

## Starting the Conversation

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### **General Guidelines for a Successful Mentoring Relationship**

- Have open discussion at first meeting
- Introduce yourselves, your professional/personal backgrounds
- Discuss specific issues mentee would like to be addressed in mentoring relationship; keep notes during meeting
- Discourage any feelings of the mentee imposing on the mentor
- Remember that mentorship can be a 2-way street. A newer clinician may have a better handle on current evidence, technology, or a specific content area.
- Establish expectations through:
  - a. Goal setting with clear timelines
  - b. Discussing structure of sessions
  - c. Determining how often you want to communicate and through what means (e-mail, phone, in-person)
  - d. Pledge to respond to e-mails or voice messages as promptly as possible, but within 2-3 days (or as agreed by you both)
  - e. Agree to organization of topics discussed
  - f. Share how you best learn and teach
  - g. Set specific guidelines for frequency and approximate length of communication sessions/meetings
- We encourage the mentee to follow up with a summary e-mail of issues covered in meeting/what to focus on by time of next meeting.
- Facilitate career planning by outlining your career path and discuss the possible next steps for your mentee's career: <http://www.apta.org/CareerDevelopment>
- Introduce your mentee to your professional network
- Focus on transferring academic knowledge to clinical situations

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- Allow for trial and error when applying guidance in clinical sessions
- Incorporate evidence based practice:
  - Challenge one another to provide rationale and evidence for treatment plans on a semi-regular basis. (Maintain patient confidentiality)
  - Share your top 2 journal articles for each diagnosis that guide your clinical practice.
- Share your top 5 resources: outcome tool databases, favorite handouts, websites, community organizations, exercises, webinars, or education courses
- Relate mentoring to personal development
- Encourage your mentee to perform a self-assessment and create goals:  
<http://www.apta.org/CareerManagement/SelfAssessments/>
- Encourage each other to create a professional developmental portfolio. You could use the NCS re-certification template as a guideline even if you are not trying to get or recertify your NCS. <http://www.abpts.org/Recertification/Neurology/>
- Challenge each other to: get involved with the APTA on a state or national level, submit an article to a journal, write a case report, teach a course, speak in the community, present a poster, become a manuscript reviewer, be an investigator on research study, be test item writer, become a credentialed clinical instructor (CI), contribute to a PT outcome database, revise a department protocol based on evidence, start a journal club, attend a national conference, write a senator about a issue important to physical therapy.

The understanding for this mentoring program is that the mentoring relationship is driven by the mentee sharing their interests and needs.

*This information was prepared by Ann Valentine, PT, DPT, NCS and Aspen Kunisch, PT, DPT, NCS and adapted from materials by Britta Battaile, PT, DPT, PCS, from the Section on Pediatrics' Mentoring Program 2013. Last updated April 2014.*