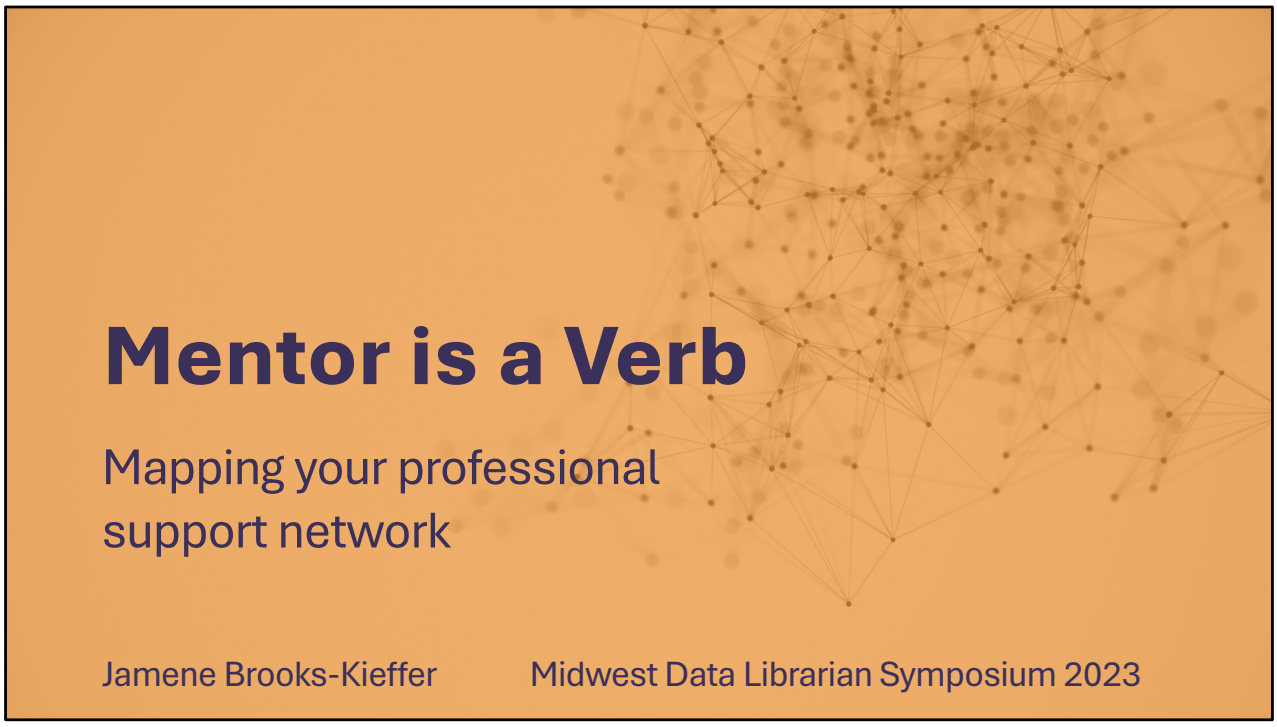


Good afternoon, everyone. I'm Jamene Brooks-Kieffer, Data Services Librarian at the University of Kansas.
I'm delighted to be closing the Symposium with you. Thank you to the organizers for inviting me to do this again.

Today I'm asserting that the word "mentor" is actually a verb, and walk you through some exercises to map your mentoring network.

Agenda

1. Mentors and Mentoring
2. What do you need?
3. Mapping your network

Here's what we're up to today.

I'm going to bring some definitions and thoughts about mentors and mentoring to the table in part 1.

In part 2, we'll look more closely at how to figure out what support you need.

And in part 3, you're going to be doing most of the work as you map out your current and desired support network.

Part 1

Mentors and Mentoring

What is a mentor?

"...a more senior individual using life experience and acquired knowledge to guide the development, growth, or entry of the mentee into future life stages or career paths."

(National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine, 2019, p. 34)

As a noun, the concept of "mentor" brings some very specific and entrenched ideas along with it. A National Academies report on effective mentorship describes these historical ideas using the words on the screen – "a more senior individual using life experience and acquired knowledge to guide the development, growth, or entry of the mentee into future life stages or career paths."

The implication is that this is a one-direction, potentially hierarchical relationship in which the senior individual has all the knowledge and skill to give to (or withhold from) the junior individual so that the junior individual can progress in their career.

So we understand a traditional relationship with a mentor to be long-term and hierarchical. Where does this perception come from?

What is a mentor?

"In the apprenticeship model, the role of mentors has been focused…on replicating the mentors' skills in the…mentees."

