

# Building and Maintaining a Support Network

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# Overview & Workshop Expectations

## Workshop Objectives

- Understand how networking and mentoring can help your career
- Re-thinking your network
- Self-assess your current network
- Common mistakes
- Hands-on: network builder & one minute introduction

3

## Workshop Agenda

Time	Activity
1:30 - 1:40 pm	Welcome, Overview
1:40 - 2:10 pm	Defining mentoring Distinguishing between a mentor, advisor, and sponsor
2:10 - 2:35 pm	How to assess your network Active Listening Activity
2:35 - 3:00 pm	One-Minute Biosketch

## Defining Mentoring

A **collaborative learning relationship** that proceeds through purposeful stages over time and has the primary goal of helping mentees acquire the essential competencies needed for success in their chosen career.

It includes using one's own experience to guide another person through an experience that requires **personal and intellectual growth and development**.

## A mentor is:

- "A mentor is someone who is **willing to fight** for you the fights that no one else is willing to fight!" - SACNAS National Conference 2012
- Individual with **advanced experience, skills and knowledge** who is committed to providing upward mobility and support to a protégé
- Source of wisdom, support, assistance, technical knowledge, empathy, respect, and empowerment

## What's a mentor? Who can be a mentor?

- A mentor is someone with whom you have established a relation of **trust** to provide you with **feedback, guidance and challenges you** to accomplish your goals.
- Depending on the situation, you can have multiple mentors. **I highly recommend you have multiple mentors at all stages of your career.**

## Have multiple mentors

- Figure out what they do best and learn how they do it
- Ask for their opinions/advice
- **Keep them updated** about your plans and progress
- Be ready for criticism and be pushed out of your **comfort zone**
- Foster your **independence** and autonomy

## Do I have any responsibilities as a mentee?

- Absolutely **YES**. Mentoring is a two way street. A mentor is someone who is there for you but you need to invest in been there for your mentor as well.
- **Cultivating mentoring relationships** is KEY.

## What can I do to be a good "mentee"?

- **Set up meeting** with your mentor (online, in person, phone calls).
- Keep your mentor **updated** on your successes and failures.
- Ask your mentor how they are doing. Show **interest** in your mentor's life and career.
- Become a mentor yourself – **pay it forward**

## As a mentee:

- Be prepared for **taking notes**
- Be an **active listener**
- 3 R's rule: Responsible, Respectful, Ready
- Be **reciprocal**
- **Keep in touch** (send emails, give calls)

## Re-think Mentoring

- Having **mentors** is great but....  
...you also need  
**advisors**  
**sponsors**  
**collaborators**

## You need others to reach your goals! Nobody can do it alone



Faculty position,  
postdoc, government, industry

College

You are here!

High school

## Difference between mentors, sponsors, and advisors

Mentors	Sponsors	Advisors
A mentor can be a <b>sponsor</b> and an <b>advisor</b>	Usually have positions of power	Sometimes you have no control over who your advisor is
Usually builds personal relationships with you	They can put in a good word for you	Most of the time they can only guide you through academic problems or specific issues
Knows your cultural background	They usually don't know you that well on a personal level	
Knows your challenges, goals		
<b>LISTENS to you!</b>		

## Networking



A **set of relationships** that assist in effectively and efficiently completing one's tasks and in advancing one's career.

"the action or process of interacting with others to **exchange information** and develop professional or social contacts."

## What is a professional network?

- **Group of people** who have connected with one another for career or business-related reasons.
- Members, who are called **contacts** or **connections**, can share information which may include, but is not limited to, job leads.

