
Myths & Realities
of Mentoring
Robert J. Milner, PhD
Associate Vice Provost for Professional Development

# The topics to be covered in this session

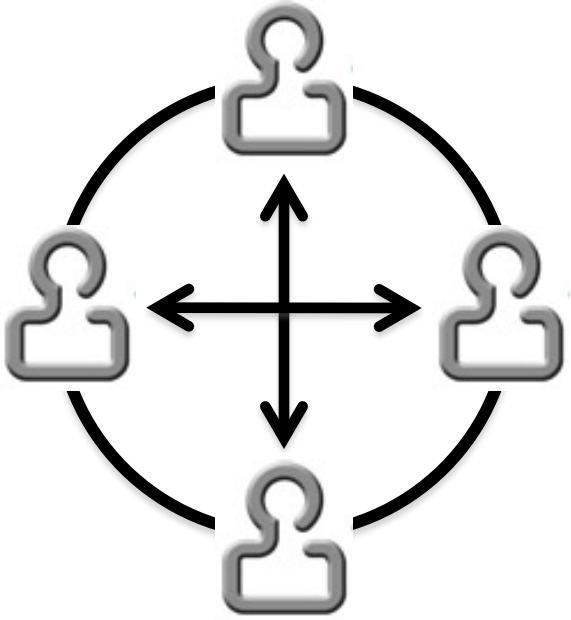
What is Mentoring?

Finding a Mentor

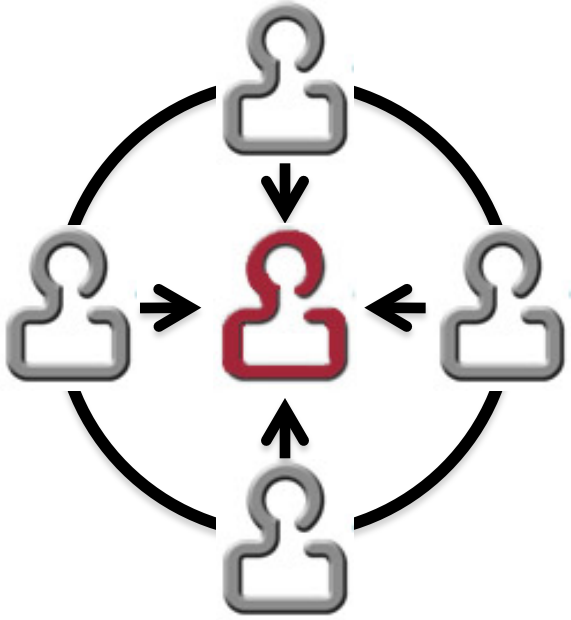

Guidance for
Mentees & Mentors

Questions
& Discussion

# Mentoring is essential for effective team science — you will also need a team of mentors



**Mentoring should occur within your team**



**Meet your mentoring needs with a team**

***The principles and approaches we will discuss for mentoring also apply to collaborations and team science***

# I wish to acknowledge my team of mentors . . .

Luanne Thorndyke, MD
Joanna Cain, MD
Judith Ockene, PhD
*UMMS Office of Faculty Affairs*

Joan Lakoski, PhD
*American Association of Colleges of Pharmacy*

Kevin Grigsby, DSW
*American Association of Medical Colleges*

Some materials were extracted from
*Mentoring Clinical & Translational Science Researchers: A Training Guide*


My goal today is to dispel the myths of mentoring…

# …and replace with evidence-based reality

**Mentoring throughout a professional career is a critical key to success**

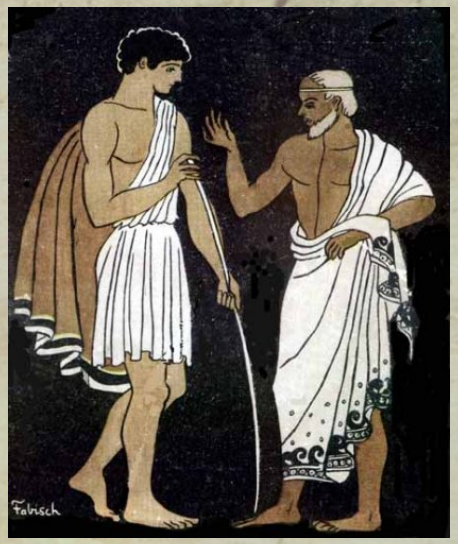
# Many studies have demonstrated that mentoring is key to career success

**Mentoring** → ***Positive Outcomes:***

- ☑ behavior
- ☑ satisfaction
- ☑ relationships
- ☑ motivation
- ☑ health-related
- ☑ career

Meta-analysis of 116 papers on youth, academic and workplace mentoring

Eby et al., Does Mentoring Matter? A Multidisciplinary Meta-Analysis Comparing Mentored and Non-Mentored Individuals. *J Vocat Behav* **72:** 254–267 (2008)



# What is mentoring?

# A good definition of mentoring . . .

"Mentorship refers to a dynamic, collaborative, reciprocal, and sustained relationship focused on an emerging individual's acquisition of the values and attitudes, knowledge, skills, and behaviors necessary to develop into a successful professional."

(*modified from* Abedin et al. Clin. Trans. Sci. **5:** 273–280, 2012)

# Mentoring consists of both career and psychosocial functions

"While **career functions** serve, primarily, to aid advancement up the hierarchy of an organization, **psychosocial functions** affect each individual on a personal level by building self-worth both inside and outside the organization. Taken together these functions should enable individuals to navigate the challenges of each successive career stage."

*Kram KE, *Mentoring at work: developmental relationships in organizational life.* (1985).

