



Making Mentoring Meaningful—Identifying Needs and Mapping a Mentor Network

Activities and Resources

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Overview and Learning Objectives

Would you like to connect with a mentor but aren't sure how to get started or what you should talk about? In this workshop, participants will identify mentoring needs, map a mentoring network, and learn tips for having a meaningful mentoring relationship.

Learning Objectives

At the end of this session, participants will be able to:

1. Identify mentoring needs
2. Outline mentoring goals
3. Plan mentoring conversations
4. Map a mentoring network

Related Reading

The following articles discuss the concept of a mentor network.

- [Forget Mentors: Employ a Personal Board of Directors](#)
- [The Eight Types of Mentors: Which Ones Do You Need](#)
- Mapping a Mentoring Roadmap and Developing a Supportive Network for Strategic Career Advancement: <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/full/10.1177/2158244017710288>
- Mentor mapping tool from the International Association of Women: <https://blog.iawomen.com/mentoring-map-developing-an-actionable-plan-to-reach-your-next-level-of-success/>
- NASEM resources on the Science of Effective Mentoring in STEMM: <https://www.nap.edu/resource/25568/interactive/tools-and-resources.html>
- Forbes Business article on How to Develop a Mentoring Team: <https://www.forbes.com/sites/ruthgotian/2020/07/06/how-to-cultivate-a-mentoring-team-in-five-easy-steps/#5a4f8f66244a> and more from this author: <https://www.ruthgotian.com/>

What Are Your Mentoring Needs?

As you map your mentor network, consider the reasons why you might be seeking a mentor.

Think about:

1. What is frustrating you the most right now?
2. Career path and career interests?
3. Immediate needs and long-term needs?
4. What skills do you want to build?
5. Understanding your organization? Work/Life Balance?
6. Reassurance during times of change?
7. "Safe space" for thinking through issues?
8. What does it take to be successful in your field?

See worksheet at the end of this handout for a tool to develop mentoring goals.

Group Activity: Mapping a Mentor Network

1. Review the different types of mentors on the next two pages.
2. Reflect on your mentoring needs
3. Start filling in the table "Mapping Your Mentor Network"—are there gaps in your network?
4. Discuss how you might use this information as you advance in your career



Mapping a Mentor Network Exercise

TYPE OF MENTOR	WHO'S IN YOUR NETWORK
<p>Work/Life Mentor Role Model How do they do it? Managing multiple priorities</p>	
<p>Field/Discipline Specific Mentor How do you grow your reputation? Balancing work obligations and professional networking needs Knowledgeable about opportunities</p>	
<p>Career Stage Mentor Brand new to stage/Navigator Postdoc, Early, Mid-Career or Senior Scientist Adding value at every stage Managing transition stages</p>	
<p>Organizational Mentor Understanding Company Culture Expanding Cross-Company Network Navigating Policies and procedures</p>	
<p>Grow Your Career Mentor Navigating promotion or performance process Understanding Expectations Output/Productivity Professional Society Connections</p>	
<p>Grow Your Skills Mentor Funding, communicating with managers Building relationships Writing/speaking skills Research ethics and integrity</p>	
<p>“Got Your Back” Mentor Safe space Reassurance Reality check Dealing with change</p>	

Turning StartER Goals into SMARTer Goals

Mentoring Goals should provide an opportunity for you to develop a relationship with your mentor and give you a basis for meeting. Mentoring goals often take the form of “starter” goals—improve communication skills, learn about careers, etc. As we progress in our mentoring towards learning and professional development, it helps to be more specific in our goals and identify activities to support growth.

Specific

- What are you really trying to accomplish? What can help address the underlying issue of your starter goal?

Measurable

- How will you know you are making progress?

Action-Oriented

- Can you identify specific activities to work on to help you achieve your goal?

Realistic

- Can you break the goal into achievable tasks? What resources are needed?

Timely

- Can you identify a plan to make progress in the desired time frame?

For more on Starter to SMARTer goals, refer to: Zachary, Lois and Fischler, Lory. 2011. “Begin with the end in mind.” *TD Magazine*. <https://www.td.org/magazines/td-magazine/begin-with-the-end-in-mind-the-goal-driven-mentoring-relationship>

Group Activity: Turning StartER Goals into SMARTer Goals

How would you translate these starter mentoring goals into SMART mentoring goals?

Starter Goal	SMARTer Goal
Improve work/life balance	
Improve communication skills	
Become an independent researcher	
Build self-confidence	
Be better at managing projects	
Learn about career paths	

For Further Reading

- National Academy for Science, Engineering and Math resources on the Science of Effective Mentoring in STEMM: <https://www.nap.edu/resource/25568/interactive/tools-and-resources.html>
- Mapping a Mentoring Roadmap and Developing a Supportive Network for Strategic Career Advancement: <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/full/10.1177/2158244017710288>
- The Importance of Mentor Networks for Female Scientists: <https://www.chemistryworld.com/careers/the-importance-of-mentoring-networks-for-female-scientists/4016456.article>
- Mentor mapping tool from the International Association of Women: <https://blog.iawomen.com/mentoring-map-developing-an-actionable-plan-to-reach-your-next-level-of-success/>

American Physical Society Mentoring Programs and Student Resources

APS National Mentoring Community: <https://aps.org/programs/minorities/nmc/>

APS Industry Mentors for Physicists (IMPacT): <https://impact.aps.org/>

APS Resources for Undergraduate Students:

<https://www.aps.org/programs/education/undergrad/index.cfm>

GOAL DEVELOPMENT TOOL

For Mentees

As a mentee, it is important to prepare beforehand to ensure you get the most out of this experience. Going through this exercise will help you communicate your interests and goals with your mentor.

TO HELP YOU PREPARE, THINK THROUGH THESE THREE SIMPLE STEPS:

- Get clear on what you really want for yourself.
- Select the most important issues from your list.
- Explain your goals and interests to your mentor.

1 Getting clear on your mentoring interests and goals

Respond to any of the statements below that ring true for you. Reviewing your Individual Development Plan may be helpful in identifying your mentoring needs.

I want to be more skillful/proficient at _____

I want to know more about _____

I want to feel more confident in _____

I want to better understand _____

I want to be viewed by others in the company as _____

2 Selecting your top goals

As you begin your mentoring experience, write down the top two to three goals that are most important to you as you start your mentoring experience:

FIRST GOAL

SECOND GOAL

THIRD GOAL

3

Explaining your goals to your mentor

For each of your goals consider:

Why is it important to me to realize these goals?

FIRST GOAL

SECOND GOAL

THIRD GOAL

How can my mentor support me in these goals?

FIRST GOAL

SECOND GOAL

THIRD GOAL
