



PROGRAM MATERIALS

Program #35182

October 29, 2025

Starting Strong: Professionalism Essentials for New Attorneys

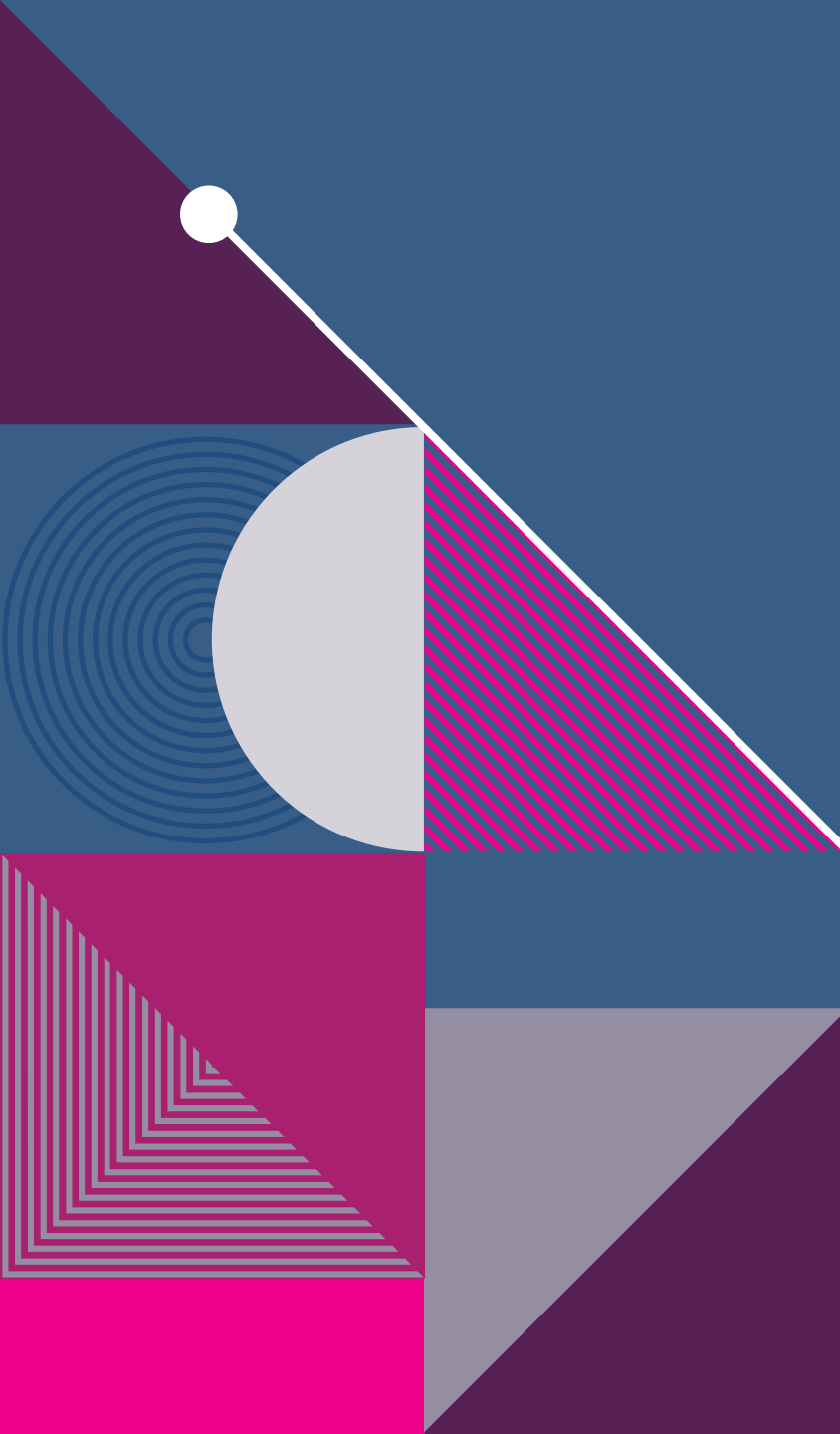
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- **Chazle' Woodley, Esq. - Gordon Rees Scully
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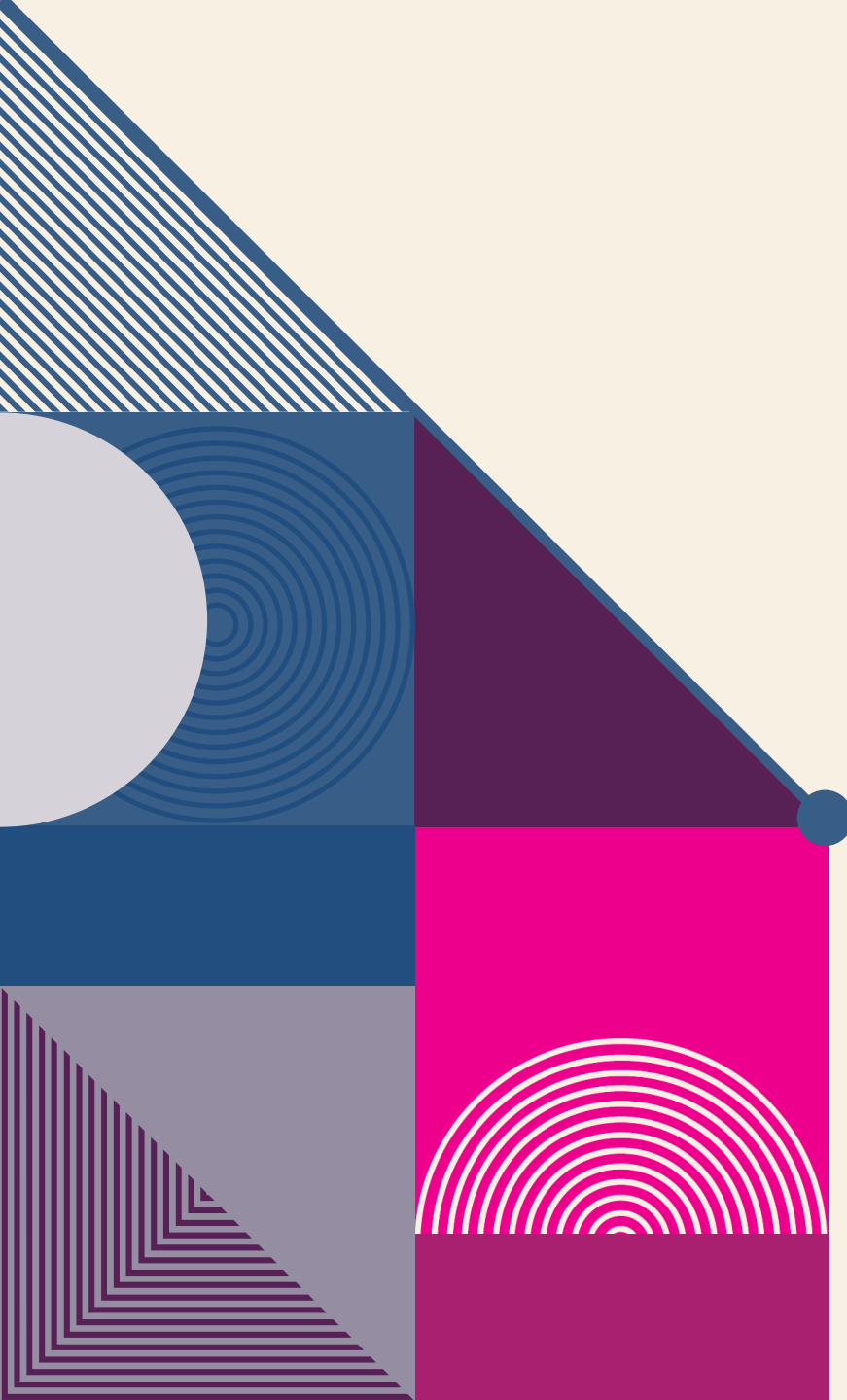
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STARTING STRONG: PROFESSIONALISM ESSENTIALS FOR NEW ATTORNEYS