# Mentoring encompasses three areas of activity

**Educational:**
*coaching*

mentee acquires and integrates new learning

**Personal:**
*counseling*

mentee manages transitional states

**Professional:**
*sponsorship*

mentee maximizes potential to become an achieving practitioner

Sambunjak & Marusic. *Mentoring. What's in a Name?* *JAMA* 302: 2591 (2009).

# Observable behaviors of the Mentor as *Coach*

Engages with or observes mentee during their work and provides constructive feedback

- — provides guidance on research or clinical skills
- — gives feedback on mentee's writing: grants and papers
- — gives feedback on mentee's presentations
- — directs mentee to resources
- — observes meetings or other interactions

# Observable behaviors of the Mentor as *Counselor*

Provides psychosocial support:

— prepares mentee for a negotiation, difficult meeting or managing conflict

— helps mentee think about career and work/life issues

— guides mentee in setting short and long term career goals and objectives

— offers alternative options and solutions for career development

# Observable behaviors of the Mentor as *Sponsor*

Supports the growth of the mentee's career

— facilitates referrals to mentee

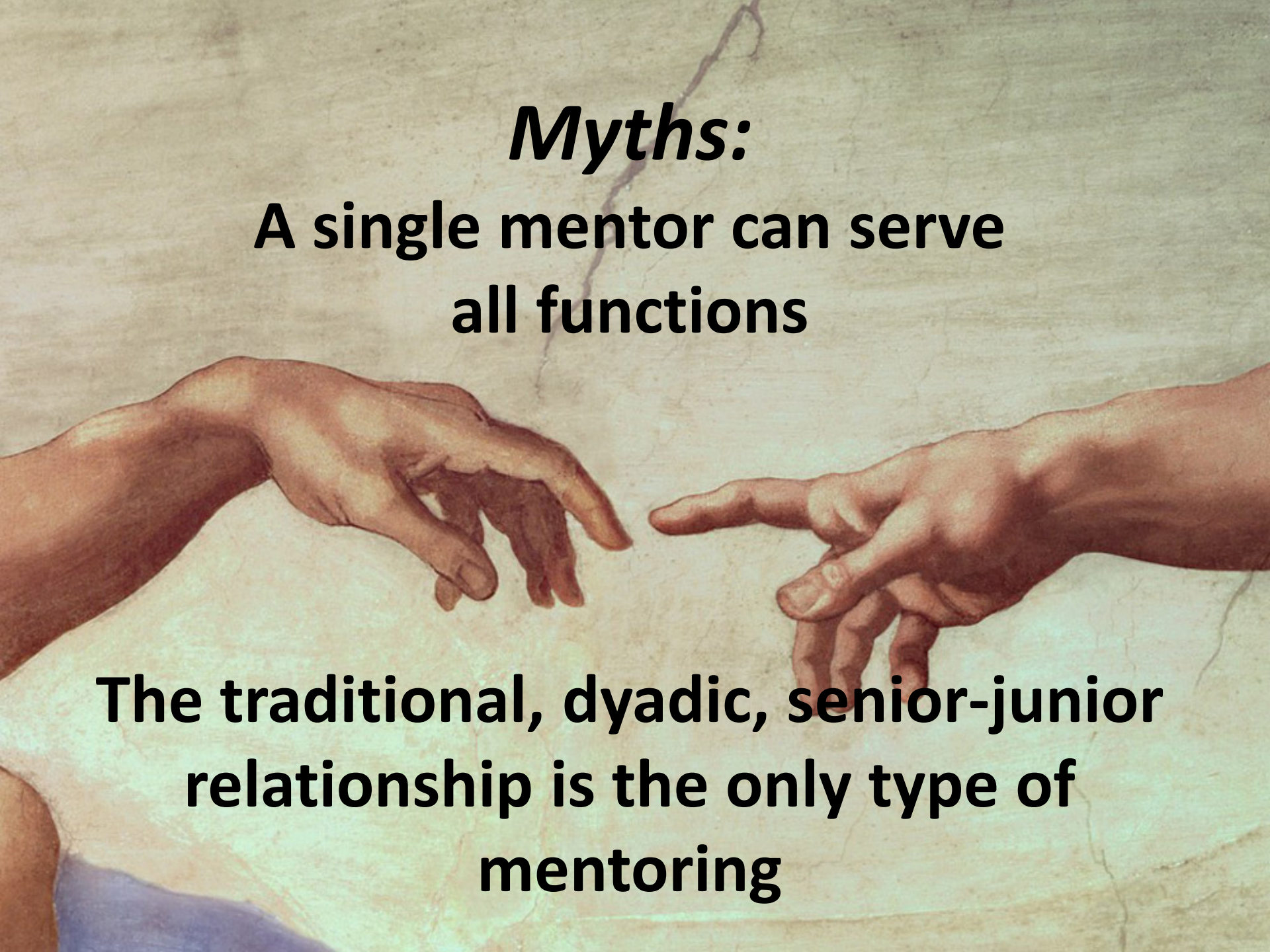
— talks up work of mentee in meetings and conversations with colleagues

