

# Five ways a mentor can help you make better decisions



If you've never had a mentor, you might have heard the word and wondered what it's all about. Mentors aren't managers. They help guide and coach you with your career. Maybe you've acted as a mentor for someone else.

Mentors can help with identifying your next move or mapping out your larger career plan. They can help you add to your skill set to prepare you for your next big opportunity. Mentors can offer:

- **Perspective.** They know the lay of the land before you. You may be so focused on getting to the next level that you don't think as much about what you'll do once you're there. Mentors can help you prepare for future challenges.
- **Reflection.** Self-awareness is critical to success. A mentor can act as a mirror. That can help you make the most of your strengths and mitigate your weaknesses.
- **Support.** Mentors won't be attached to your decisions. It's not about following the same or a certain path. They can help you weigh all the options and support the decisions you make.
- **Ideas.** Mentors might help you create a new or bigger vision for yourself. It's not just about where you'll go and what you'll do. It's also about others whose lives you touch along the way.
- **Hindsight.** Ask your mentors what they would have done differently. Learning what they know might just help you save time and energy along your journey.

## Finding a mentor

Are you interested in having a mentor or becoming one for someone else? Check with your organization to see if they have a program for matching people together. If they don't, maybe you can start one. Even if there's no formal process, don't worry. Simply asking a respected colleague for advice can begin an informal mentoring relationship.

Throughout your career, you can learn from many mentors. In the end, it's not as important what you call such a relationship as it is that you get the guidance you're looking for at a time you can make good use of it. And if you decide to act as a mentor for others, you're likely to find there's a lot to learn from taking that role on, too.