

PHASES OF MENTORSHIP

Have you thought about the future of your relationship with your mentor/mentee?

The length of mentoring relationships vary. Some mentors and mentees work together for years while others may engage in much briefer mentoring experiences. Regardless of the timeframe, decades of research have identified and confirmed four developmental phases of mentorship. The model described below outlines how the relationship evolves and how both mentors and mentees affect the relationship as it moves from phase to phase.*



Phase #1 Initiation

- Relationship is established by setting positive expectations.
- Mentor is often the presumed lead, but both parties can take initiative.



Phase #3 Separation

- Relationship experiences significant changes due to professional/personal circumstances.
- Mentee is more independent.



Phase #2 Cultivation

- Relationship boundaries (personal, professional, or combination) are established.
- Mentor and mentee begin to reap benefits or may experience some obstacles in the relationship.



Phase #4 Redefinition

- Relationship ends or a new relationship emerges.
- In redefined relationships, mentor and mentee view themselves as professional colleagues and/or a personal friendship develops.

Throughout the phases, mentors and mentees should meet and reflect on their relationship.

➤ Phase #1: Initiation

Meetings: Focus on getting to know each other during initial meetings.

Reflection: Agree SMART Goals. Goals that are Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, and Time-bound.

➤ Phase #2: Cultivation

Meetings: Schedule regular meetings to check SMART goals and develop an interpersonal relationship.

Reflection: Share roses (personal and professional accomplishments or benchmarks that are positive), thorns (obstacles or challenges you have encountered), and buds (something you are anticipating).

➤ Phase #3: Separation

Meetings: Scale back your scheduled time together and/or make your meetings less formal.

Reflection: Identify the pros and cons of moving forward with or without your mentor/mentee.

➤ Phase #4: Redefinition

Meetings: Decide to continue mentoring meetings or schedule a final mentorship meeting.

Reflection: Examine your mentoring experiences. Consider what you have given and what you have gained during the relationship.

*Research

- Hackmann, D.G. & Malin, J.R. (2020). From dyad to network: The evolution of a mentoring relationship. *Mentoring & Tutoring: Partnership in Learning*, 28(4), 498-515.
- Kram, K. (1985). Phases of the mentor relationship. *Academy of Management Journal*, 26(4), 608-625.