

Canadian Evaluation Society (CES) – Mentoring Initiative

Tips for Selecting a Mentor

Reflect on Your Needs

Before you reach out to a prospective mentor, think about each of the following:

- What are your evaluation-related mentoring needs?
- What expectations do you have regarding the mentoring relationship and how you will communicate these expectations to a future mentor?
- What are your greatest strengths as an evaluator? What are the areas you would like to improve as an evaluator?
- How would you like to communicate with your mentor and how often?
- You could opt for meeting in person or digital communications such as email, virtual Zoom meetings, MS Teams, phone or other.
- What are your boundaries for the mentoring relationship?
- Identify what you are willing to share with your mentor, whether you are okay discussing personal details, and how confidentiality can be managed. Discussing this with your mentor early on will improve their ability to respect your boundaries and allow you to understand theirs.

Selecting the Right Mentor

Once you have thought about what you want to gain through mentorship, your mentor should align with your professional growth and development objectives. Your chosen mentor should:

- Possess the competencies and experiences you are seeking.
- Be accessible, motivated, and enthusiastic about engaging in a mentoring alliance.
- Share affinities with you and exhibit strong communication abilities.
- Have no direct supervisory role with you.

Effective Strategies

Consider these strategies:

1. **Look at the people you know:** Look around at the people in your personal and professional life. Is there someone you admire? Someone you would like to emulate in some way? Someone who has the wisdom you need?

2. **Become familiar with the mentoring platform:** you can use the search feature on the mentoring module to look for a mentor based on specific criteria.
3. **Look for a mentor who is a good role model:** Look for someone who is not only recognized or successful, but who has a reputation for good character and sound principles. Look for someone you can admire and respect as well as emulate.
4. **Select a mentor who is a good listener:** The best mentor is one who gets to know you, your skills and strengths and weaknesses, your individual personality and your aspirations. A good mentor should act as a sounding board, who will help you with your challenges and help you to clarify your principles and beliefs.