16

## Building your network

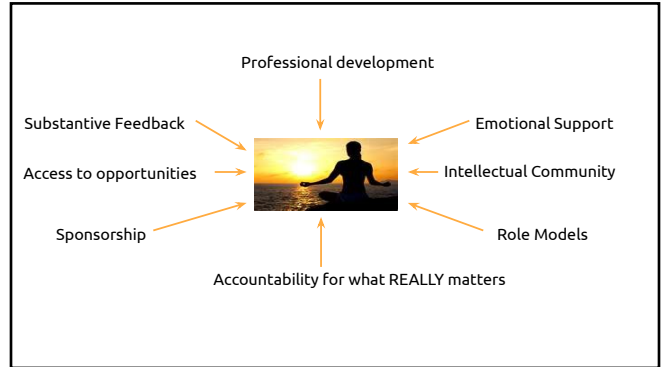
- Have goals and stay focused
- Find mentors, sponsors, and advisors
- Become a mentor if possible
- Join professional associations
- Have an online professional presence (LinkedIn, Facebook, and Twitter)
- Engage in organizations/events at your institution
- **Carry your business cards at all times**

## How can networking help with career advancement?

- Learn about a career
- Find prospective job candidates
- Get advice about a project
- Learn about a prospective employer
- Prepare to make pitches to clients

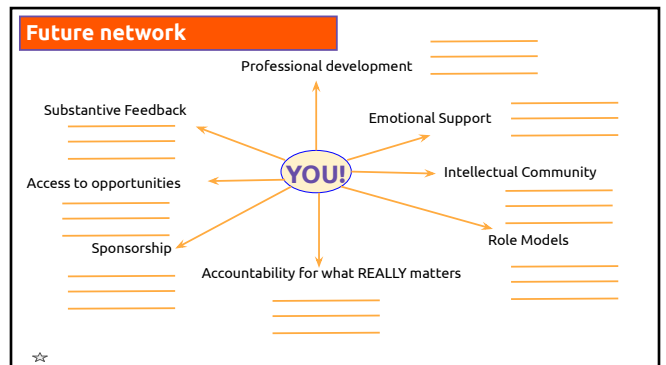
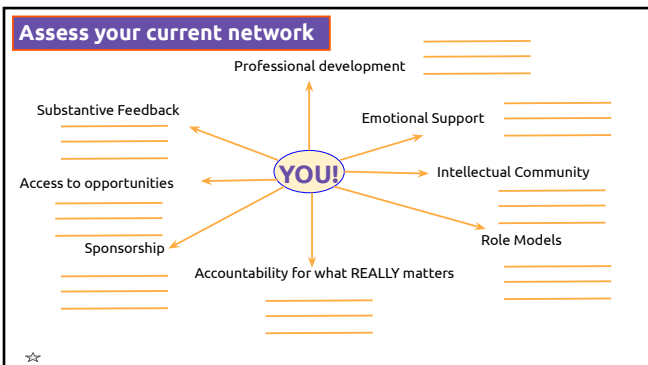
## Who should be in your network?

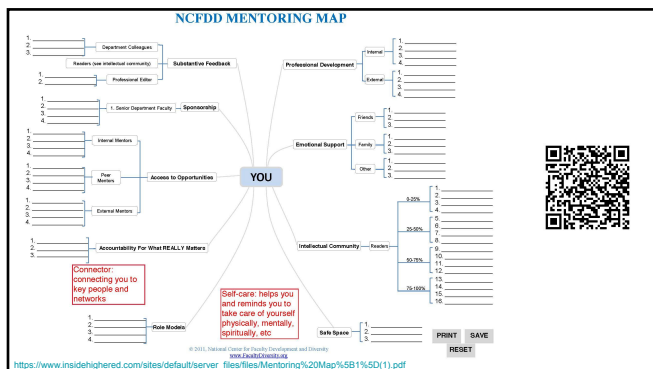
- Current and former coworkers
- Fellow members of professional associations
- Friends and family
- Former professors and instructors
- Former classmates



Mentor Roles	My Mentors
<b>Intellectual Feedback:</b> People who provide <b>critical feedback</b> that helps you to improve your work.	
<b>Intellectual Community:</b> People with whom you can <b>brainstorm ideas</b> and discuss your work.	
<b>Sponsorship:</b> People who <b>use their power and influence on your behalf</b> to shape the story about who you are and the importance of your work.	
<b>Access to Opportunities:</b> People who <b>provide access to opportunities</b> that will advance your work and career.	
<b>Accountability:</b> People who check to make sure that you are <b>making quality and timely progress</b> in your work.	
<b>Role Models:</b> People who <b>exhibit the values, attitudes and behaviors that you aspire to emulate</b> as a person and a professional.	