— involves mentee in projects

— introduces mentee to leaders in the field

— nominates mentee for awards, committees

— advocates for the mentee



## *Myths:*

**A single mentor can serve all functions**

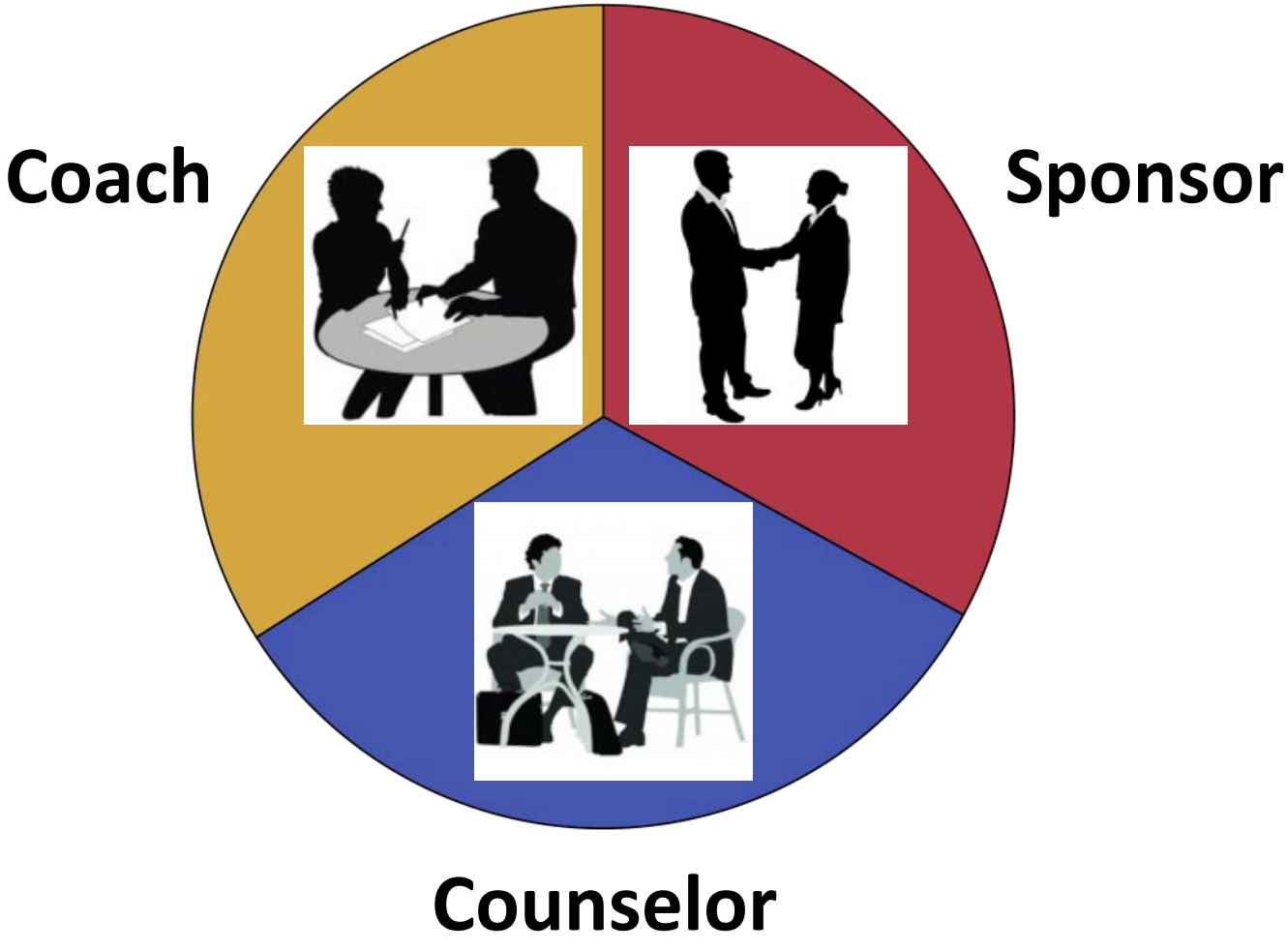
**The traditional, dyadic, senior-junior relationship is the only type of mentoring**

