Training Ourselves: Improving Mentoring of Doctoral Students

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What is a mentor?
Mentor Training for Social Science Faculty – 7 Modules

- Maintaining Effective Communication
- Aligning Expectations
- Addressing Equity and Inclusion
- Improving Mentee Research Self-Efficacy
- Fostering Independence
- Promoting Professional Development
- Articulating Your Mentoring Plan
### Key Elements of Mentor Training

- Process-based using case studies and group problem-solving
- Aimed at awareness-raising among peers (highlighting the “intentionality” of mentoring)
- Provides a forum to share the collective experience of mentors across a range of experiences
- Links to resources to improve mentoring

### Can training actually improve mentoring?

- Yes.
Recruited 283 mentor/mentee pairs across 16 sites

Mentors Randomized

Mentor and Mentee Baseline Interviews (MCA) N=566

Mentors Allocated to Training Group N=144

Training Implemented (6-14/site)

Mentor and Mentee Follow-Up Interviews (MCA) N=552; 98%

Mentor Post-Training Surveys


Training Implementation and Evaluation:
Flowchart of Research Mentor Training Trial

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Today

- Consider: Do you think your colleagues could benefit from mentor training?
- Do some exercises together – sample of training

Groundrules:
- Remember that this is usually done in a small seminar
- Not everyone will have a chance to talk in group discussion since we are a large group
- Exercises are abbreviated
- Given time constraints, try to stay on task

Improving mentee research self-efficacy
Improving mentee research self-efficacy -- Exercise

- Read Handout #1: “What is self-efficacy?” focusing on the four sources
- Pair off and do activity in Handout #2: Anatomy of a Research Success Experience
- 10 minutes

Group Discussion
Applying the Self-Efficacy Tool Box

- Do the activity on Handout #3
  - Think of one of your own mentees who currently or in the past has shown signs of lower self-efficacy around research.
- Read Handout #4
- Get back in a pair, and discuss the questions on Handout #3 (15 minutes)

Aligning Expectations

- Introduction
- Read handout #5
- Discuss as one large group
Aligning Expectations

- Mentor/mentee compacts

Spend 10 minutes

- Skim the two sample compacts/expectations docs
- Think: If you were to create a mentor-mentee compact for yourself and your doctoral students, consider what you would include.
- What is in these example that you like?
- What is missing that you would add for yourself?

Moving Forward
Moving forward – issues

- How can we train faculty to be better mentors?
- How do we mentor our mentees in a way that can make them better than us?
- How do we better mentor trans- and interdisciplinary scientists?
- Team mentoring – best practices?
- Might better mentor training improve the experiences of mentees who are under-represented minorities?

Want more? Go to: Researchmentortraining.org
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My next steps

- Pilot a bit more
- Finalize the curriculum
- Train others to facilitate the curriculum
MENTOR TRAINING CORE

Christine Pfund, PI and Director, University of Wisconsin-Madison
Stephen Thomas, Associate Director, University of Maryland, College Park
Janet Branchaw, Associate Director, University of Wisconsin-Madison

Research Mentoring Website
https://mentoringresources.ictr.wisc.edu