AGENDA

- Introduction
- The Power of Community
- The Power of Preparation
- The Power of Responsiveness
- The Power of Self-Care
- Final tips & takeaways

Meet the Speaker!

Chazle' Woodley

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I focus my practice on representing
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negligence matters.

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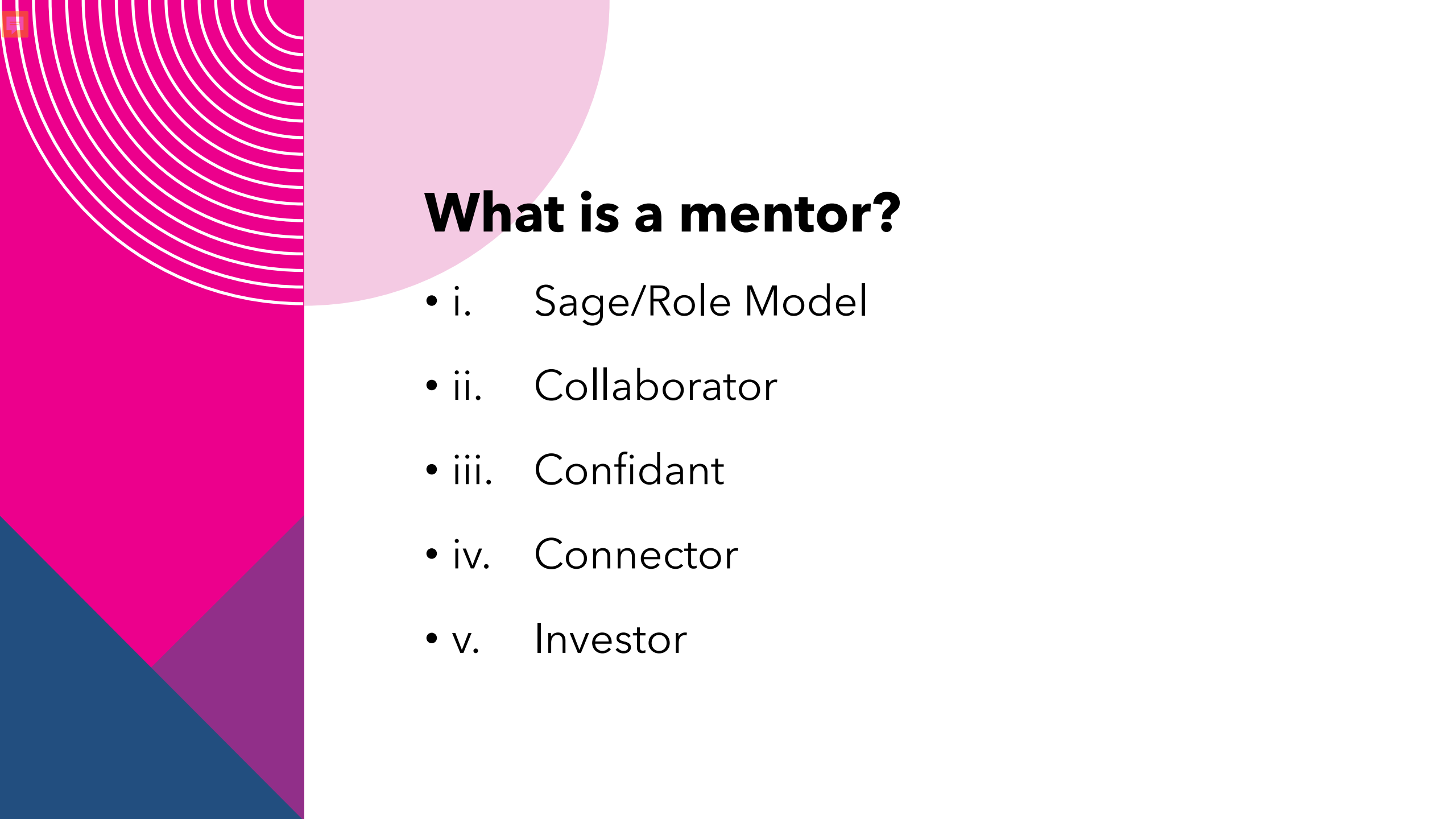


