

Maintaining Effective Communication in Mentoring

**Cyclotron Institute
December 4, 2023**

Why is Mentoring Important?

- Impact on Mentees?
- Impact on Mentors?



One Definition of Mentorship

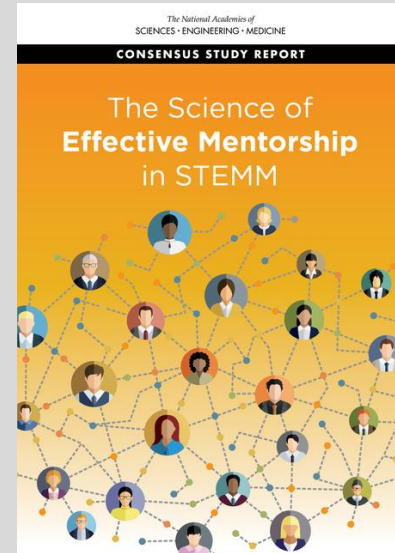
Mentorship is a professional, working alliance in which individuals work together over time to support the personal and professional growth, development, and success of the relational partners through the provision of career and psychosocial support.

The Science of Effective Mentorship in STEMM, National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine 2019. Washington, DC: The National Academies Press. <https://doi.org/10.17226/25568>



Science of Effective Mentoring

- National Academies of Science, Engineering, and Medicine. 2019. *The Science of Effective Mentorship in STEMM*. Washington DC: The National Academies Press.
<https://doi.org/10.17226/25568>
- Mentoring experiences can be **transformative** (p. 15)
- Despite its important place in the academic culture, **mentorship rarely receives the focused attention**, evaluation, and recognition of other aspects of the professional development process, such as teaching and research. (p. 16)
- Online Guide: <https://www.nap.edu/resource/25568/interactive/>



Center for the Improvement of Mentored Experiences in Research (CIMER)

CIMER Mission - Improve the research mentoring relationships for mentees and mentors at all career stages and disciplines through the development, implementation, and study of evidence-based and culturally-responsive interventions.

CIMER History - A UW-Madison team led by Dr. Christine Pfund established CIMER in 2015 with support from the Wisconsin Center for Educational Research to begin the work of expanding efforts to implement and investigate ways to improve research mentoring relationships in higher education settings.



Maintaining Effective Communication

Learning Objectives

1. Engage in active listening
2. Identify different communication styles
3. Use multiple strategies for improving communication (in person, at a distance, across multiple mentors, and within proper boundaries)
4. Provide constructive feedback
5. Communicate effectively across diverse dimensions including various backgrounds, disciplines, generations, ethnicities, positions of power, etc.

Active Listening

“Active listening requires that the listener try to understand the speaker's own understanding of an experience without the listener's own interpretive structures intruding on his or her understanding of the other person.” Weger, Castle, and Emmett, 2010

- Pay attention
- Show that you are listening
- Provide feedback
- Defer judgement
- Respond appropriately

Activity 1: The Listening Game

Learning Objective 1: Engage in active listening

The Listening Game

Instructions

1. Once in your small group, introduce yourself
2. Have a conversation...
3. Start your sentence with the last word of the team member's previous sentence. For example:
 - a. Cody: "Last weekend I had a dinner with my closest **friends**."
 - b. Carl: "**Friends** are a great source of **entertainment**."
 - c. Phil: "**Entertainment** is looking familiar to what I did **previously**."

Engage in Active Listening

Discuss

- What did you learn?
- What did you observe?
- What strategies were used?



Activity 2: Communication Styles Inventory

Learning Objective 2: Identify different communication styles

Learning Objective 3: Use multiple strategies for improving communication (in person, at a distance, across multiple mentors, and within proper personal boundaries)

Activity 2 Instructions

1. Review the list of communication styles on your participant worksheet. Which are you?



Activity 2 Instructions

2. Reflect on your results.

- a. Do you think it describes you?
- b. How is your communication style different from other types?
- c. How is your style different from others in your group?

Communication Styles Guiding Questions

1. What did you learn?
2. How can you use this or other tools like it to improve communication in your mentor relationships?
3. What are strategies for communicating across different styles?

Activity 2 Reflection

3. Keep in mind...

- a. Communication Styles 2.0™ at [Maintaining Effective Communication Styles Link](#) includes twenty-one communication styles because people rarely fit into just four or five simple categories.
- b. There are twelve primary communication styles and nine additional blended styles.
- c. On the Circle of Styles™, the styles closest to each communicate most easily using their natural style.
- d. Those farther apart on the circle have more difficulty communicating, while those opposite from each other on the circle have the biggest communication challenges.

Activity 3: Case Studies

The Lion's Den

Giving Constructive Feedback

Learning Objective 4: Provide constructive feedback

Learning Objective 5: Communicate effectively across diverse dimensions including various backgrounds, disciplines, generations, ethnicities, positions of power, etc.

Case Study Instructions

1. In your small group:

- a. Identify a *reporter* to report information to the larger group
- b. Read the first case study
- c. Discuss your initial reactions to the case study.
- d. Discuss the case study guiding questions in your small group.

2. Report to the large group.

3. Repeat for the second case study (maybe with a different reporter)

Guiding Questions for *The Lion's Den*

1. What are your initial reactions to this case?
2. What is the most effective way to communicate who should be involved in dealing with problems that arise between the mentor and mentee/ supervisors and TAs?
3. What could have been done to avoid this situation? What should the mentor do now? What should the mentee do now?

Guiding Questions for *Giving Constructive Feedback*

1. Was this good feedback? How could it be better? What should Dr. Yin do now?
2. How do you interpret silence or a minimalist response?
3. How do you teach mentees to communicate in ways that will resonate with different audiences (academic audiences versus community audiences versus project partners)?

Resources for Communication

- [Mentoring Compacts](#)
- [Individualized Development Plans](#)

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Graduate and Faculty Mentoring Academies

- **Goal:** Improve Mentoring Experiences
- **Target Audiences:** GMA: Graduate and Professional Students, Faculty, and Staff; FMA: Faculty; soon PMA, too.
- **Competencies:** Seven **evidenced-based** competencies
 - ***Maintaining Effective Communication***
 - Aligning Expectations
 - Assessing Understanding
 - Fostering Independence
 - Promoting Professional Development
 - Supporting Well-Being
 - Articulating Your Mentoring Plan and Philosophy