# The reality . . .

**Mentoring has many forms**

***You will need a team of mentors***

# An individual mentor may have different roles reflecting their mentoring strengths




*It is a rare mentor who can serve all roles*

# You may need different mentors to serve these roles . . . *a team of mentors*

Coach

Sponsor

Counselor

# You will also need mentors throughout your life and career

set goals

manage money

leadership

retirement

write grants

negotiation

social & emotional intelligence

educational skills

mentoring

rejuvenation

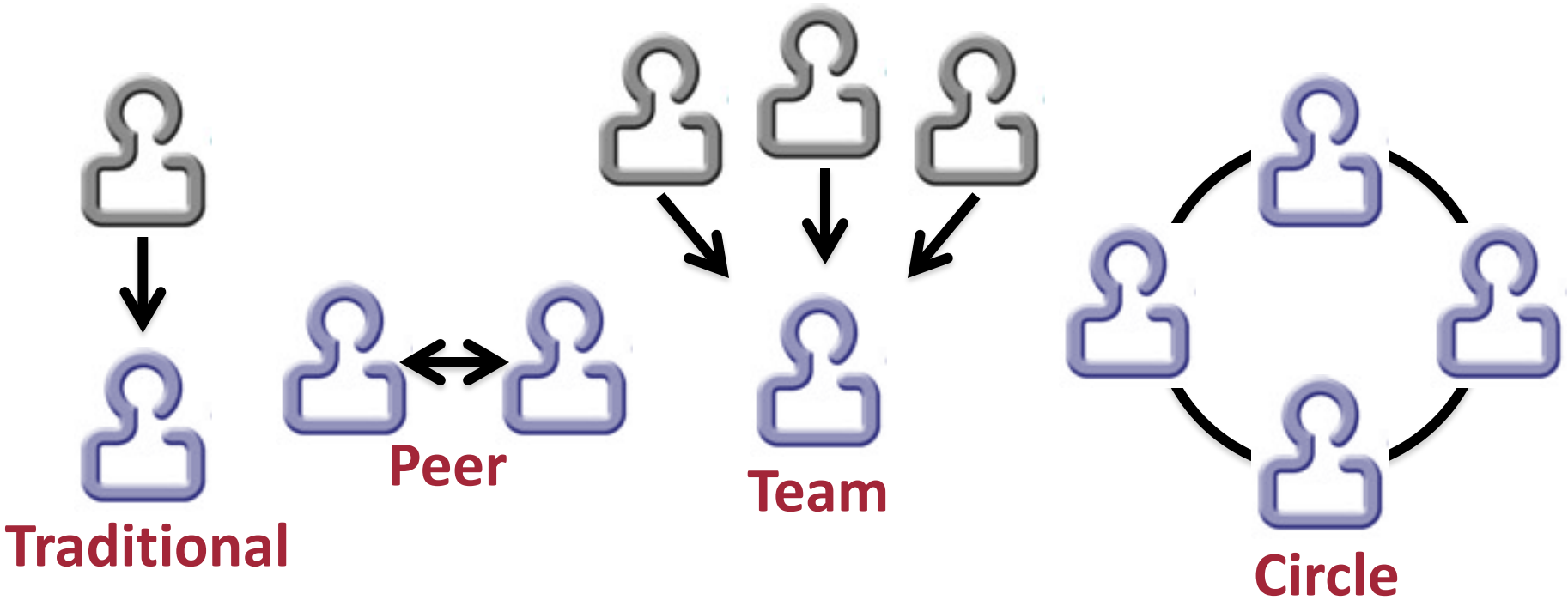
work-life integration

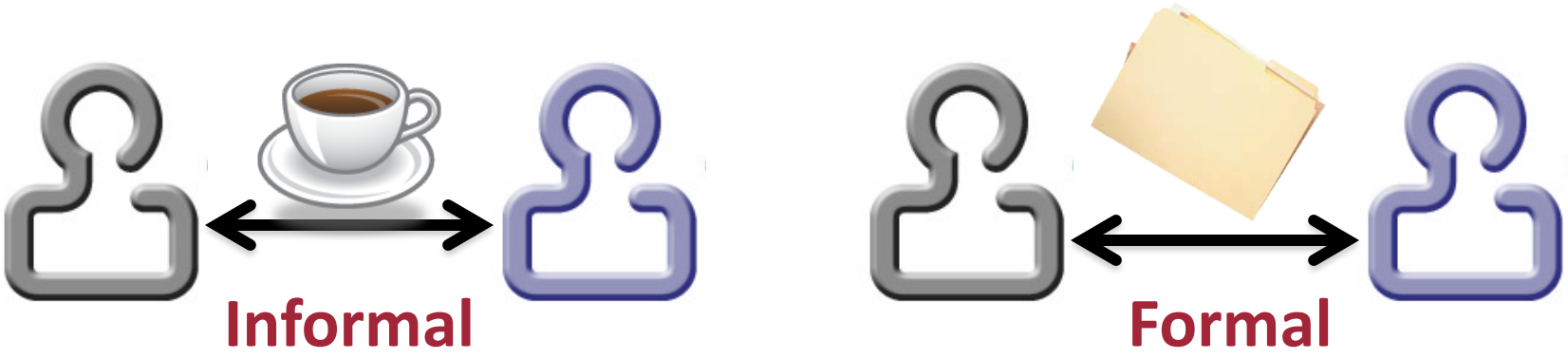
manage people

administrative skills

intrapersonal communication

# Mentoring occurs in many different forms



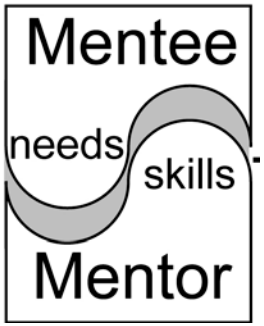




*Myth:*
Mentoring just happens

# The reality . . .

**You can take deliberate steps to establish a mentoring relationship**

# *Functional mentoring:* a defined process to identify, establish and nurture a mentoring relationship . . .




**Junior Faculty Development Program (JFDP)**
— mentors are identified with the skills to match the needs of a mentee

***Based on the principle that mentoring is not the goal but a means to achieve a goal:***

. . . career advancement

. . . learning a skill

. . . completing a project

. . . growing a network

. . . balancing work & family

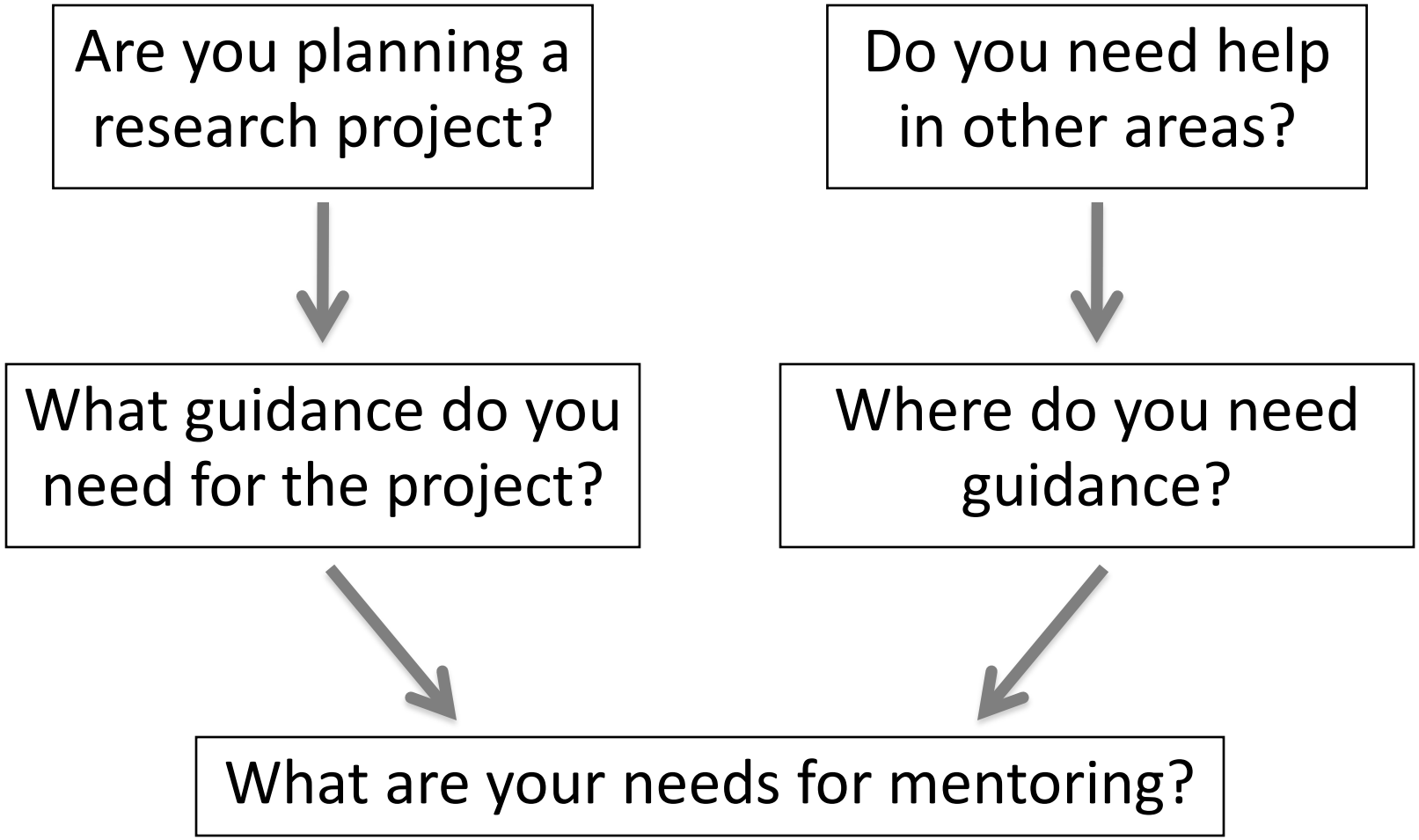
Thorndyke, Gusic & Milner *J. Cont. Educ. Health Prof.* 28: 157–64 (2008).

# Five steps to identify, establish and sustain a mentoring relationship . . .

1. Define your needs for mentoring