THE POWER OF COMMUNITY



Defining the Mentor Paradigm

- **What** is a mentor?
- **Who** makes a good mentor?
- **Why** do you need a mentor?
- **When** to seek guidance from a mentor?
- **How** do you find a mentor?



What is a mentor?

- i. Sage/Role Model
- ii. Collaborator
- iii. Confidant
- iv. Connector
- v. Investor



What Makes a Good Mentor/Mentee Relationship

- Mutuality – A two-way street among professionals.
- Willingness to Meet – Blocks of time are valued and honored
- Availability to Meet – Close enough in proximity to meet routinely



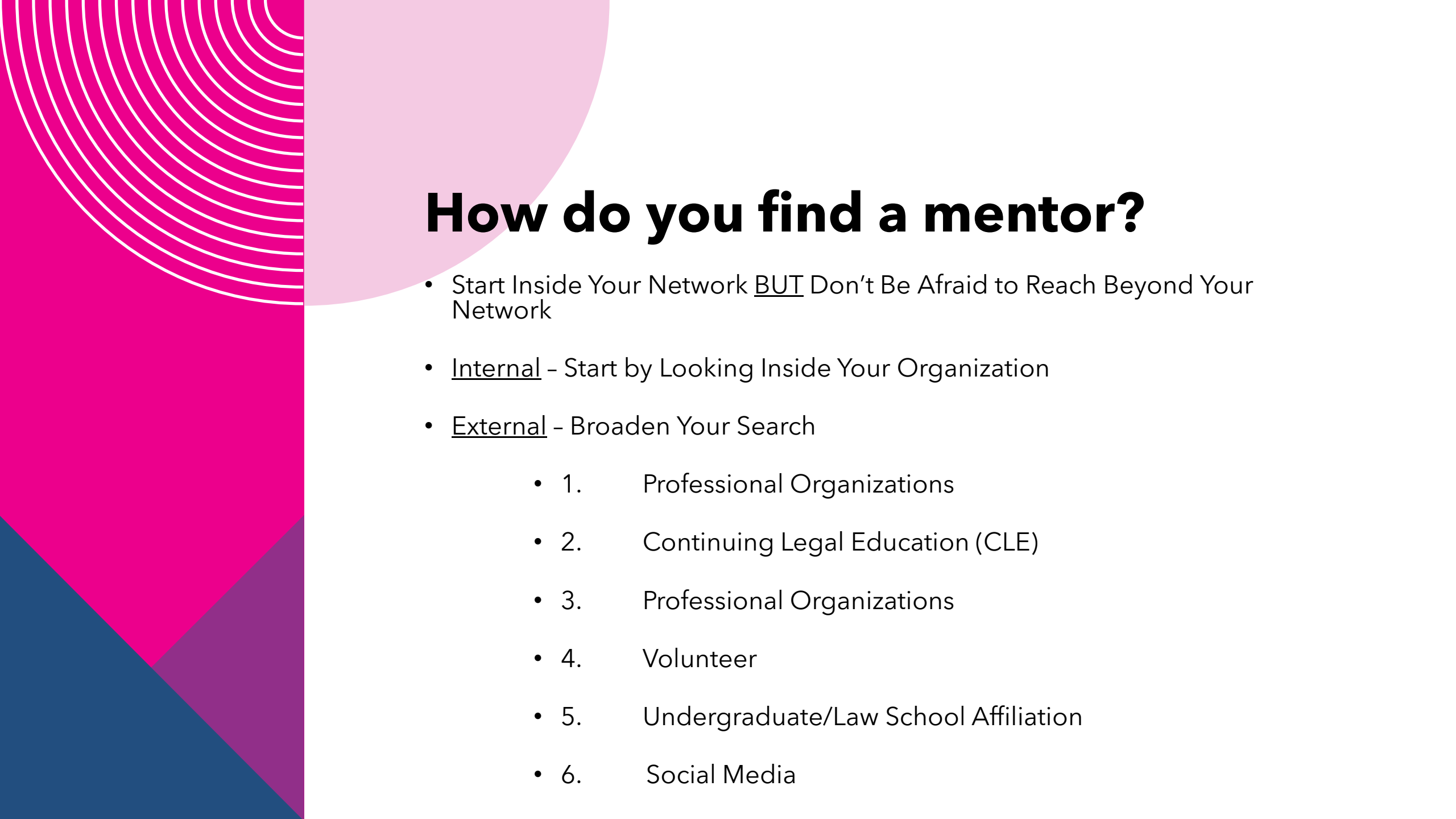
Who makes a good mentor?

