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## Effective Mentorship in Research

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# Effective Mentorship in Research

PEER Liberia Research Workshop Series  
Troy Moon, MD, MPH



**Describe characteristics of a Mentor?**

**What is the difference between a Mentor  
and a Supervisor?**

# Why is mentoring important?



Enhances mentee productivity, self-efficacy and career satisfaction  
(Garman *et al.*, 2001; Feldman *et al.*, 2010 ; Cho *et al.*, 2011; Fleming *et al.*, 2012 )



Strongly influences (predicts) the success of research trainees  
(Shea *et al.*, 2011; Steiner *et al.*, 2004 )



Strengthens decision-making around academic persistence and degree attainment  
(Gloria and Robinson Kurpius, 2001; Solorzano, 1998)



Improves retention of junior faculty in higher education  
(Nagda *et al.*, 1998; Daley *et al.*, 2006; Ries *et al.*, 2009)

# What are the barriers?



Lack of experience and confidence



Lack of time



Lack of institutional rewards



Lack of financial rewards



Lack of classroom structure



... misalignment with the faculty identity

# Five Skills for effective research mentoring



## RESEARCH SKILLS

- Developing disciplinary research skills
- Teaching and Learning disciplinary knowledge
- Developing technical skills
- Accurately assessing mentees' understanding of disciplinary knowledge and skills
- Valuing and practicing ethical behavior and responsible conduct of research



## PSYCHOSOCIAL SKILLS

- Providing motivation
- Developing mentee career self-efficacy
- Developing mentee research self-efficacy
- Developing science identity
- Developing a sense of belonging



## DIVERSITY/CULTURAL SKILLS

- Advancing equity and inclusion
- Being culturally responsive
- Reducing the impact of bias
- Reducing the impact of stereotype threat



## SPONSORSHIP SKILLS

- Fostering mentees' independence
- Promoting professional development
- Establishing and fostering mentee professional networks
- Actively advocating on behalf of mentees



## INTERPERSONAL SKILLS

- Listening actively
- Aligning mentor and mentee expectations
- Building trusting relationships/ honesty

# Some mentoring tips



Listen patiently and be constructive



Build a relationship and share yourself



Don't abuse your authority or be overbearing



Nurture self-sufficiency



Establish "protected time" together



Provide introductions



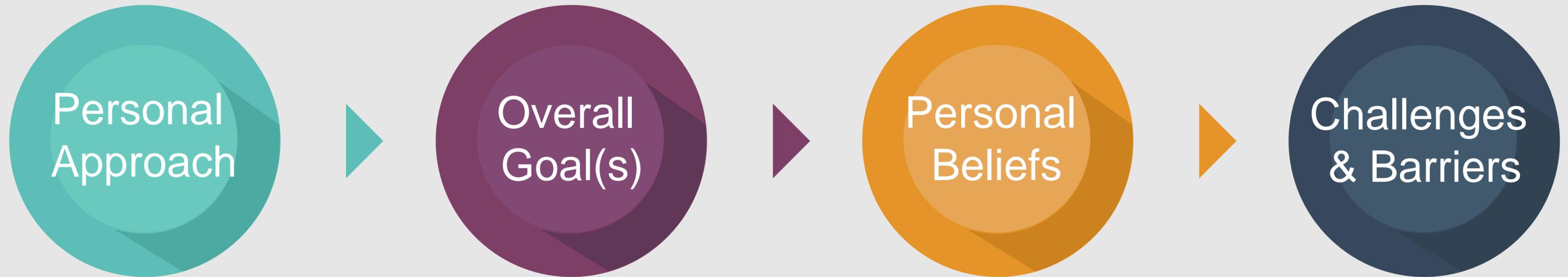
# Developing a mentoring philosophy

“Your mentoring philosophy is a statement that explains and justifies the way you approach personal and professional relationships with students as you guide their development into professionals.”

*Entering Mentoring, 87-88*



# Common components of mentoring philosophies



Remember, every mentoring philosophy will be unique to the mentor's own experiences, beliefs, and context. The following slides present **suggestions** for what to include in your own mentoring philosophy.

# Mentoring philosophy components

## Personal approach

What is your personal approach to mentoring?

Why did you choose this approach?

## Example

My personal approach to mentoring is flexible. With some mentees I am hands-on, with others I am hands-off.

I chose this approach because I believe that every mentee has distinct needs, and requires varying degrees of guidance.

# Mentoring philosophy components

## Overall goal(s)

What is your overall goal as a mentor?

Why did you choose this goal?

## Example

My overall goal as a mentor is to provide the support necessary for my mentees to flourish professionally and academically.

I chose this goal because it is the responsibility of the mentee to define what professional and academic success is for themselves personally.

# Mentoring philosophy components

## Personal beliefs

How are your personal philosophies/beliefs similar to your mentoring philosophy?

How do your personal philosophies/beliefs differ from your mentoring philosophy?

## Example

My personal philosophy is to “treat all people with respect regardless of their background” is present in all aspects of my mentoring philosophy.

My personal philosophy to go out of my way to assist others must be put on hold in certain mentoring situations, as the mentee must learn to do for themselves.