(Adan, ca. 1914; National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine, 2019, p. 36)

Our hierarchical ideas about mentors come from centuries of tradition about apprenticeship – a structure where someone learns professional skills from an expert in order to have a livelihood. In this model, the expert holds all the knowledge; the apprentice is dependent on the expert to pass on that knowledge. In such an imbalanced relationship, the apprentice risks the possibility of the expert abusing their power.

The National Academies report makes an interesting observation about the apprenticeship model: "In the apprenticeship model, the role of mentors has been focused historically on replicating the mentors' skills in the apprentices or mentees."

The mentor's focus on the mentee's professional skills and career trajectory make sense, but our profession no longer requires us to exactly replicate skills from one generation to the next, and in data work, this could actually be harmful because the field changes so quickly. The notion of "a mentor" – a noun – as one expert who can, on their own, train an individual into becoming another expert is outdated, and it isn't helpful as the only paradigm for professional support.

What is mentoring?

"… 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."

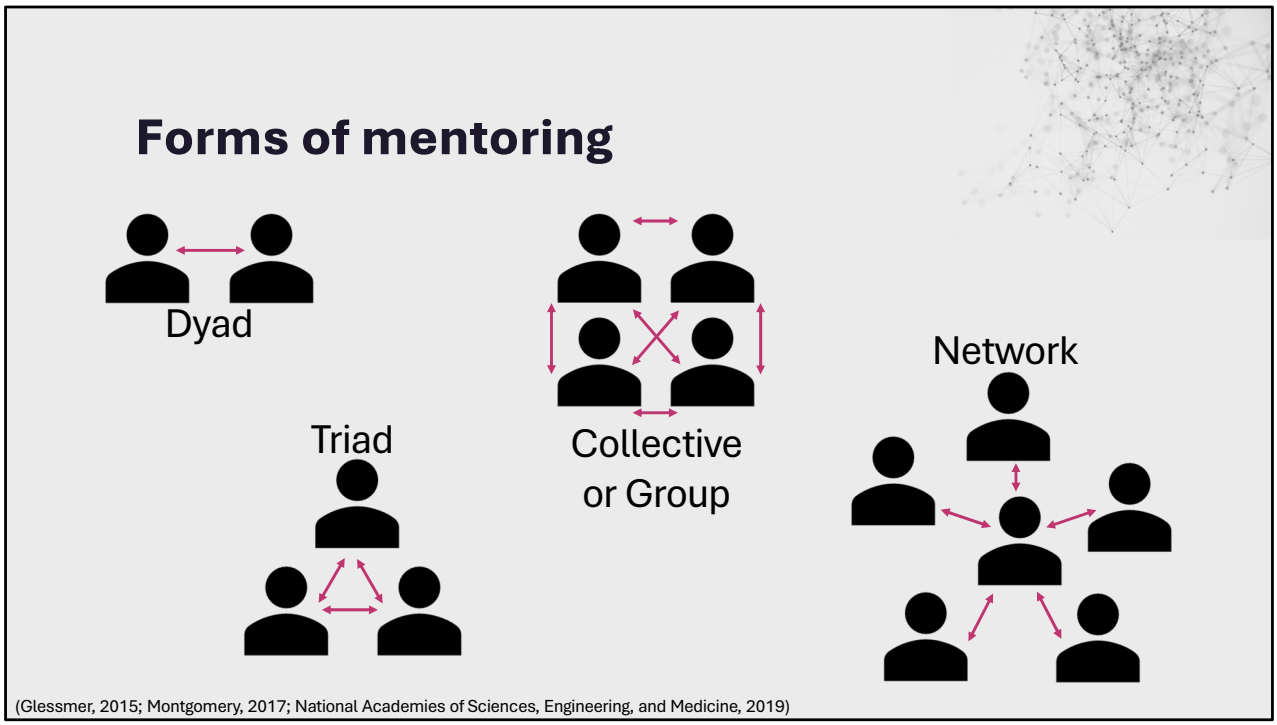
(National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine, 2019, p. 37)

So let's turn the noun into a verb and talk about mentoring.

Also in this National Academies report is an updated definition of what they refer to as mentorship – that is, a *mentoring relationship*. [read the quote]

Notice the implications of the pink words here, which are radically different from an apprenticeship:
- it's a working alliance, not a static thing
- it accommodates more than two individuals
- it supports ALL of the relational partners, not only the "junior" partner
- in BOTH career and psychosocial areas

In short, mentoring is creating and maintaining relationships.



And as with all human relationships, there are all kinds of ways to form mentoring relationships.

Notice that in all these groupings, the arrows go both ways – there's room for everyone in the relationship to get and give support.

Any of these relationships can involve a difference in experience and expertise – what we usually call mentors and mentees – or they can involve only peers and near-peers.

