



GUIDE TO FINDING AND CREATING A MENTOR RELATIONSHIP



FINDING A MENTOR

To find a mentor, first define your specific goals and what you need guidance on. Then, identify potential mentors within your existing network or by attending industry events and joining online communities. When you've found a candidate, build a connection first by offering value or asking specific, respectful questions, rather than immediately asking for mentorship.



1 Clarify Your Goals

- **Identify your needs:** Before you seek a mentor, be clear about the specific skills, knowledge, or experience you want to gain.
- **Identify your area(s) of interest:** Think about whether there are any particular areas or skills you'd like to learn more about. This can help you nail down some next steps for your career direction. Consider what really "lights you up" at work (e.g. client interaction, performing specific types of procedures, leadership opportunities, research topics).
- **Define your ideal mentor:** Think about the qualities you admire in others, such as honesty, experience, or a specific career path.

2 Identify Potential Mentors

- **Start with your network:** Reach out to people you already know, like friends, family, professors, or colleagues, who may be able to make introductions.
- **Attend events:** Go to networking events related to your field to meet people with shared interests. Consider different types of events, such as conferences or other in-person professional development opportunities, dental hygiene society meetings in your area, or CDHO peer circle meetings.
- **Join online communities:** Engage in online forums, LinkedIn groups, or other platforms where people with your career interests gather.
- **Consider different types of mentors:**
Don't limit yourself to one type of mentor; you can learn from peers, people just a step ahead in their careers, or even from authors, podcasters, etc. You may consider contacting the authors of research or general interest articles, or approaching speakers who present at professional development events.

Depending on what your goals are, you may even want to consider someone outside the field of dental hygiene. For example, if you are aiming to develop leadership qualities, you may consider approaching an individual in a different field who displays strong leadership skills and is willing to help a mentee learn to develop theirs.

3 Build the Connection

- **Be authentic:** Instead of rushing to ask someone to be your mentor, focus on building a genuine professional relationship first. You may wish to invite your potential mentor to an informal in person or virtual coffee meeting. From there, you will be able to interact and see whether you envision a potential “fit” for a future mentor/mentee relationship.
- **Ask for specific advice:** Instead of a broad “will you be my mentor?”, ask for specific guidance related to the goal(s) you’ve identified or with managing a particular situation.

4 Make the Request

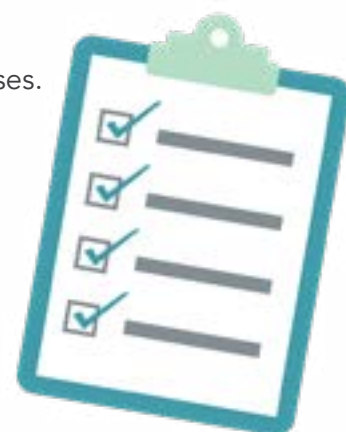
- **Be direct but respectful:** When you're ready, prepare what you want to say and why you think they are the right mentor for you.
- **Suggest a meeting:** Ask if they would be open to scheduling a more formal mentorship meeting, as well as if they would consider meeting with you regularly.
- **Show appreciation:** Thank them for their time and commitment to helping you.

MEETING CHECKLIST

A mentorship meeting checklist helps ensure productive meetings by guiding both mentor and mentee to set goals, discuss progress, share experiences, provide feedback, and define next steps. Key items include establishing communication preferences and confidentiality, preparing a flexible agenda, active listening, offering resources, and scheduling follow-up meetings to review goals and commitments.

For the Mentee

- **Before the meeting:**
 - **Prepare an Individual Development Plan (IDP):** to identify your goals and share it with your mentor beforehand.
 - **Prepare a flexible meeting agenda,** including your personal and professional background, fears, uncertainties, and desired outcomes.
 - **Review your mentor's resume, work history and accomplishments:** to understand their career path and find common interests.
 - **Document your progress:** on past action items to share with your mentor.
- **During the meeting:**
 - **Actively listen:** to your mentor's advice and questions.
 - **Clearly present your goals:** and be prepared to discuss challenges and successes.
 - **Ask for feedback:** and suggestions for resources.
 - **Take responsibility:** for driving the meeting and tracking progress.
- **After the meeting:**
 - **Summarize key points and action items:** in a thank-you email to your mentor.
 - **Follow up promptly:** on your commitments.
 - **Take the initiative to schedule:** the next meeting.



MEETING TOPICS



Mentorship meeting topics could include any of the following: skill development, career path planning, networking strategies, work-life balance, leadership qualities, conflict resolution, and industry trends. You can also discuss personal insights from your mentor's career journey, feedback on current work, and accountability for goals. Be sure to define the goals for the mentorship relationship upfront to guide your discussions.

First Meeting

- **Define Relationship Goals:** Discuss what you hope to achieve from the mentorship relationship.
- **Personal Connection:** Begin with an introductory meeting to get to know each other, perhaps discussing professional passions or life/career experiences.
- **Ask Your Mentor:** Inquire what topics they believe would be most beneficial for the mentee to discuss.
- **Listen and Ask Questions:** Be an active listener and prepare clear, specific questions to make the most of the meeting.

Professional Development & Career

- **Career Path Planning and Goals:** Discuss long-term aspirations, short-term goals, and the steps needed to achieve them.
- **Skill Development:** Identify strengths and weaknesses and discuss how to improve skills like negotiation, communication, and leadership.
- **Networking:** Explore strategies for building and maintaining a professional network.
- **Interviewing and Job Search Skills:** Get advice on navigating the job market and preparing for interviews.
- **Salary Negotiation:** Discuss strategies for negotiating compensation effectively.

Leadership & Personal Growth

- **Leadership Styles:** Share insights into different leadership and management styles.
- **Conflict Resolution:** Learn techniques for managing and resolving workplace conflicts.
- **Work-Life Balance:** Discuss strategies for managing professional responsibilities alongside personal life.
- **Mentoring Journey:** Hear about the mentor's personal career journey, challenges, and lessons learned.

Feedback & Accountability

- **Feedback for Improvement:** Ask for constructive feedback on performance, specific projects, presentations, or workplace situations.
- **Accountability:** Discuss how the mentee (you) is progressing with goals and hold each other accountable for commitments made during the mentorship.
- **Current Challenges:** Talk about current struggles and successes in the workplace to get practical, relevant advice.

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