2. Identify potential mentors
3. Contact your mentor
4. Establish the relationship
5. Nurture the relationship

***The same steps can be used to identify and nurture collaborators for a team science project***

# Step 1 Define your needs for mentoring . . .



# Meet Ayesha Umar, MBBS, PhD
## — *Clinical Research Scholar*

Assistant Professor of Surgery

MBBS, Aga Khan University
Medical College

PhD (Cell Biology),
New York University

*Research Project:* **Role of innate immunity in vascular changes in diabetes**

*Ayesha needs to find a mentor for her project*

**Step 1** **Ayesha Umar . . .**

My project will use the *in vitro* model that I developed for my doctoral studies to study inflammatory changes in the vascular system in diabetes.

I have some experience with diabetes but no background in innate immunity.

I'd like a mentor with expertise in immunology. Success in writing grants would be a plus!

It would be nice if the mentor was outside my department but otherwise I have no preferences.

# Step 2 Identify potential mentors . . .

1. **Use personal networks to identify mentors who fit your needs:**
   - — talk to colleagues
   - — talk to your supervisor
   - — consult with the Office of Faculty Affairs

UMass Profiles
Research Networking Software

PubMed.gov
US National Library of Medicine
National Institutes of Health

NIH RePORTER
Version: 6.7.0

2. **Search databases for expertise:**
   - — Faculty Profiles: who is at UMMS?
   - — PubMed: who is publishing in the area?
   - — NIH Reporter: who is funded?