Mentor Roles	My Mentors
<b>Professional Development:</b> People (or organizations) who <b>provide professional development training</b> to advance your work and career.	
<b>Emotional Support:</b> People who provide <b>support to help you maintain personal well-being</b> (psychological and physical) as you navigate the ups and downs of your work and career.	
<b>Safe Space:</b> People with whom you can <b>talk about anything and everything without being judgmental</b> or passing the information forward.	
<b>Financial Support:</b> People who you could go to in <b>hard situations for financial support</b> .	
<b>Other:</b>	
<b>Connector:</b>	
<b>Self-care:</b>	





### Common Mistakes: Networking

<b>Differentiate the ideal from what's real</b>	"It's really all about the work, so if I just earn good grades and work hard I will be successful."
<b>Reactive vs. proactive</b>	"Everyone is so busy, I don't want to bother anyone with my problems."
<b>Hyper-individualism</b>	"I can do everything myself."
<b>Waiting for the perfect mentor</b>	"I am looking for a person who can meet all my needs for my entire life (career, college plans). If only I can find that person."
<b>Narrow belief</b>	"Most people outside my community/school can't understand my unique circumstance (e.g., race, immigration status, socio-economic background)"

### Common Mistakes: Networking

<b>Staying safe</b>	"I only socialize with people that look like me or that I like."
<b>Inability to talk about yourself</b>	"I avoid talking about myself or future plans because I don't want to seem arrogant."
<b>Self-isolation</b>	"I only spend time with people I already know."
<b>Not asking for help</b>	"I don't ask for help, assistance, and/or support."
<b>Perfectionism</b>	"I will be isolated until I get my life together."

**Identify your current needs**

**Ask:** how can I get my needs met?

**Plan:** to maximize your opportunities

**Identify:** your limiting beliefs

**Commit to ACTION**

- ### How can you meet those needs and goals?
- Learn how to properly introduce yourself
    - The **one minute biosketch** (elevator pitch)
  - How to ask/approach someone to become your mentor, sponsor, or advisor
    - Email is acceptable
  - The more you talk to people outside of your daily circle, the more confident you will become

## Communication:

### Active Listening Activity

### The one-minute Biosketch

## Active Listening

### Keys to active listening

- **Gather information:** Pinpoint an issue or clarify information
- **Ask open ended questions:**
  - What (when, where)-facts,
  - Why-reasons leading up to the event,
  - How-feelings
- Open - How have you experienced support in the lab?  
Closed - Have you experienced support in the laboratory?
- Maintaining eye contact with the speaker
- Clearing your mind of other distractions and focusing on what the speaker is saying and how they are saying it
- Asking for clarification when you don't understand
- Attending not only to the words, but also to the feelings behind the words  
**Look for discrepancies between verbal and body language**

## Activity: Active Listening



Picture from I-TECH

1. Get into groups of 3
2. Choose one speaker, one listener, & one observer

## Activity: Active Listening

- **Speaker** shares a one-minute biosketch (aka elevator pitch)
- **Listener** practices active listening skills and tries to come to full understanding of the situation
- **Observer** watches and listens, noting body language, facial expressions, etc.
- Share with large group – 1 observation per group

## Active Listening Mechanics

- **Message** - concise, contextualized, clear self intro, clear ask
- **Voice** - steady pace, inflection at the end, pause
- **Body** - make eye contact, natural gesture, firm hand shake