- Organic – Flexible, adaptable, and amenable to change over time
- Aware - Understands who you are as a person and where you want to go as a lawyer.



Why do you need a mentor?

- Professional and Personal Development
 - Knowledge - Personal & professional
 - Growth - Critical feedback
- Networking
- Accountability

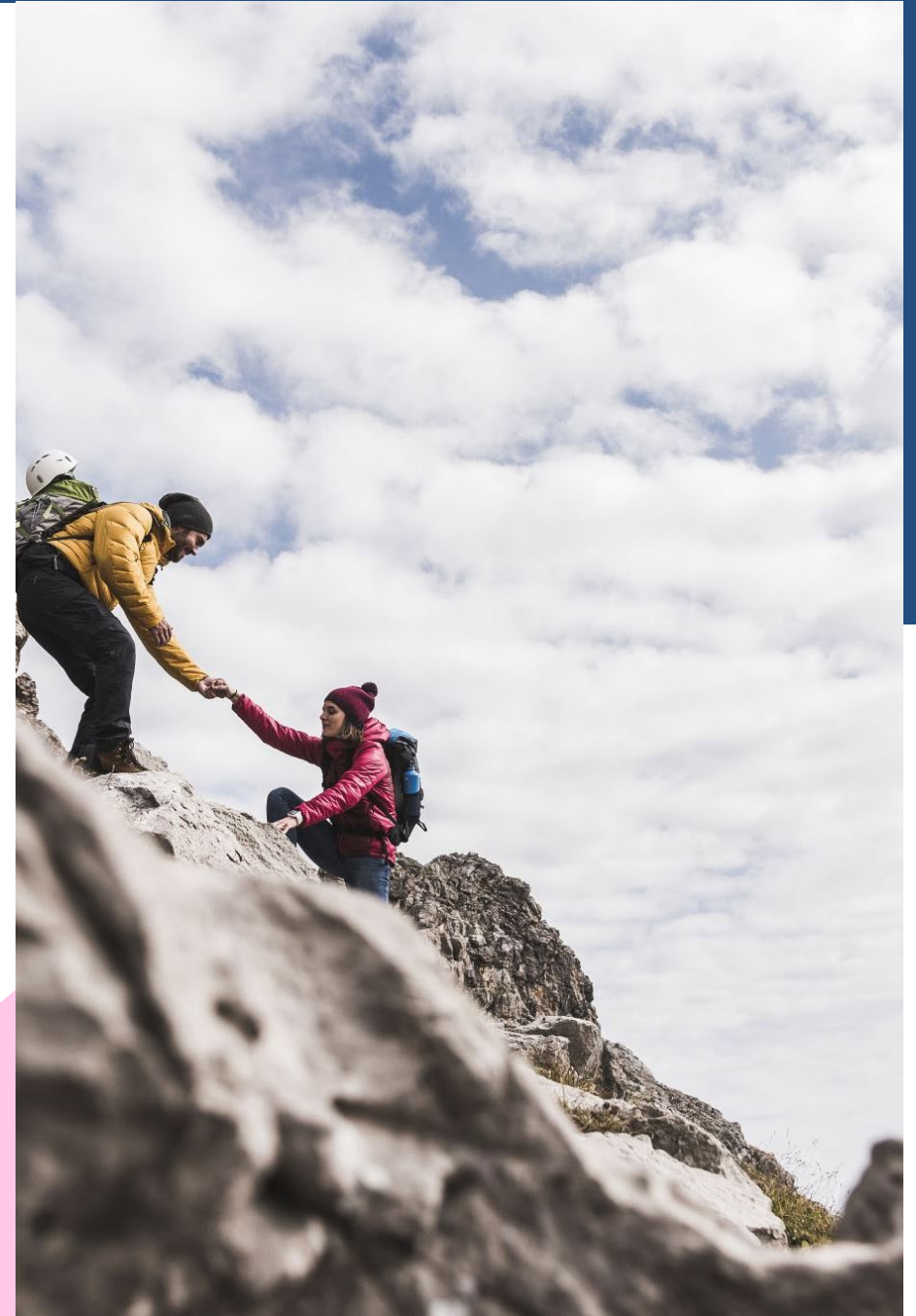


How do you find a mentor?

