Developing a circle of advisors

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- rationale for having a circle of advisors instead of a single mentor
  - no single person can provide all the information, constructive criticism, emotional support, and challenges that you need in order to have the best chance of reaching your goals
  - multiple or mosaic or composite mentoring is a better approach

- keep your overall goals in mind at all times
  - be as effective and efficient as possible in all aspects of your work
  - enjoy your work and enjoy your life

- advisors for professional goals can provide
  1. suggestions for places you can apply to for research funding
  2. knowledgeable critiques of your grant proposals
  3. constructive criticism of your papers
  4. analysis of your rejection letters
  5. suggestions about writing the diplomatic cover letter after you have revised a manuscript
  6. information about prizes and awards you might be eligible for
  7. information about how to advance into academic leadership positions
  8. advocacy on your behalf
  9. suggestions about items to negotiate for and how to negotiate
  10. experience role-playing negotiation scenarios
  11. sympathetic and constructive critiques of your self-presentational style
  12. specific courses of action for various problems
  13. if you need it, someone can supply it; think broadly about your needs

- advisors for personal issues can provide
  1. challenges to do better
  2. reassurance that you can be successful when you doubt yourself
  3. specific courses of action for various problems
  4. help with time-management and procrastination problems
  5. acknowledge your weaknesses – to selected others – so that you can handle them

- separate professional from personal goals
  - reassurance is best obtained from people who have no say over your future
• for each need, determine who can fulfill it and how to approach the potential advisor; brainstorm with others to develop list of needs and list of possible advisors
  o potential advisors can come from anywhere
  o people enjoy providing advice and information in limited quantities
  o aim for limited and specific questions
  o thank the person for their advice and let them know the outcome

• composition of circle
  o people in the circle will change as needs change
  o you will add and subtract advisors as your circumstances change
  o you never outgrow your need for advisors

• consider what topics could be handled well by a workshop
  o get an expert to lead the workshop
  o workshops are efficient
  o workshops are destigmatizing

• help others; have reciprocal relationships
  o e.g., you can have an ally with whom you plan out each week; you help him or her and he or she helps you
  o e.g., help others construct a circle of advisors

Partial Reference List
Blake-Beard, S., Bayne, M. L., Crosby, F. J., & Muller, C. B. (2011). Matching by race and gender in mentoring relationships: Keeping our eyes on the prize. *Journal of Social Issues, 67*, 622-643. Although students of color and women students in STEM tend to prefer having mentors of their own race and gender, and believe that they receive more help from matched mentors, academic outcomes (GPA, efficacy, and confidence) are not affected by matching. Any demographic group can mentor, and any demographic group can be successfully mentored by any demographic group.


