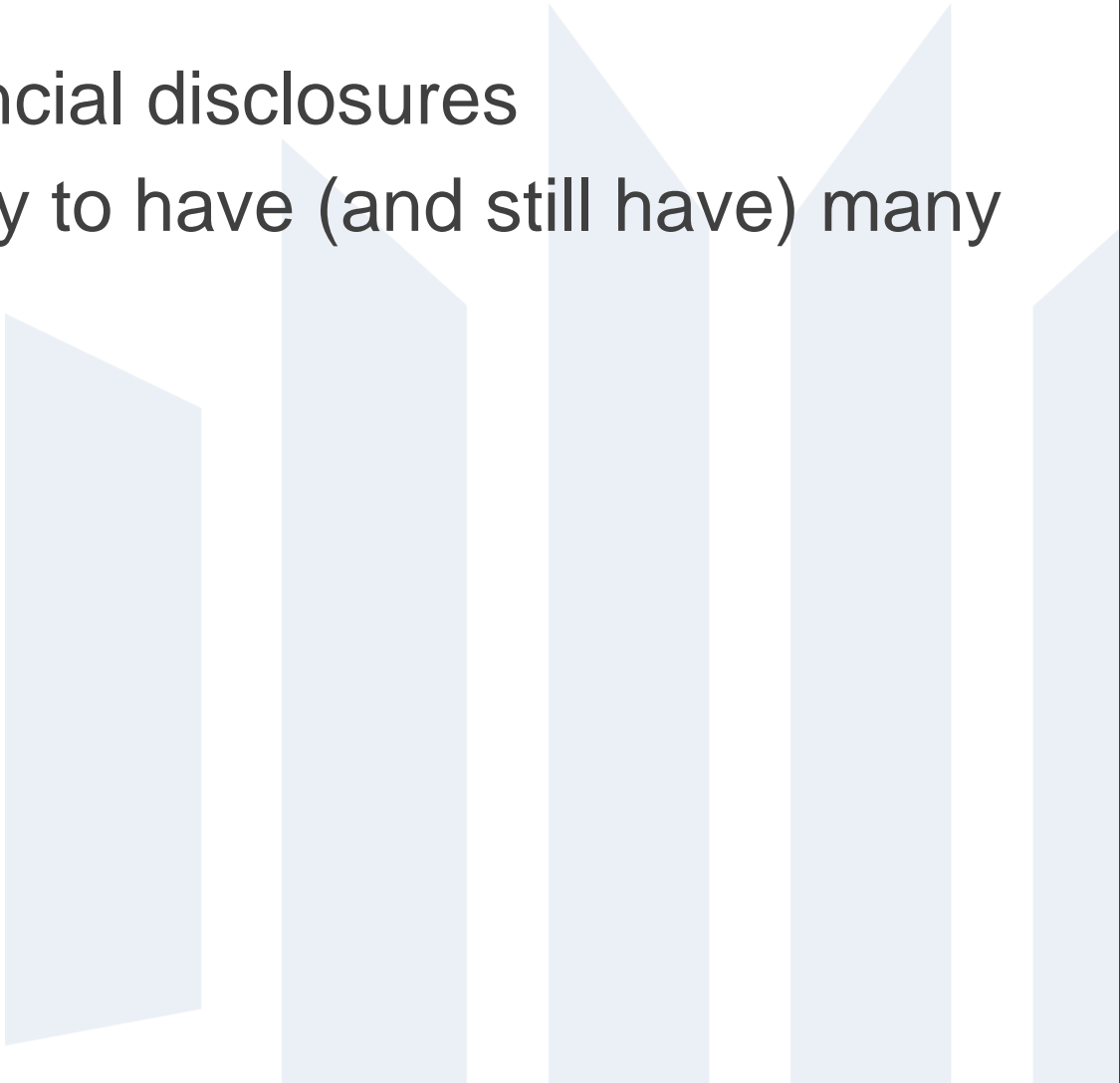




Mentorship and Sponsorship

Justin B. Dimick, MD, MPH
George D. Zuidema Professor of Surgery
Chief, Division of Minimally Invasive Surgery
Director, Center for Healthcare Outcomes & Policy
Department of Surgery, University of Michigan

Disclosures

- No relevant financial disclosures
 - I have been lucky to have (and still have) many great mentors
- 

**YOU ARE THE AVERAGE OF THE FIVE PEOPLE
YOU SPEND THE MOST TIME WITH**

JIM ROHN

CHOOSE WISELY

Mentor vs. Sponsor:

What's the difference?