- Start Inside Your Network BUT Don't Be Afraid to Reach Beyond Your Network
- Internal – Start by Looking Inside Your Organization
- External – Broaden Your Search
 - 1. Professional Organizations
 - 2. Continuing Legal Education (CLE)
 - 3. Professional Organizations
 - 4. Volunteer
 - 5. Undergraduate/Law School Affiliation
 - 6. Social Media

When to seek guidance

The power of seeking help early





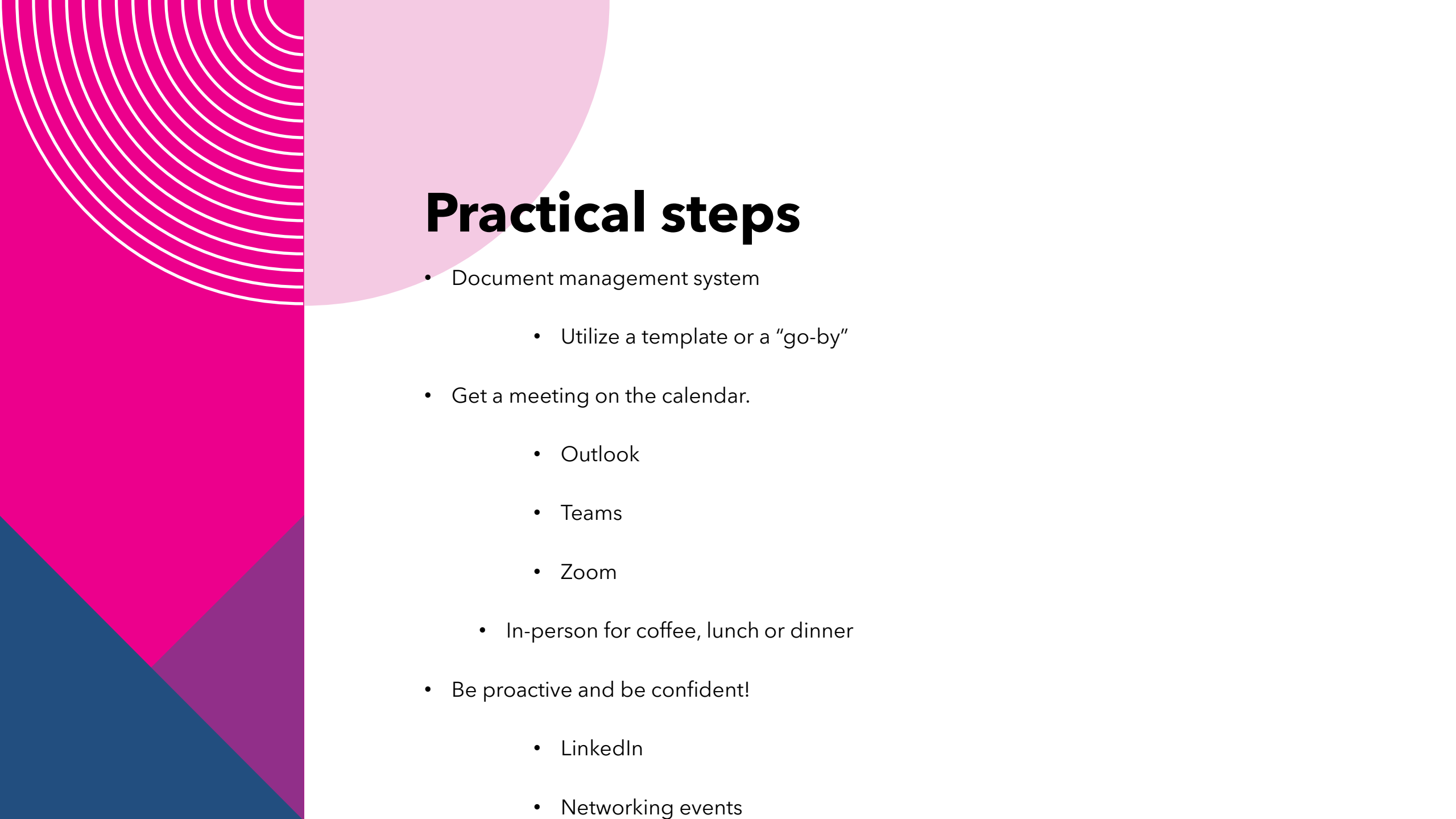
When to seek guidance from a mentor

- Natural inflection points in your career
- Job transition
- New Venture/New Area of Law (outside of your comfort zone)
- Personal or Professional Turmoil



Mentorship must be sought.

- Be teachable.
- Be available.
- Know what you desire when approaching a potential mentor:
 - Do you need assistance with how to draft a document?
 - Do you need guidance on how to navigate a procedural issue in court?
 - Do you need help on how to handle an issue with opposing counsel?
 - Is it personal? Do you need mentorship on work life balance as an attorney?



Practical steps

- Document management system
 - Utilize a template or a “go-by”
- Get a meeting on the calendar.
 - Outlook
 - Teams
 - Zoom
- In-person for coffee, lunch or dinner
- Be proactive and be confident!
 - LinkedIn
 - Networking events



**Accepting criticism
graciously**



It's not personal...

- An effective mentor desires for you to grow and develop.
- Thus, they will often provide constructive criticism.
- It is imperative not to take criticism personally, but to take it professionally and make the necessary improvements towards your personal growth.
- A good mentor wants you to be better, so they aren't providing criticism with the intent of hurting your feelings, demeaning you, or making you feel inadequate.

Receiving constructive criticism

1. Thank your mentor for the criticism.
 - a. Thanking them shows gratitude for the time and effort they put into wanting you to be better.
2. Show genuine concern for what they shared with you.
 - a. If you're a note-taker, take notes of their feedback and keep it in a space where you can refer to it later.
3. Sit with their feedback and ensure you fully understand it.
4. Implement their constructive criticism going forward.





