

Inclusive Mentoring

Why Mentoring Matters

- Effective mentoring of junior faculty results in:
 - a stronger commitment to a career in higher education;
 - a greater commitment to their institution;
 - higher faculty retention rates; more effective teaching and service;
 - more successful scholarship; heightened engagement in the department, and institution;
 - higher rates of success in tenure and promotion; and
 - higher rates of job and career satisfaction. (*On Being a Mentor*, p. 141).
- *But it is also about*
 - *a life*
 - *a sense of belonging*
 - *a sense of community*
 - *engagement*
 - *collegiality*
 - *assimilation*
 - *identity*
- **AND**
 - *We never outgrow the need for –and the ability to serve as-- mentors*

Stars and Diamonds

- While it's ideal for faculty to have a “go-to” mentor who is relatable and reliable along multiple dimensions, it is increasingly common and beneficial for faculty to have multiple mentors.
 - These relationships are sometimes referred to “mentoring constellations” (*the stars*) and are defined by different mentors who provide support in specific areas –the different facets of our identities (*the diamonds*).
- **As potential mentors**, we must reach out.
 - Think about the burden of “finding a mentor”, but
- **As mentees**, we must identify and express our mentoring needs and interests.
 - The [National Center for Faculty Development and Diversity](#) has created a “[Mentoring Map](#)” (pdf) to help faculty do just that. This easy-to-use template will help you identify the areas where you may need or desire different kinds of mentors and mentoring, and is, of course, adaptable to your own personal and professional identity and aspirations.

- **Why an inclusive prism matters:** “Women and faculty of color, in particular, encounter many barriers that can negatively affect their productivity and career advancement, These barriers include managing expectations for performance, particularly the tenure process, finding collegiality and community, and creating balance between professional roles, particularly teaching and research, and also between work and family life” (Sorcinelli and Yun: *When Mentoring is the Medium*, p. 366.)

Inclusive Mentoring Recognizes Difference

Positive mentoring experiences/relationships are characterized by environments and behaviors that

- Make difference discussable
- Address unconscious and implicit biases reflectively and openly
- Discuss, establish, and respect boundaries
- Reflect on the quality of (cross-cultural) communication and progress
- Explore assumptions about race, ethnicity, gender, identity, goals, & aspirations
- Address vulnerabilities safely and productively
- Utilize *appreciative inquiry* –the process of posing questions that generate positive awareness rather than focusing on the challenges of differences.

Potential Problems, Potential Solutions

Warning Signs	Solutions?
Needs are unmet	
The cost is greater than benefit	
Frustration	
Divergent values	
Poor communication	
Incongruent or unclear expectations	
Diminishing expectations	
Conflicted/conflicting roles	
Repeated misunderstandings	
Lack of progress	
Missed deadlines	
Poor preparation	
Exploitation	
Neglect	
Insensitivity	

Implicit biases and operative assumptions	
Divergent priorities	
Unawareness	
Incompetence	

Adapted in part from Brigham and Women's Hospital Center for Faculty Development and Diversity, Harvard Medical School Hospital

Mindful Mentoring and Mentoring Mindfully

Be aware of your own assumptions.

- In the same way that others may have different points of view because of differences in their life experiences, you likely have been shaped by your gender, race, social class, education, generation, geography, and a multitude of other cultural influences. Increasing your awareness of the ways you are a product of your past can help you avoid assuming that others see the world in the same way.

Get curious about the experience of colleagues who have different life experiences.

- Putting yourself in other people's shoes and seeking to understand how they may have come to their different points of view is a critical step in building a mentoring relationship.

Address differences openly.

- Relationships in which it becomes comfortable to talk about and acknowledge differences have much greater potential value for both mentor and mentee. While it may initially feel uncomfortable to talk about topics such as race, gender, and/or socioeconomic background, the potential for increased understanding and connection makes it worth the risk.

Adapted from: <https://www.ohsu.edu/xd/education/schools/school-of-medicine/faculty/mentoring/mentoring-best-practices/mentoring-across-differences/>

Remember...

Mentoring across differences requires an explicit acknowledgment of difference, of our operative assumptions, of “the other side”.

- When mentoring across differences, mentors should:
 - **Examine** assumptions and how they may influence the mentoring relationships;
 - **Consider** identity-based similarities and differences in the context of the mentor-mentee relationship;
 - **Discuss** identity assumptions and dimensions up-front and often
 - Don't quietly assume; discuss.
 - **Abide by Best Practices:**
 - Be aware of your assumptions...and theirs
 - Discuss them
 - Be mindful of the lives, identities, experiences, and career goals of mentees
 - Address differences openly and appropriately
 - Be organized and on-task
 - Provide meaningful feedback
 - **Respect Confidentiality**
 - A lot of mentoring is highly confidential –know the risks and think about assumptions involving:
 - Closed doors
 - Off campus meeting
 - Informal relationships
 - Perceptions
 - The quality and context of your advice