Mentors *ADVISE*

Mentors...

- Develop skills and capabilities
- Provide tips and strategies
- Navigate unwritten rules
- Reduce isolation and stress

Sponsors *ACT*

Sponsors...

- Connect to career opportunities
- Advocate for advancement
- Publicly endorse you
- Help confront and interrupt bias

Mentorship:

A dynamic, reciprocal relationship in a work environment between an advanced-career incumbent (mentor) and a beginner (mentee) aimed at promoting the career development of both.

Mentors – Need more than one!

Clinical mentor:

More senior surgeon who you can run complex cases by and call for help when you need it.



Lisa Colletti

Academic mentor:

More senior scientist who is a recognized expert in the field and productive scholar.



John Birkmeyer

What is a good mentor?

Clinical mentor: A good clinical mentor offers advice and help without judgment. They are committed to building your clinical skills and practice.



Academic mentor: A good academic mentor is one that has bandwidth and is fully committed to developing your academic career.



What is a mentorship malpractice?

Opinion

A PIECE OF MY MIND

Vineet Chopra, MD, MSc

The VA Ann Arbor Healthcare System, University of Michigan School of Medicine, Ann Arbor; and Department of Internal Medicine, University of Michigan School of Medicine, Ann Arbor.

Dana P. Edelson, MD, MS

Department of Internal Medicine, University of Chicago Medicine, Chicago, Illinois.

Sanjay Saint, MD, MPH

The VA Ann Arbor Healthcare System, University of Michigan School of Medicine, Ann Arbor; and Department of Internal Medicine, University of Michigan School of Medicine, Ann Arbor.

Mentorship Malpractice

The delicate balance of mentoring someone is not creating them in your own image, but giving them the opportunity to create themselves.

Steven Spielberg

The word *mentorship* evokes strong emotional and intellectual chords. In formal parlance, *mentorship* has been defined as “a dynamic, reciprocal relationship in a work environment between an advanced-career incumbent (mentor) and a beginner (mentee) aimed at promoting the career development of both.”¹ In our careers in academic medicine, we have seen mentees benefit from mentors through development of critical thinking skills and advice on research ideas, scholarship, and networking opportunities. Similarly, now as mentors we have also benefited by gaining an ally to support our work, developing larger circles of influence, and establishing legacies as academic leaders. It is thus not surprising that mutually beneficial mentor-mentee relationships are a key predictor of academic success.²

While much has been written about the qualities that constitute an ideal mentor,³ little attention has been given to behaviors that make one less desirable. This gap is important because mentor-mentee relationships are, by definition, unequal, with mentees being more vulnerable. Mentees are also likely to disproportionately suf-

fer from a negative association is already done. syndrome variant, the mentee willingly gives up lead positions on manuscripts or grants, mistakenly expecting that the success of the mentor will ultimately cascade down to him or her. It is only when this fails to occur that mentees realize they have been cheated, but usually the damage from such a negative association is already done.

The Exploiter

The Exploiter torpedoes mentees' success by saddling them with low-yield activities. Typified by self-serving advice, Exploiters commandeer mentees by thrusting their scientific agenda or nonacademic responsibilities onto them, often justifying such behavior as “the price of mentorship” or “a valuable learning experience.” Exploiters may assign mentees to mentor other trainees, supervise project staff, or manage projects central to the mentor, but not the mentee's area of expertise. In this way, Exploiters value managers, not independent scientists, and have no interest in cultivating mentees.

