is to work at centers that have EM departmental representation in search committees for key institutional personnel.

Play hard. This means that you need to have a personal life and identity that is separate from your role as an academic EM physician. Your family and close friends require appropriate investment of time and energy on your part. One of the most frequent themes among business executives is that they wished they had spent more time with their family than they did. Talk to older mentors and you will be surprised how pervasive this is. Only strong attention to this and proper planning

will allow you to avoid making this tragic mistake. On a personal level, it is easier to empathize with our patients and our colleagues/students at work if we are well-rounded and have an active extracurricular life. Family outings should be part of your regular planning, and never become the victim of meeting a deadline. "Medicine free" evenings are critical when out with work colleagues at events that include non-medical spouses and friends. I encourage you to envision how bored you would be if you sat at a dinner table with a group of accountants and listened to them discuss their "great accounts" all evening. Younger faculty have more difficulty with this, but with agreement that "medical talk is taboo" (and a few pregnant pauses the first time you try this), it is surprising how enriching the social event becomes. Non-medical friends and family are intrigued with the humanistic aspects and stories of our practice, so if you must revisit the workplace, focus on these (but be careful not to violate patient confidentiality). Vacations should be exactly that: time away from professional obligations to use for personal relaxation, growth and family time. Work during a vacation is an oxymoron. Leave it behind and DO NOT feel guilty about not working. Learn to relax! Your productivity is enhanced by this activity. Set goals for personal development. For instance, decide to develop a new hobby every other year. This complements your "student for life" role as a faculty role model, and enriches your life with new knowledge, experiences and friendships. We read so much material in our professional lives that it is easy to lose track of the joy of pleasure reading. Again, make a goal to regularly engage in non-medical reading.

Other Wellness Tips

Exercise

This is a critical component of any wellness program. A well designed exercise program not only increases energy and stamina but also bolsters the immune system. Doing this in combination with watching TV, pleasure reading, or with a group of friends makes it a social event as well. Exercise not only provides health benefits for the body, it is also a great stress reliever. Remember going for a walk to clear your mind when studying for tests? Muscular activity triggers the sympathetic nervous system and helps keep you mentally alert. Even stretching exercises at your desk may afford a needed mental break and result in better creativity. As noted above, a minimum of 20 minutes of aerobic exercise or resistance training three times a week is recommended. Try to schedule some regular time at the gym, walking, jogging, or other physical activities to maintain peak performance.

Pleasure reading

For reasons discussed earlier, this activity augments one's humanistic qualities as a physician, adds social interests, provides an escape from stress and breaks the rut of reading only professional material. Reading "humanities" books (how other people live and think) allows a broader perspective and potential for empathy. Setting a goal, such as reading one novel a month, increases the likelihood that this will be accomplished.

Some of the material in this chapter also appears in the chapter "Physician Wellness in an Academic Career" co-authored with Debra Perina, MD in the SAEM-EMRA ***Emergency Medicine: An Academic Career Guide***.

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