



This is Tammy McCausland here today with Debra Corban and Tonya Terry who have participated in the SROA mentoring program. Welcome Debra and Tonya.

Debra Corban:

Thank you so much for having us.

Tonya Terry:

We're very excited to be here.

Tammy McCausland:

Tonya. I understand you're relatively new to SROA. Why did you attend the speed mentoring event at last year's annual meeting? (0:24)

Tonya Terry:

Well, I attended the speed mentoring event in hopes of finding someone that could help me in my transition from a staff therapist into my more administrative role.

Tammy McCausland:

Debra, why did you volunteer as a mentor? (0:46)

Debra Corban:

Well, I felt that I could add value to a new administrator in radiation oncology. I've have over 30 years experience and my scope was pretty broad, so I felt that I could add some value to a new administrator.

Tammy McCausland:

How did the two of you get matched up? (1:09)

Tonya Terry:

Debra, do you want to take that one or do you want me to?

Debra Corban:

Yes, I'll start and you can finish.

Tonya Terry:

Okay.

Tammy McCausland:



So we get participated, SROA had a speed mentoring event in which you signed up to either be a mentor or mentee. The mentees would go to each mentor and the mentor had about three minutes to communicate whether their attributes and experience could be of some help to a mentee. And then the mentee would evaluate which mentor that they wanted to be matched with.

Tonya Terry:

Well, Debra hit on it correctly. I kind of went into a room and there were about six or seven tables, if I remember correctly, with a mentor on each side. And it was kind of like speed dating. So you went from one table for three minutes and then they rang a bell and then you moved on to the next table. And you did exactly what Debra said. You kind of listened to the mentor and you listened to the type of experiences that they had had in the past and whether they were hospital-based, free standing. I was looking for someone who was in a similar position to me that I felt could kind of relate to my day to day activities and try to help me on that level. And Debra was unbelievably friendly and motivated and had so much knowledge. And that's how I decided I would like to try for Debra, and hoped with my fingers crossed that she would accept me.

Tammy McCausland:

Can you both tell me how often you have met and what you have discussed over the last year? (2:47)

Tonya Terry:

I can tell you that we've met about once a month and we talk anywhere from, oh gosh, Debra, 20 minutes to an hour, probably, depending on our time schedule. We have discussed everything from billing questions to how do you deal with difficult employees to how do you do stress relief to what does a change curve look like? She has been unbelievable in the range of knowledge and the range of information that she has given me. There hasn't been one thing that I've asked her that she hasn't been able to help me get through, and I really do appreciate that.

Debra Corban:

Thank you, Tonya. And the first time we met, our initial meeting, I had Tonya to review her current scope of responsibilities and her clinical oversight, her staffing and everything. And then like Tonya said, every month we would meet she would choose the topic or just like she said, just share just challenges of being in that position. I think as administrators, it's probably one of the positions that does not get all the accolades. So I think we had a very great time. I think we met almost every month except maybe one, and I learned a lot as well from Tonya.

Tammy McCausland:

Tonya, how have you benefited from participating in the mentorship program? (4:21)

Tonya Terry:

I think I've benefited from a few different ways. One of course, as I've mentioned, is just being able to speak with someone once a month, to be able to gather knowledge, to be able to even shoot ideas off



of. That's very important to me. I think just knowing that someone is in your corner. When you're in a position like this sometimes I feel like I'm isolated or on an island, and it's really nice to be able to call and reach out to someone who's been on that island of their own before and can kind of help you navigate through.

Tammy McCausland:

Debra, what have you learned from this mentor/mentee relationship? (5:07)

Debra Corban:

Oh, I've learned that you never stop learning. And as an administrator, like Tonya said, you feel like you're on a island and you're always being evaluated when you're in your own environment. But in this mentor and mentee environment, it's a safe place to ask questions. You can be vulnerable without judgment. So I always say you can't be a prophet in your own land, but in this space that we share once a month with we were able to just share, like Tonya said, personal things, challenges with physician relationships, the whole gambit.

Tammy McCausland:

Do you think your mentor/mentee relationship will continue beyond the one year, because that's sort of what's common in terms of SROA's program, but do you see yourself continuing to engage with each other? (5:55)

Tonya Terry:

I hope so. I absolutely enjoy our phone calls and our conversations. And I even think at least in my world when it ends the mentor/mentee, I hope that it continues on at least as a friendship, because I truly do enjoy Debra.

Debra Corban:

And I can echo the same sentiments. I have enjoyed, the I'll say now friendship as well. Tonya and I also talked about you could mentor people in your own organization, but to me this relationship is safe. You don't have to worry about again being judged or maybe I said something wrong. So I say that it's going to be a longstanding friendship.

Tammy McCausland:

And this is the final question for both of you. Would you recommend the mentorship program to others? (6:57)

Tonya Terry:

Go ahead, Debra. You want to take that one first?

Debra Corban:



Yes, definitely. Radiation oncology is a beast of its own and not taken consideration of everything that's changing. This is a place, the mentor/mentee program is a place or plan for resources, especially for new administrators when they're starting their journey. Definitely.

Tonya Terry:

I totally agree. As a mentee, if you are a new person just getting into the administrative portion of radiation oncology, there is absolutely no reason why you shouldn't do the mentor/mentee program. And I also mean that even if your facility has someone that is mentoring you into your job. You can still reach out and do this mentee/mentor through SROA, because it's always nice to have several different opinions and several different people that you can go to to ask your questions.

Tammy McCausland:

It's been great speaking with you both today. You've provided a lot of great insight for SROA members. I really appreciate your time.

Debra Corban:

We appreciate you having us. Thank you.

Tonya Terry:

Yes. Thank you, Tammy. And I've told Debra how much I've appreciated her help. And now I can just tell all of SROA. Debra, I appreciate you and all that you do. Thank you for everything.

For more information visit [www.sroa.org](http://www.sroa.org). Thank you.