# Mentoring philosophy components

## Barriers/Challenges

What do you personally identify as potential challenges and/or barriers to having a successful mentor-mentee relationship?

## Example

Potential challenges/barriers:

- 1) Lack of **communication** between mentee & myself
- 2) **Transparency** and **honesty** issues
- 3) Failure to clearly define **roles/responsibilities** at the beginning of the relationship

# Supervisor vs. Mentor

<b>Supervisor</b>	<b>Mentor</b>
Task-Oriented	Mutual relationship
Deadlines	Long-term development
Heirarchical	Planner
Limited until completion of the research	End goal is mentee independence from mentor

# Roles of Mentors and Mentees

<b>Mentor</b>	<b>Mentee</b>
Advisor	Communicator
Teacher	Active Listener
Supporter	Planner
Sponsor	Learner

# Where can problems arise in this relationship?



Lack of experience and confidence



Lack of time



Lack of institutional and financial rewards



Overly personal or controlling mentor



Lack of classroom structure



Differences in beliefs, values, and practices

# Issue 1: Inaccessible Mentors

-  Mentors are inaccessible and seem to lack commitment. They do not respond to emails and regularly miss meetings.
-  Raise this issue with the mentor/ other superiors. Remember that mentors have agreed to this level of commitment!
-  Propose to touch base in person or by phone, at regular intervals.
-  Other possible solutions

# Issue 2: Unmotivated Mentees

-  The mentor thinks that the mentee lacks motivation and commitment to put in the grueling work required to succeed in academia, and has a real chance of failing.
-  Try to discern why the mentee seems to be lacking commitment – identify the underlying issue and help resolve it.
-  Other possible solutions

# Issue 3: Inadequate Direction

-  The mentor provides too much help, which stalls a mentee's independence or provides too little guidance, which causes the mentee to flounder.
-  The mentee should talk to peers to get a better idea of the guidance they are receiving.
-  After the mentee has a better understanding, they should raise their concerns with their mentor.

# Issue 4: Ethical Concerns

-  Both parties have engaged in unethical, manipulative behavior (mentor denies mentee authorship, mentee engages in plagiarism, mentor/mentee falsifies data etc.)
-  Both parties should attempt to observe the Code of Ethics, as closely as possible
-  Both parties should undergo proper training to prepare themselves for their roles

(Weil, 2001)

# Issue 5: Romantic Attraction

-  The mentoring relationship between the mentor and mentee is complicated by romantic and/or sexual attraction.
-  The mentor is an authority figure in the relationship and should ensure that the relationship remains professional.
-  Instances of sexual harassment should be reported to JFK leadership and addressed using the code of conduct.

# Best Practices to Resolve Mentoring Conflicts



Identify an appropriate space for discussion



Agree to ground rules



Clearly describe your perspective on the situation and your needs



**Listen** to the other person's perspective



Be flexible in creating a solution that works for both the mentor and mentee

# Summary



Common challenges to mentoring: inaccessible mentors, unmotivated mentees, inadequate direction, ethical concerns, and romantic attraction



It is essential to identify positive practices to resolve mentoring conflicts



Mentoring conflicts can be resolved through clear communication, flexibility, compromising, and setting clear goals and expectations



# Fostering Independence in the Mentoring Relationship

Dr. Trevor Kaile and Dr. Selestine Nzala

# Independence in the Mentoring Relationship

Throughout the course of the mentoring relationship, the mentor should foster independence in the mentee – encouraging them to work independently and gradually become fully autonomous, not relying solely on their mentors for support.

(J. Jones, 2017)

# Role of Mentors in Fostering Independence



Mentors should encourage mentees' professional development



Mentors should foster mentee professional networks and guide them to establish new relationships



Mentors should actively advocate on behalf of their mentee

# Mentor Traits that Promote Independence



**Trust:** Encourage and demonstrate trust in your mentee. When beginning different projects, do not treat them as your competitors but rather as colleagues.



**Foresight:** Identify milestones in the mentoring relationship that will eventually lead to mentees' independence; set timely goals to help them achieve these milestones



**Ability:** Gain experience, publish independent work in your own field, and develop professional networks that will later help your mentees. Serve as their role-model.

# Mentee Traits that Promote Independence



**Persistence:** The most independent young researchers require tenacity, drive, and the willingness to hang in there (Hochella, 2007)



**Confidence:** Independent mentees “have seen success and believe that they can do it too” - they don’t worry too much or are easily intimidated (Hochella, 2007)



**Flexibility:** “The ability to handle ambiguity and uncertainty with some equanimity, even to embrace it, is really critical.” (Thoennesen, 2007)

# Milestones for Independence

<b>Time</b>	<b>Mentor Responsibilities</b>
Beginning of relationship	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Set expectations of the relationship</li><li>• Include mentees in orientation</li><li>• Share non-work-related aspects of lives to develop a relationship and better understand one another</li><li>• Share strategies and provide feedback on observations</li></ul>
Monthly	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Mentee shadows mentor in day-to-day activities</li><li>• Regular monthly meetings with mentee</li></ul>
Year Two	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Encourage mentee to lead meetings and take initiative</li><li>• Continue frequent feedback</li></ul>
Yearly & Until End of Mentorship	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Frequently revisit expectations and goals</li></ul>