We have the classic dyad, drawn without explicit hierarchy.
Triads can involve both mentors and mentees in any configuration. When there's more than one mentor, this configuration is often called "multiple mentor."
Likewise, Collective or Group mentoring can include any mix of expertise.
And Networks typically involve mentors, mentees, and other resources.

Misconceptions about mentoring

Mentoring is one-way.

"...mentorship is a bidirectional activity, with mentors also being enriched and gaining benefits from engaging with the mentee."

(Montgomery, 2017, p. 7)

Let's look at some misconceptions about mentoring that show up in some of the literature about mentoring and professional support:

Mentoring is one-way.

This belief goes back to the apprenticeship model.

We've already seen the double-ended arrows diagramming the give and take in mentoring relationships. This idea shows up in other literature, too, including a 2017 paper by Beronda Montgomery.

Click; read the quote.

As a relationship, mentoring must be mutual because it requires honesty, trust, and a degree of vulnerability.

Misconceptions about mentoring

Only students and early career professionals need mentoring.

"An individual … has many needs … along the trajectory of the mentoring lifeline … [which] requires a complex and comprehensive set of mentoring resources and expertise."

(Montgomery, 2017, p. 3)

Only students and early career professionals need mentoring.

In many assigned mentoring relationships, this is the reality. Mid- and late-career individuals aren't automatically assumed to need mentorship. For example, my workplace doesn't arrange mentorship for mid-career librarians considering promotion to full librarian.

Click; read the quote.

Beronda Montgomery uses this phrase, the "mentoring lifeline," that I love, because it packs up mentoring, lifetime, and timeline all into one compact phrase. Folks at any career stage can benefit from establishing and maintaining mentoring relationships.

Misconceptions about mentoring

I only need one mentor.

"...the wide range of areas to which mentors can make contributions suggests that mentors either have to serve effectively in multiple roles or ... that mentees need to engage multiple mentors ... to gain the comprehensive mentoring needed."

(Montgomery, 2017, p. 3)

I only need one mentor.

This belief probably comes from the apprenticeship model, and in assigned mentoring relationships, this is a norm – one mentor, one mentee.

And while dyad mentoring relationships can be effective, they can't be what Beronda Montgomery calls *comprehensive* – Click; read the quote.

No one mentee should be expected to get all their needs met by one mentor, and one mentor shouldn't be expected to be able to meet all of those needs.

This is the NO UNICORNS argument – no single mentor can do everything. We'll come back to this in a little while.

Misconceptions about mentoring

I only need the mentor(s) assigned by my institution.

"...the engagement of mentoring networks has been associated with long-term career outcomes, whereas top-down approaches more effectively support short-term career goals."

(Montgomery, 2017, p. 3)

"I only need the mentor(s) assigned by my institution."

If I'm at an institution that assigns mentors, this is an understandable belief – that person or group is supposed to help me advance my career, right?

But what the research shows is more nuanced. Click; read the quote.

Mentoring networks that individuals assemble themselves are associated with better long-term career outcomes that meet that individual's own goals.

Top-down mentoring, such as mentors assigned by an organization, do a good job with orienting people to the norms of that specific workplace and helping them meet short-term goals that are defined by the organization – for example, successfully pass a mid-tenure review.

So for this belief, the question really is, whose goals are you trying to achieve? Your own goals, or the ones your institution defines for you? For the rest of this closing, we'll be focusing on mentoring that helps you meet your own goals.

Notice that all of these misconceptions use the language and mindset of scarcity and

constraint. In an apprenticeship model, maybe there are limitations on how many experts are available to train apprentices, but we don't need the apprenticeship model to learn from and support students and fellow professionals. So how do we get started building those relationships?

> “Focus on *what* you need, before thinking about *who* can meet that need.”
>
> (Glessmer et al, 2015, p. 121)

There is a 2015 paper by Mirjam Glessmer and her colleagues in the Earth Science Women’s Network called “Taking ownership of your mentoring” – highly recommended.

This piece of advice from the paper is excellent, I think – read the quote.

This is backwards from how many one-on-one mentoring relationships are formed, especially in relationships created by organizations – “Here’s your mentor; now go figure out what they can do for you.”

We’re going to use this what-then-who approach in the next two sections.

With that advice in mind, let’s get into part 2 and reflect on what we need.

We're starting here with some possible areas for mentoring and examples within those areas. These aren't prescriptive; they're here to help us keep evolving our understanding of what we can get from mentoring relationships.

This set of slides and their content are based on mentoring workshops offered by the Earth Science Women's Network and PROGRESS (PROmoting Geoscience Research, Education, and SuccesS), as well as the Glessmer paper.

