

# The role of the mentor

- › Ideally mentors should not have a **conflicting power relationship** with the mentee. That is, there should not be potential for the mentor to directly impact on the mentee's career.
- › Mentors can **take on many roles**: role model, sounding board, helping build networks and career support; sometimes being there simply to listen and challenge.
- › Mentors should have an idea **how many mentees** they are willing to mentor.
- › **Ground rules** should be established between the mentor and mentee in terms of what can and can't be discussed.
- › Mentors should always strictly adhere to **maintaining confidentiality and privacy** in their discussions with their mentees. This will allow the mentees to speak openly about issues that may be of concern with them.
- › Mentors should aim to encourage their mentees to **progress through reflection** on their own goals, skills and knowledge, as opposed to simply providing them with advice. This promotes self-reliance and resilience in the mentee.
- › A mentor isn't expected to have all the answers but instead to guide the mentee to identify **their own solutions** and meet their goals.
- › Mentors should:
  - **Build trust and a strong rapport** with their mentee; this includes being sensitive and respectful to individual issues and responding promptly to requests for meetings
  - **Share their experiences** – this includes successes and failures
  - **Actively listen and ask questions** – listening is an important skill for mentors and they should be prepared to listen to the mentee's points of view
  - **Empower the mentee** by guiding them towards solutions and decisions
  - Assist the mentee with achieving their **short and long-term goals**
  - Provide mentees with **constructive feedback** and encourage them to listen, review and consider different perspectives
  - Assist mentees with their career by exploring options and **providing opportunities**
  - Be **role models** for their mentees.

Questions about the mentoring program or concerns about your mentoring relationship?  
Contact [susie.obeid@aoa.org.au](mailto:susie.obeid@aoa.org.au) for a confidential conversation

AOA Younger Surgeon Mentoring Initiative