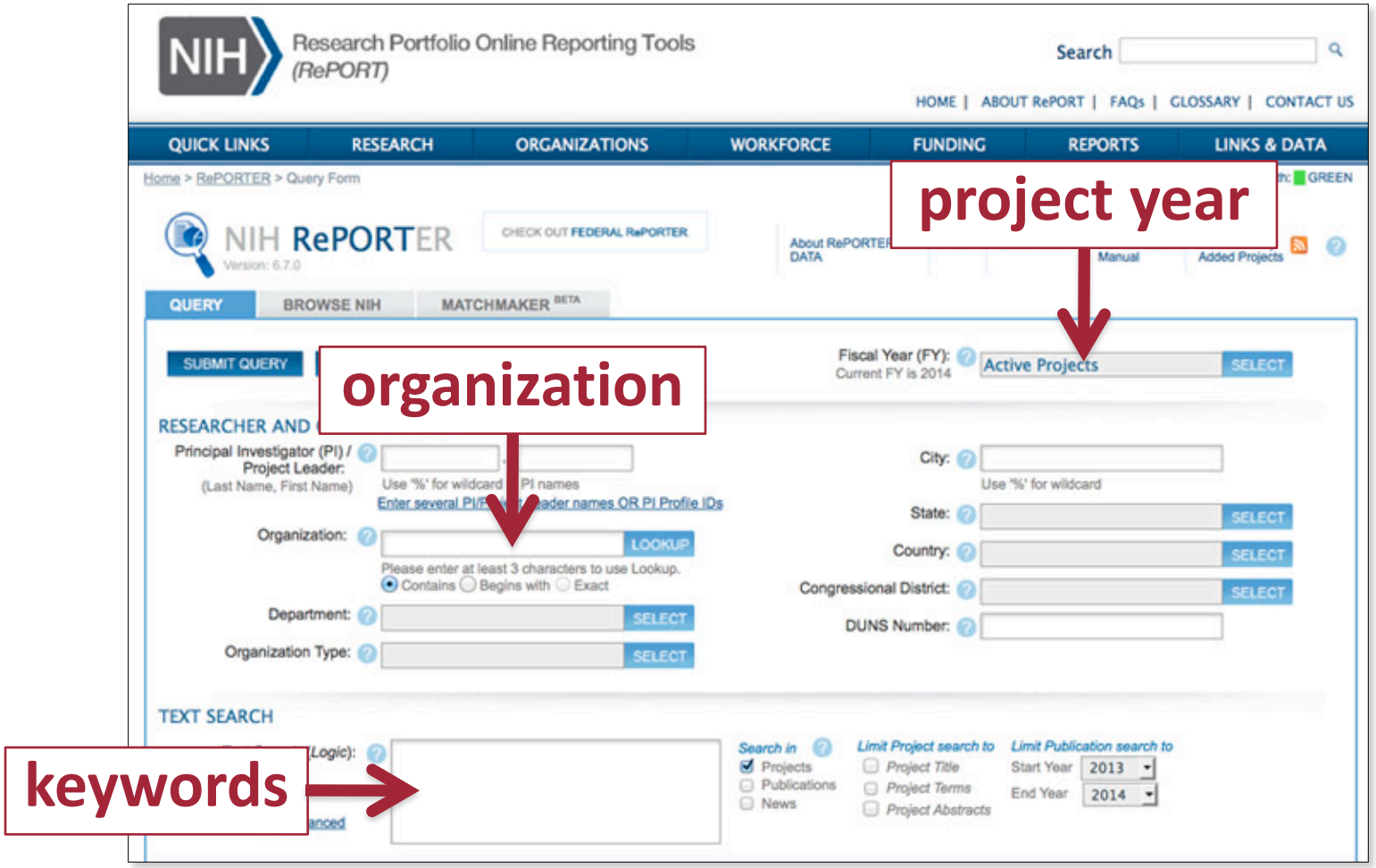
# Step 2 Who is publishing? — *example*

**PubMed search:**

Worcester [AD] and **"innate immunity"**

# Step 2 Who is funded in the area?

## Search the NIH reporter:




http://projectreporter.nih.gov

## Step 2 Once you have a list of potential mentors:

Learn more about them in order to make a final choice:

- what have they published?
- how are they funded?

Are they good mentors?

- whom have they trained?
- do you know someone who knows them?
- seek advice from current mentors

# Step 3 Contact your mentor . . .

You can send an email but a personal contact can be more powerful; in either case . . .

**Introduce yourself:**

— include brief personal information & attach CV

**Be specific about your need for guidance:**

— define how the potential mentor can help you

**Describe why you are asking this person for help**

— what is their relevant expertise?

# Step 3 Contact your mentor — *an example*

Ayesha has identified an investigator in the Department of Medicine who is an expert in innate immunity.

She writes an email . . .

Dear Dr. Smith:

I'm an Assistant Professor of Surgery. I was accepted into the Clinical Research Scholar program this year: my project focuses on the role of innate immunity in vascular changes during diabetes.

Your research on the effects of inflammation on muscle during diabetes is very relevant to the project I am planning.

I wonder if we could meet to discuss whether you would be willing to help me with my research project?

# Step 4 Establish the mentoring relationship . . .

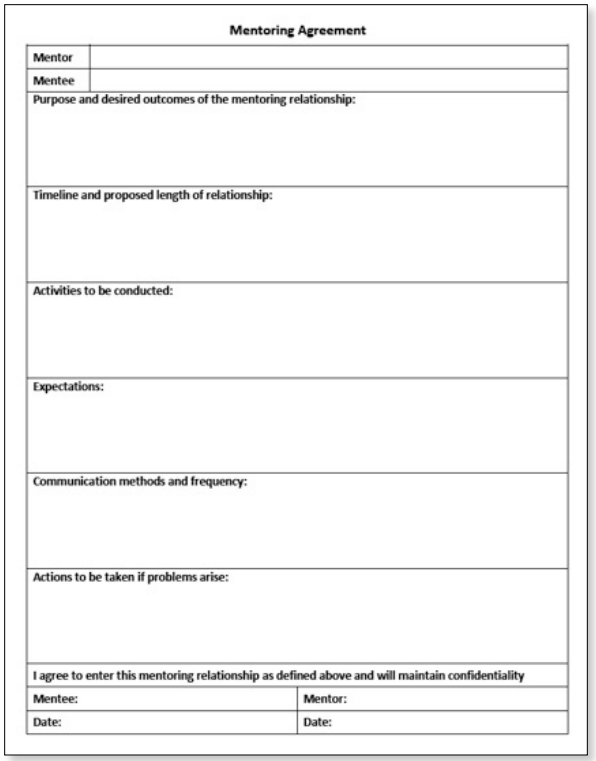
***Effective Mentees and Mentors:***

Define the goals and objectives for the mentoring relationship

Agree on the steps and timeline to reach the goal

Discuss mutual expectations and boundaries, ethics and vision

Negotiate a schedule for meeting together



**Mentoring Agreement**

| | |
|---|---|
| Mentor | |
| Mentee | |
| Purpose and desired outcomes of the mentoring relationship: | |
| Timeline and proposed length of relationship: | |
| Activities to be conducted: | |
| Expectations: | |
| Communication methods and frequency: | |
| Actions to be taken if problems arise: | |
| I agree to enter this mentoring relationship as defined above and will maintain confidentiality | |
| Mentee: | Mentor: |
| Date: | Date: |