Maintaining professional boundaries

Unless your mentor brings it up and makes it clear that you both share common ideals or religious beliefs, try to steer away from any discussions about religion or politics.

It's best to keep conversations around universal topics such as current events, entertainment news, and other topics that won't cause offense.

Try to contact your mentor only during reasonable hours unless there is an absolute emergency that requires their attention.

- Keep texts and phone calls between 8a-6p, unless they have indicated to you that another time works best for them.

Also, keep your phone calls mindful of their time.

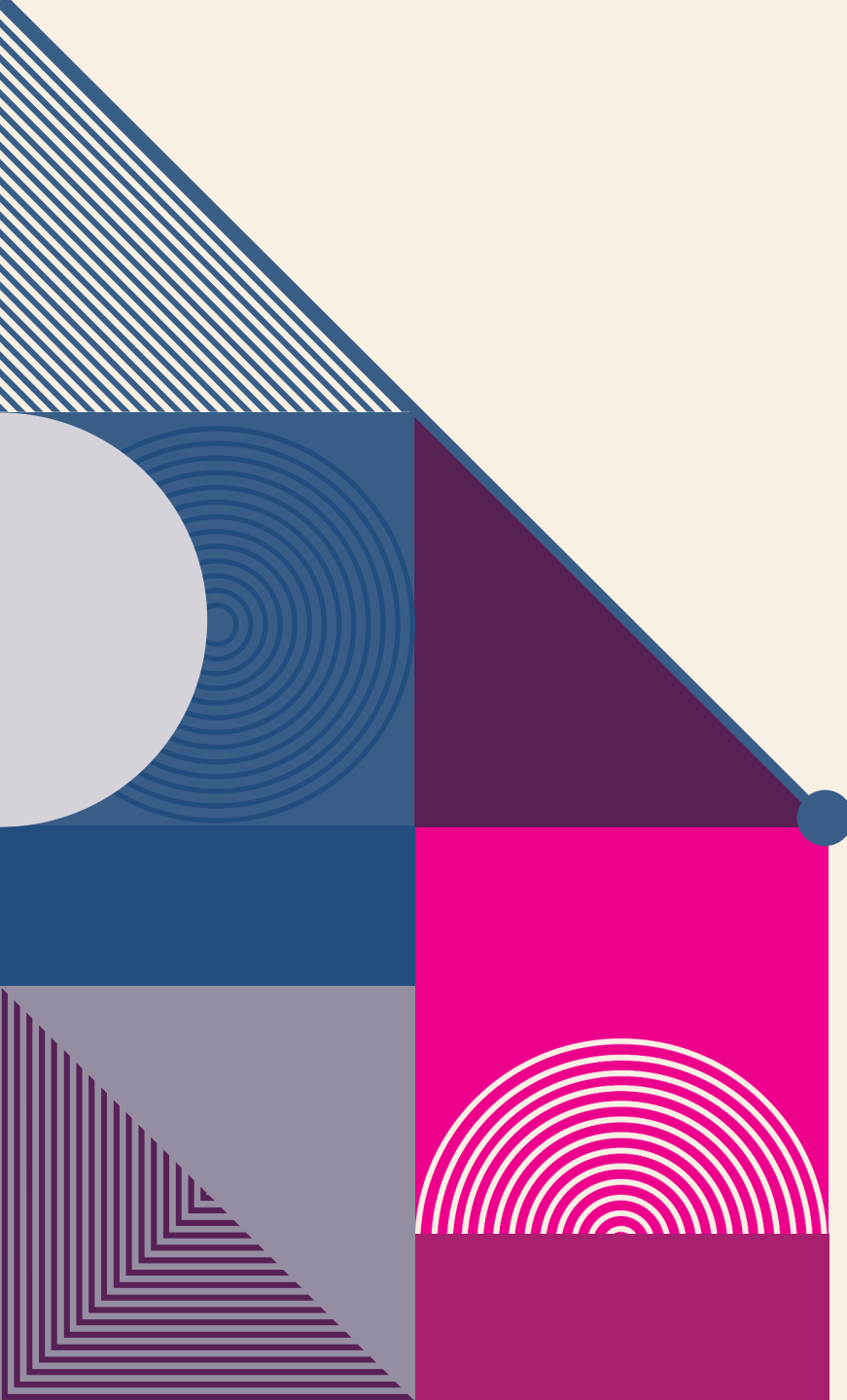
- Unless you are having breakfast, lunch, or dinner in a casual setting, try to keep phone and video calls centered on the topic or question for which you are seeking their mentorship.





THE POWER OF PREPARATION

Confidence-building strategies



THE POWER OF PREPARATION

1. Practice **while** you're in the practice of law.
2. Practice your arguments out loud before you have a hearing.
3. Practice your arguments out loud before you have an arbitration.
4. Practice your points before you have a mediation.
5. Read your motions, briefs/memorandum of law out loud before submitting them to a superior, to a client, or to the court.
6. If you have a hearing, arrive early so that you can observe other attorneys in action.

IF YOU STAY READY...

1. When you initially get a case, review the entire case file.
2. Understand the context of the case and the backdrop.
3. Know the facts.
4. Know the parties.
5. Start thinking of defenses early.
6. Start thinking of a plan early to gather facts and information.