The Possessor

The trademark of the Possessor is domination of the mentee. Possessors are insecure and view seeking assistance from others as a threat to their position. Such anxieties lead possessors to take a passive-aggressive approach to collaboration, disparaging potential co-mentors or demean-

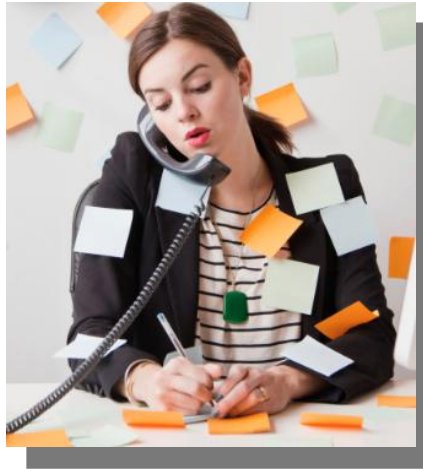
Phenotypes of **active** mentorship malpractice

The Hijacker



Take hostage a mentee's ideas labeling them as his or her own for self-gain.

The Exploiter



Torpedoes mentees' success by saddling them with low-yield activities.

The Possessor



Domination of the mentee; isolation from collegial interactions, making it difficult to be rescued.

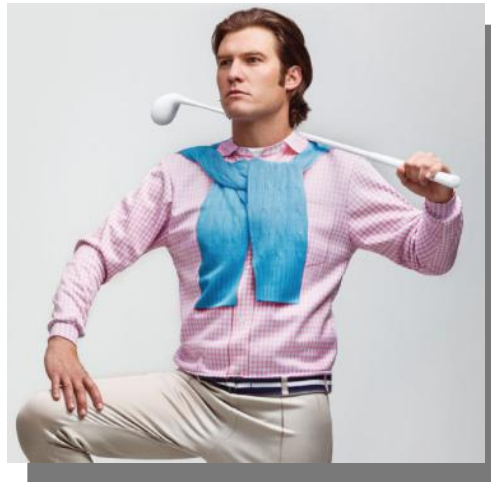
Phenotypes of **passive** mentorship malpractice

The Bottleneck



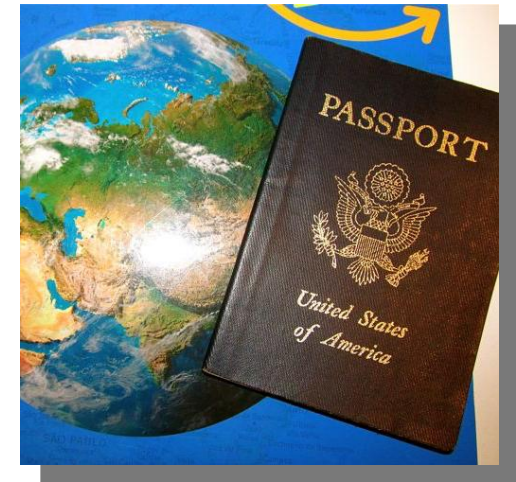
Preoccupied with own priorities; do lack bandwidth and desire to be a mentor.

The Country Clubber



View mentorship as a ticket to popularity, to build social capital and do not take responsibility.

The World Traveler



Highly successful and sought after for speaking. Little time for their trainees on a day-to-day basis.

Chopra et al. JAMA 2016; 315: 1453-54.

Preventing Mentorship Malpractice

Don't Be Complicit:

Whether it is sacrificing papers to the Hijacker or accepting chores with no academic yield for the Exploiter, mentees are tacitly complicit when mentors malpractice

Set Boundaries and Communicate Needs:

This is particularly important when dealing with passive phenotypes; with active phenotypes, mentees must set firm boundaries and confront mentors when violations occur

Establish a Mentorship Team:

Having several mentors allows mentees to not only learn from each advisor, but also more easily recognize dysfunction.

Know When to Walk Away:

If a mentor is sabotaging the mentee's career, consciously or otherwise, mentees must be prepared and willing to end the relationship.

Chopra et al. JAMA 2016; 315: 1453-54.

Avoid these common mentee missteps:

A PIECE OF MY MIND

Mentee Missteps Tales From the Academic Trenches

Valerie Vaughn, MD, MSc

Department of Internal Medicine, University of Michigan Medical School, Ann Arbor.

Sanjay Saint, MD, MPH

VA Ann Arbor Healthcare System, Ann Arbor, Michigan; and the Department of Internal Medicine, University of Michigan Medical School, Ann Arbor.

Vineet Chopra, MD, MSc

Department of Internal Medicine, University of Michigan Medical School, Ann Arbor; and the VA Ann Arbor Healthcare System, Ann Arbor, Michigan.