***A mentoring agreement is a useful tool to define goals and expectations***

# Step 5 Nurture the mentoring relationship

## *Behaviors of an effective mentee*

Comes prepared to meetings

Respects the mentor's time

Follows through and accepts responsibility

Demonstrates insight and self-knowledge

Comes with solutions, not just problems

Seeks clarification in communications

Gives, requests and accepts feedback

# Step 5 What should mentors expect of a mentee?

**Professionalism**:

— responds to messages

— keeps to scheduled meetings or gives notice in good time

— is honest about needs

**Listens** to advice (but doesn't necessarily take it!)

Provides the mentor with **feedback about their needs**

***Don't forget that mentors can also learn from their mentees!***


*Myth:*
Anyone can mentor


The reality . . .
Mentoring requires defined skills
and can be taught

# What are the essential qualities (competencies) of an effective mentor?


SPECIAL REPORTS

Deriving Competencies for Mentors of Clinical and Translational Scholars

Zainab Abedin, M.P.H.[1], Ewelina Biskup, M.D.[2], Karin Silet, M.A.[3], Jane M. Garbutt, M.D.[4], Kurt Kroenke, M.D.[5], Mitchell D. Feldman, M.D.[6], Richard McGee, Jr, Ph.D.[7], Michael Fleming, M.D.[8], and Harold Alan Pincus, M.D.[9]

Used a range of methods to define competencies

Derived 19 competencies for mentors of clinical and translational investigators

Abedin et al. Clin. Trans. Sci. **5:** 273–280 (2012)

# The 19 mentoring competencies are organized into six thematic areas

1. **Communication & managing the relationship**
2. **Psychosocial support**
3. **Career & professional development**
4. **Professional enculturation** & scientific integrity
5. Research skills development
6. Clinical and translational investigator development

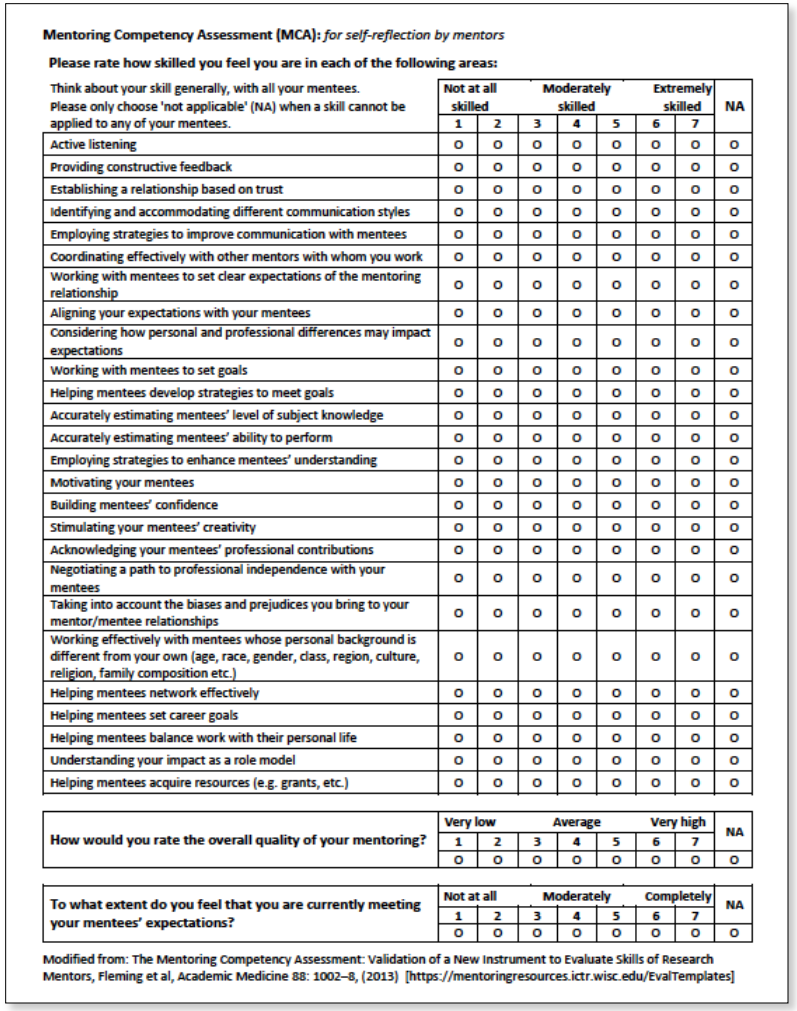
***Areas 1–4 are common to most mentoring relationships***

# These competencies were used to develop a Mentoring Competency Assessment

Validated instrument for both mentors & mentees

26 questions over six domains:

- Effective communication
- Aligning expectations
- Assessing understanding
- Fostering independence
- Addressing diversity
- Promoting professional development