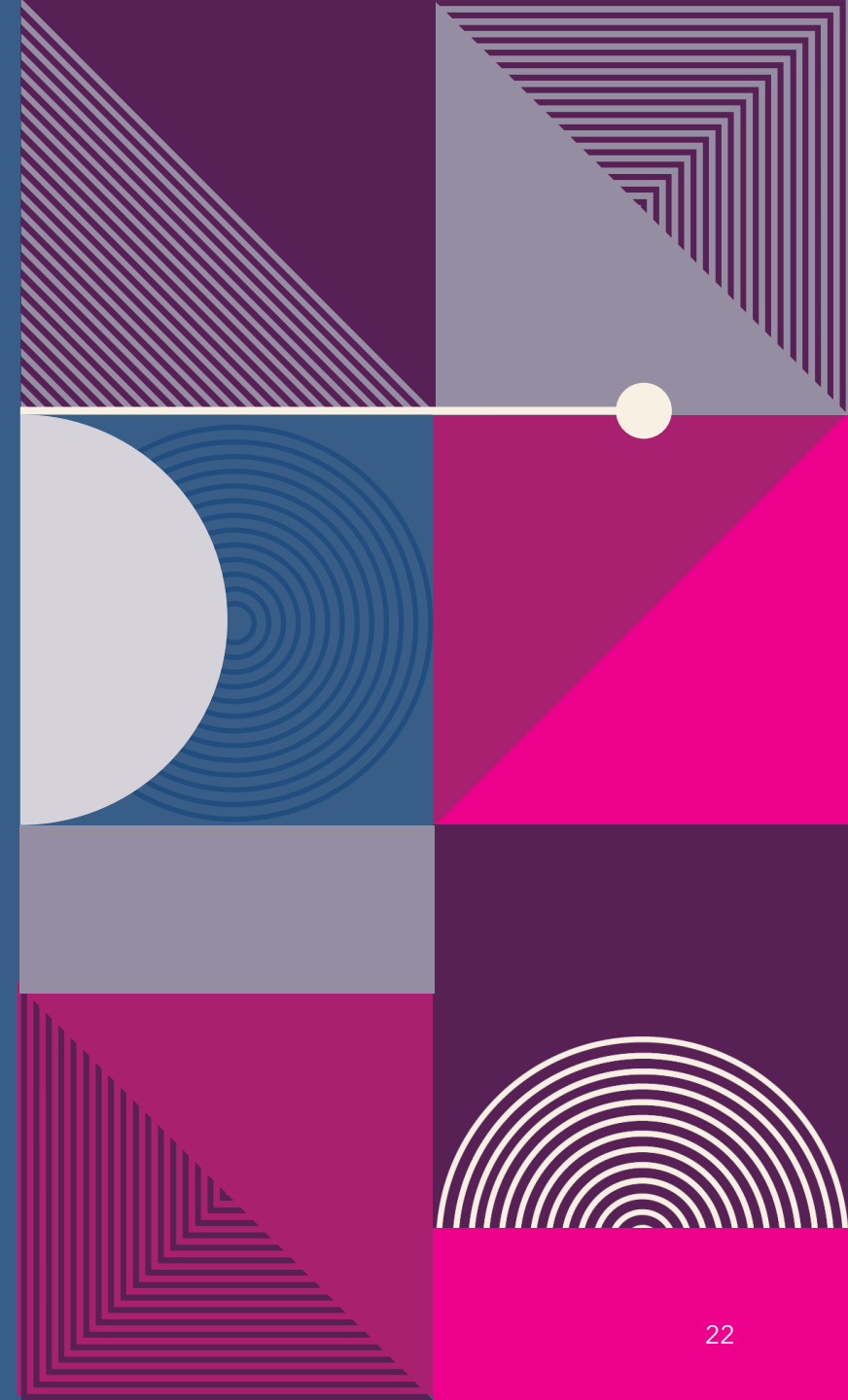
You will need to talk to the client or join a call where the partner or superior speaks with the client.