Mentorship takes many forms, from personal and professional counseling to clinical and research guidance. The wisdom and guidance of experienced mentors not only help mentees ascend the academic ladder, but may also prevent burnout.¹ Given the importance of this relationship, it is imperative that mentees put their “best foot forward.” Unfortunately, young physicians are rarely taught what is expected of them as mentees, and mentors vary in discussing “menteeship” with protégés.

Many mentees overlook the fact that they are still learning. Instead, they may feel pressure to appear immediately successful. This desire to please, admixed with paroxysmal bouts of self-doubt, may work against trainees. Rather than appear flawed—or risk displeasing mentors—a mentee may unintentionally “misstep.” These missteps could have devastating consequences, including rejection by a mentor and career implosion.

Mentee missteps are thus paths by which mentees might undermine their careers. We outline six such missteps, using colloquial names to portray extreme examples of what are otherwise common, intermittent mentee behaviors. Our aim is to help mentees self-diagnose before a single misstep becomes a pattern.

may be cultivated by mentors that “malpractice”—especially those who are possessive or exploitative.²

The Vampire

The Vampire drains the lifeblood of his or her mentor. Vampires are typified by countless emails, text messages, phone calls, and meeting requests. Although these mentees are often intelligent, they are paralyzed by decision making and rely on mentors for validation. Regardless of the mentor’s generosity, the Vampire demands more, eventually forcing the mentor to sever the connection.

The Lone Wolf

The Lone Wolf appears to have no need for a mentor. This type of trainee has often succeeded previously sans assistance and boldly carries forth this behavior. Although Lone Wolves may appear stubborn or confident, internally they fear asking for help lest they appear weak or foolish. This fear becomes their undoing when a preventable but highly embarrassing error occurs due to lack of guidance.

The Backstabber

By the time the Backstabber is identified, it is often too

Phenotypes of conflict averse mentees:

The Overcommmitter



Say “yes” to everything; high-output failure due to lack of prioritization and development

The Ghost



Hides hoping that poor performance goes unnoticed. Avoidance is only a temporary fix.

The Doormat



Often used but seldom noticed. Take on tasks without recognition or advancement.

Phenotypes lacking confidence:

The Vampire



The Vampire drains the lifeblood of the mentor. Typified by countless emails, phone calls, and meeting requests

The Lone Wolf



Although they may appear confident, internally they fear asking for help lest they appear weak or foolish.

The Backstabber



Backstabbers may initially perform well. However, they resent criticism and produce excuses for every failure.

Four golden rules of menteeship:

1. Select the right mentor



2. Be respectful of mentor's time



3. Communicate effectively



4. Be engaged and energizing



1. Select the right mentor:

Role Model

The kind of person you would like to be.

Expertise

Content expertise, influence in a field, network of connections

Personal Attributes

Patience and altruism rather than simply being famous in their field

Background Check

Do they have a track record of being “other-focused”? Have their prior mentees been successful?



2. Be respectful of your mentor's time:

Your Mentor's time is precious so manage it wisely

Meet regularly and frequently

Remind mentor where you left off last time.
Plan for meetings by setting agendas and
prioritize discussion points

Ask for feedback in small bites

Bring work in small bite size increments
(e.g., introduction, specific aims page)
rather than entire paper or grant



3. Communicate effectively :

Goals and Aspirations

Make sure your mentor knows what your short and long-term goals are. Make them aware of obstacles so they can help.

Focus on Meetings

Most communication should be during meetings. Do not send multiparagraph emails with vague questions. Ask “yes” or “no” questions whenever possible.

Provide Adequate Notice

“Poor planning on your part does not make an emergency on mine”



4. Be engaged, energizing, and collaborative

Be positive not negative

Emotionally draining behaviors, such as complaining, pessimism, and “snarking” about others will not endear you to your mentor

Be an energy donor, not a recipient

Help to drive projects forward, be proactive, and accept all comments as important learning opportunities

Be a “closer”

Early in your career it is important to be someone who follows through on tasks in a timely manner



“The delicate balance of mentoring someone is not creating them in your own image, but giving them the opportunity to create themselves.”

Steven Spielberg