**Mentoring Competency Assessment (MCA):** *for self-reflection by mentors*

**Please rate how skilled you feel you are in each of the following areas:**

| Think about your skill generally, with all your mentees. Please only choose 'not applicable' (NA) when a skill cannot be applied to any of your mentees. | Not at all skilled | | Moderately skilled | | | Extremely skilled | | NA |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | |
| Active listening | o | o | o | o | o | o | o | o |
| Providing constructive feedback | o | o | o | o | o | o | o | o |
| Establishing a relationship based on trust | o | o | o | o | o | o | o | o |
| Identifying and accommodating different communication styles | o | o | o | o | o | o | o | o |
| Employing strategies to improve communication with mentees | o | o | o | o | o | o | o | o |
| Coordinating effectively with other mentors with whom you work | o | o | o | o | o | o | o | o |
| Working with mentees to set clear expectations of the mentoring relationship | o | o | o | o | o | o | o | o |
| Aligning your expectations with your mentees | o | o | o | o | o | o | o | o |
| Considering how personal and professional differences may impact expectations | o | o | o | o | o | o | o | o |
| Working with mentees to set goals | o | o | o | o | o | o | o | o |
| Helping mentees develop strategies to meet goals | o | o | o | o | o | o | o | o |
| Accurately estimating mentees' level of subject knowledge | o | o | o | o | o | o | o | o |
| Accurately estimating mentees' ability to perform | o | o | o | o | o | o | o | o |
| Employing strategies to enhance mentees' understanding | o | o | o | o | o | o | o | o |
| Motivating your mentees | o | o | o | o | o | o | o | o |
| Building mentees' confidence | o | o | o | o | o | o | o | o |
| Stimulating your mentees' creativity | o | o | o | o | o | o | o | o |
| Acknowledging your mentees' professional contributions | o | o | o | o | o | o | o | o |
| Negotiating a path to professional independence with your mentees | o | o | o | o | o | o | o | o |
| Taking into account the biases and prejudices you bring to your mentor/mentee relationships | o | o | o | o | o | o | o | o |
| Working effectively with mentees whose personal background is different from your own (age, race, gender, class, region, culture, religion, family composition etc.) | o | o | o | o | o | o | o | o |
| Helping mentees network effectively | o | o | o | o | o | o | o | o |
| Helping mentees set career goals | o | o | o | o | o | o | o | o |
| Helping mentees balance work with their personal life | o | o | o | o | o | o | o | o |
| Understanding your impact as a role model | o | o | o | o | o | o | o | o |
| Helping mentees acquire resources (e.g. grants, etc.) | o | o | o | o | o | o | o | o |

| How would you rate the overall quality of your mentoring? | Very low | | Average | | | Very high | | NA |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | |
| | o | o | o | o | o | o | o | o |

| To what extent do you feel that you are currently meeting your mentees' expectations? | Not at all | | Moderately | | | Completely | | NA |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | |
| | o | o | o | o | o | o | o | o |

Modified from: The Mentoring Competency Assessment: Validation of a New Instrument to Evaluate Skills of Research Mentors, Fleming et al, Academic Medicine 88: 1002–8, (2013) [https://mentoringresources.ictr.wisc.edu/EvalTemplates]

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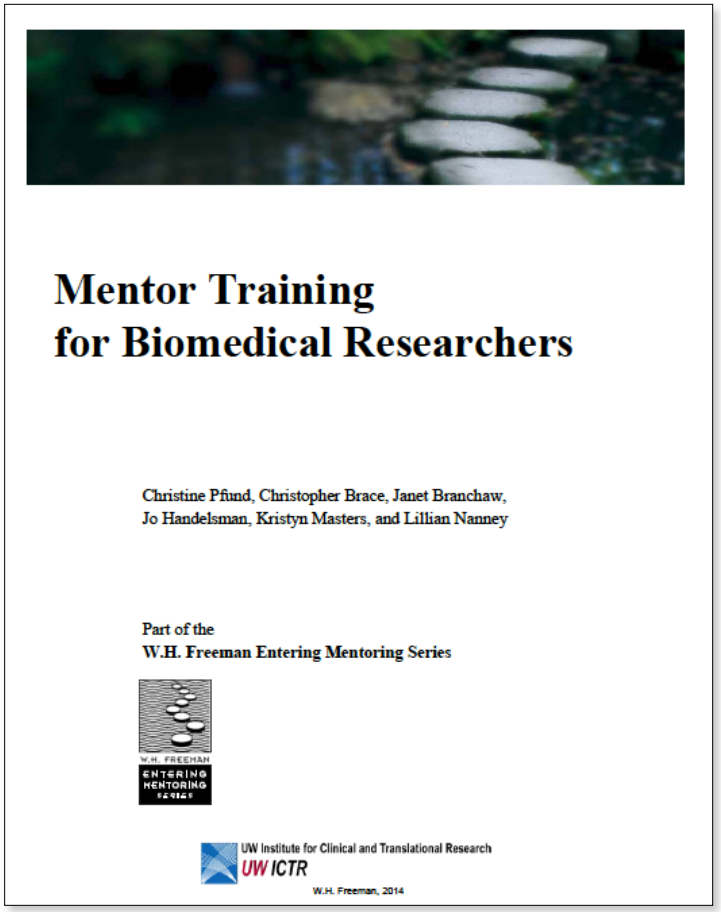
https://mentoringresources.ictr.wisc.edu/EvalTemplates

# Effective curricula have been developed to teach the mentoring competences

The curriculum increased mentor's scores on the Mentoring Competency Assessment

Curricula for mentors in specific areas of research:

- Clinical & Translational
- Biomedical Research
- Clinical & Behavioral
- Community Engagement




Pfund et al, Training Mentors of Clinical and Translational Research Scholars: A Randomized Controlled Trial, *Acad Med* **89:** 774–782 (2014)

https://mentoringresources.ictr.wisc.edu/TrainingCurriculumChoices

# The Mentoring Curriculum teaches important skills for mentors

**Effective communication**

**Aligning expectations**

Assessing understanding

Fostering independence

Addressing diversity

**Promoting professional development**

# Good communication is essential for an effective mentoring relationship

Identify respective preferences

Clarify expectations for communication, including frequency

Develop an initial plan for communication

Recognize that this plan will likely need to be flexible

# Lack of effective communication can derail a mentoring relationship

Frequency of interactions

Types or styles of communication

Make time for face to face discussions when either party is not satisfied with progress

Be patient but don’t wait….

# Final thoughts . . .
## *a framework for success!*

Know what is **expected** of you

Set **goals** and make a plan

Continue to **learn**

Connect with **colleagues**

Understand your **strengths** & **weaknesses**

Maintain **balance** in your life

Take time to **reflect**

Seek **help** and **guidance**

# For more information on mentoring . . .

## — *go to the Office of Faculty Affairs website*


http://www.umassmed.edu/ofa/mentoring