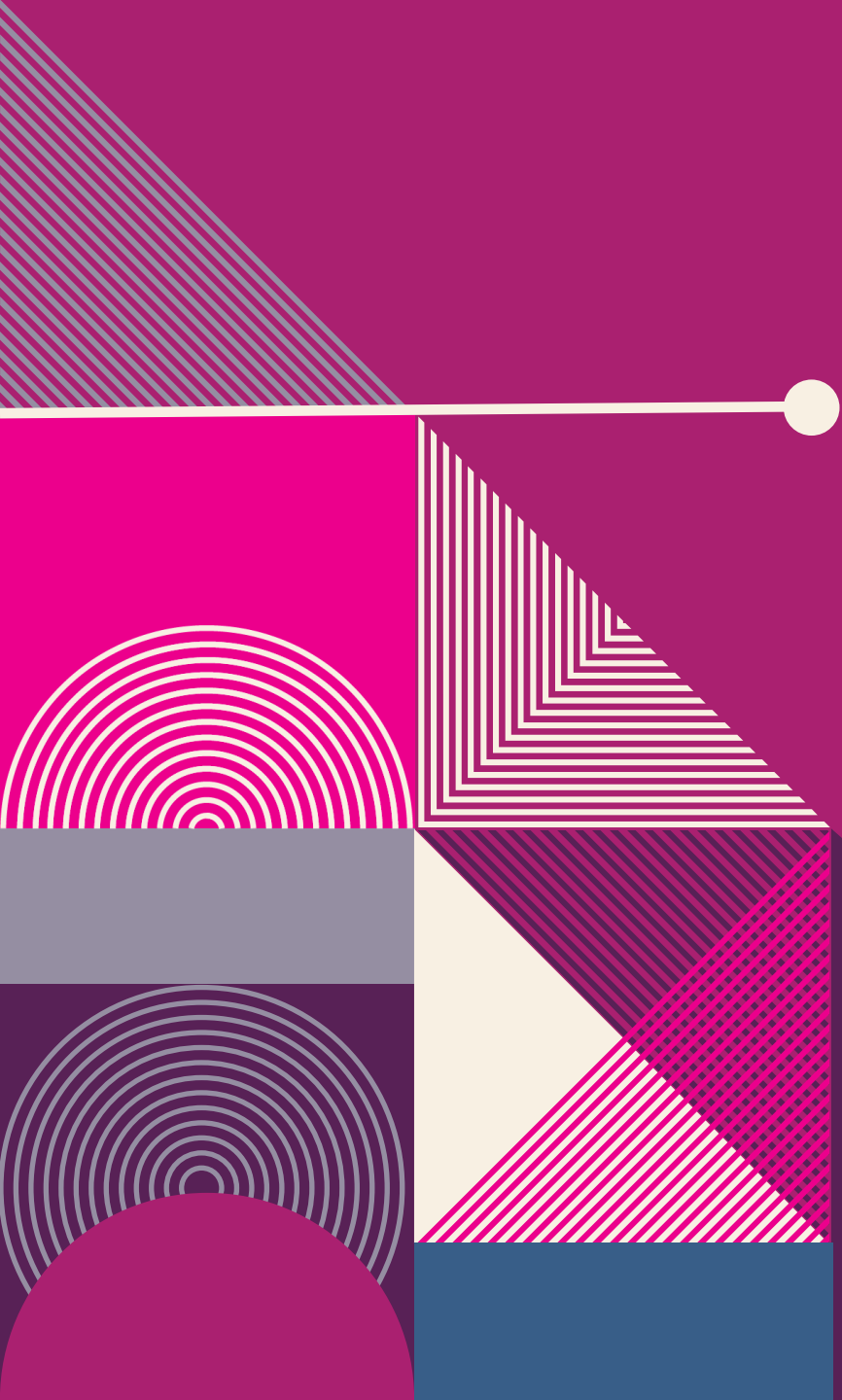
Prepare to draft documents (answer, discovery, motions, etc.)

Prepare to keep track of all to-do items.

THE POWER OF RESPONSIVENESS

- Aim to check your email every hour and respond to partners, superiors, and clients as soon as you are able to do so.
- Return calls within 24 hours to clients and partners.
- When you are responsive, you communicate that you are reliable, alert, and engaged with your cases.
- If you are unable to respond within 24 hours, flag the email so that you can come back to it later.
- If you are able to respond, but have a to-do item, flag the email and don't remove the flag until it's completed.





THE POWER OF SELF-CARE

You can not pour from an empty glass.

SELF-CARE IS NOT AN OPTION.

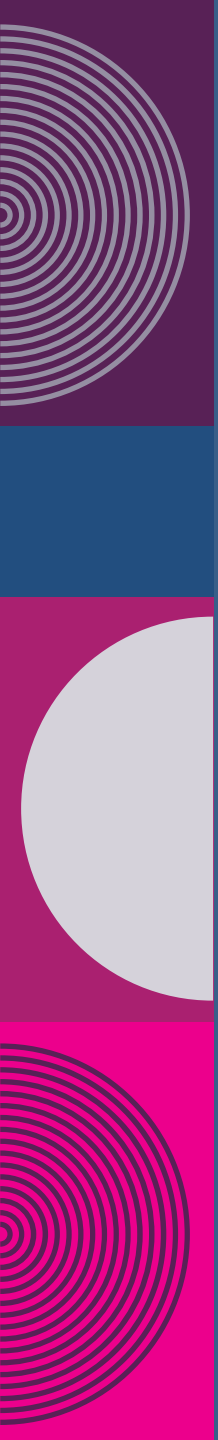
Our profession is exciting, and can also be stressful, high-paced and lead to burnout. In order to perform at your maximum level, you **have** to make sure you are taking care of **you**.

It's essential not to forsake doing the things that bring you the most joy and that are good FOR you:

- Exercise
- Healthy eating
- Hobbies

In order to ensure you are pouring into yourself, make sure you are engaging in time that will refresh you and re-energize you:

- Spending time with family and friends
- Taking vacations
- Getting fresh air (nature walks, nature sits)
- Doing something fun (watching your favorite show, movie, playing a game)



FINAL TIPS & TAKEAWAYS

- Don't forsake the power of COMMUNITY.
 - Get a mentor or mentors.
 - Check in with your mentors regularly.
 - Utilize their feedback. It's there to help you.
- Always strive to be the most prepared in the room.
 - Do your homework before you get to the major meeting.
 - Study the case file. Know it up and down.
- Being responsive = being reliable
 - Don't forget the 24-hour rule.
- You have to invest in YOU.
 - Don't forget the things you enjoy doing outside of the practice of law.
 - You are more than an attorney.



THANK YOU

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