## The one-minute **Biosketch**

- **Introduce yourself: be professional**  
Hello, my name is...
- **Interest/school/job: be concrete**  
I am a senior/junior at \_\_\_\_ high school/college  
I want to be...  
I am interested in ...
- **Hook: every word counts so rehearse this part!**  
Discuss your short term goals (getting into college, potential major)  
Discuss other relevant activities: sports, extracurricular
- **Conclusion: Ask for a business card, email, or other contact information**  
Show interest in keeping in touch (and **KEEP IN TOUCH**)  
Ask a question or two

## Let's practice!

- Small groups (groups of 3)
- **Individually:**
  - Write down your biosketch
  - Practice
- **Groups:**
  - Listen to each other and provide constructive feedback
  - One person can volunteer to present in front of the group

## Active Listening

- Breathe (1 minute)
- **Part 1:** Speaker shares a one-minute biosketch (aka elevator pitch) and listener only responds nonverbally (3 minutes)
- **Part 2:** Speaker continues to share and listener can now ask clarifying questions, but should not offer advice (2 minutes)
- **Part 3:** Listener summarizes back to speaker (2 minutes)

## Active Listening

- Everyone: follow up discussion (5 minutes)

## Take home: Important Facets of Communication

- **Verbal** - use language others understand, paraphrase, ask clarifying questions, explain clearly, summarize
- **Non-verbal** - eye contact, use similar tone, nod occasionally, gestures, open posture, lean forward to indicate empathy

Attend to the words, but also to the feelings behind the words.

Look for discrepancy between verbal and nonverbal.

## Asking mentors/sponsors for recommendation letters

- Give them specific deadlines
- Provide clear instructions and timelines
- Explain the purpose of the program/application
- Send documents about yourself and program
  - CV/Resume; Statement of purpose; Bio sketch
- Send friendly reminders
- Write thank you email and follow up (updates)

## Take home: Important Facets of Communication

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Attend to the words, but also to the feelings behind the words.

Look for discrepancy between verbal and nonverbal.

## Keep Your Network Alive

- Don't treat your network like a **dusty old reference book** to store on a shelf.
- The last thing you want is to get in touch with someone who **doesn't remember you**.
- **Make plans to get together** with any connections with whom you have, or had, a personal relationship.
- **Get in touch** a few times a year.
- The holidays are the perfect time to **send a card or email**.
- Also **reach out** when you make a **change** such as starting a new job or getting a promotion.

## Don't Let Shyness Stop You From Connecting

- Use **social media** in your favor.



- Doing **volunteer work** will also give you a chance to meet people with whom you have something in common.

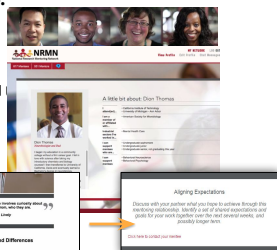
## Final remarks

- **Don't be afraid** to connect with others
- **Don't get discouraged** - Some people will say no but the majority will say yes
- Be **proactive** and professional
- Be **ready** to network, especially at professional conferences
- **Build your network now. It's never too early!**

## MyMentor

NRMN's MyMentor platform allows you to:

- **Experience** a one-on-one Guided Virtual Mentorship to navigate career path
- **Engage** in guided, critical conversations designed to enhance the success of diverse scholars
- **Share** opportunities and overcoming challenges
- **Deepen** relationships within a network of scientists across the U.S.



Hosted by our partner MentorNet



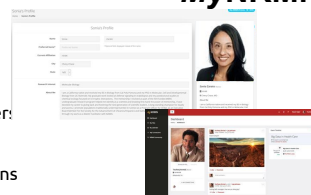
## Networking through MyNRMN



Connect with the community

Accessible upon log in to profile on NRMNet, **MyNRMN** allows the following:

- **Connect** with other members
- **Grow** a national network
- **Form** groups and connections
- **Share** documents
- **Build** a CV (mentees)



**Users can be:**

**Mentors:** Postdocs, faculty, non-faculty researchers, and academic administrators  
**Mentees:** Undergraduates, graduate students, and postdocs



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