An obvious possible area for mentoring is Getting your work done – this is fundamental to us being able to do our jobs. Here are some possible examples for mentoring in this area; I'm going to quickly define these as they appear in the Glessmer paper:

- Professional development: the people who help you gain skills, maybe in your specific responsibilities, but also in broader areas like public speaking, management, conflict resolution
- Intellectual community: the people you can share ideas with, expect honest feedback, and trust that they won't laugh or steal your ideas
- Accountability: people who will check on your progress on a task, such as a writing buddy or exercise buddy

Another obvious possible area for mentoring is Career advancement – this is often an area that gets all the attention in traditional mentor/mentee relationships. Again, the definitions of these examples come from the Glessmer paper:

- Sponsorship: the people who help your career take off – they lobby for you and mention your name to others with power
- Access to opportunities: the people who pass the ball to you, letting you know about upcoming opportunities
- Substantive feedback: this is the "classic" organization-assigned mentoring relationship – navigating your institution, progressing in your career stage, choosing publication outlets
- Role models: people whose behavior we want to emulate in different areas - examples are work/life balance, productivity, diplomacy, leadership

Areas for mentoring

Well-being

Safe space

Emotional support

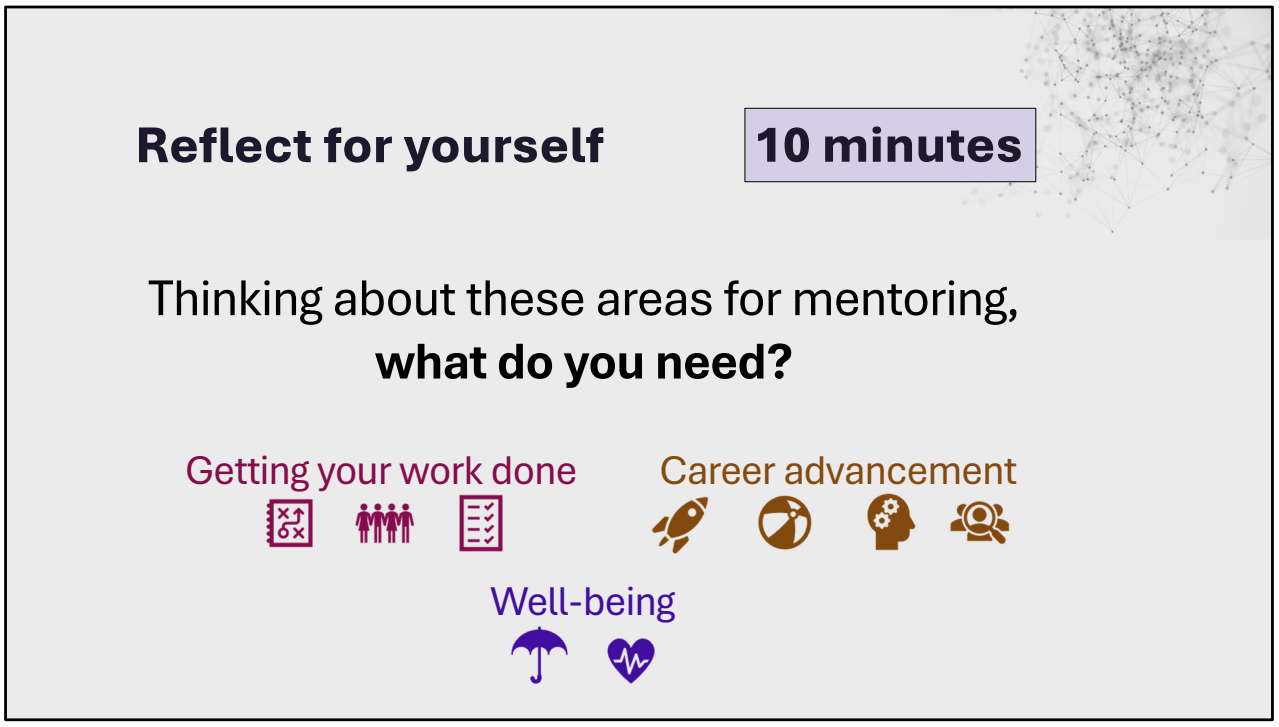
Earth Science Women's Network

PROGRESS PROmoting Geoscience Research, Education, and SuccesS

(Glessmer et al, 2015)

Finally, a not-so-obvious possible area for mentoring is Well-being – this area seldom gets a lot of attention when we think of mentoring relationships, but it is so important. Again, the definitions of these examples come from the Glessmer paper:

- Safe space: people to whom you can vent without judgment or blowback. Choose these people carefully if this isn't their professional role such as an ombuds or a professional coach.
- Emotional support: people you can share your emotions with, such as family members, friends, or a therapist



These possible areas and examples for mentoring are our framework for reflection – getting your work done, career advancement, and well-being.

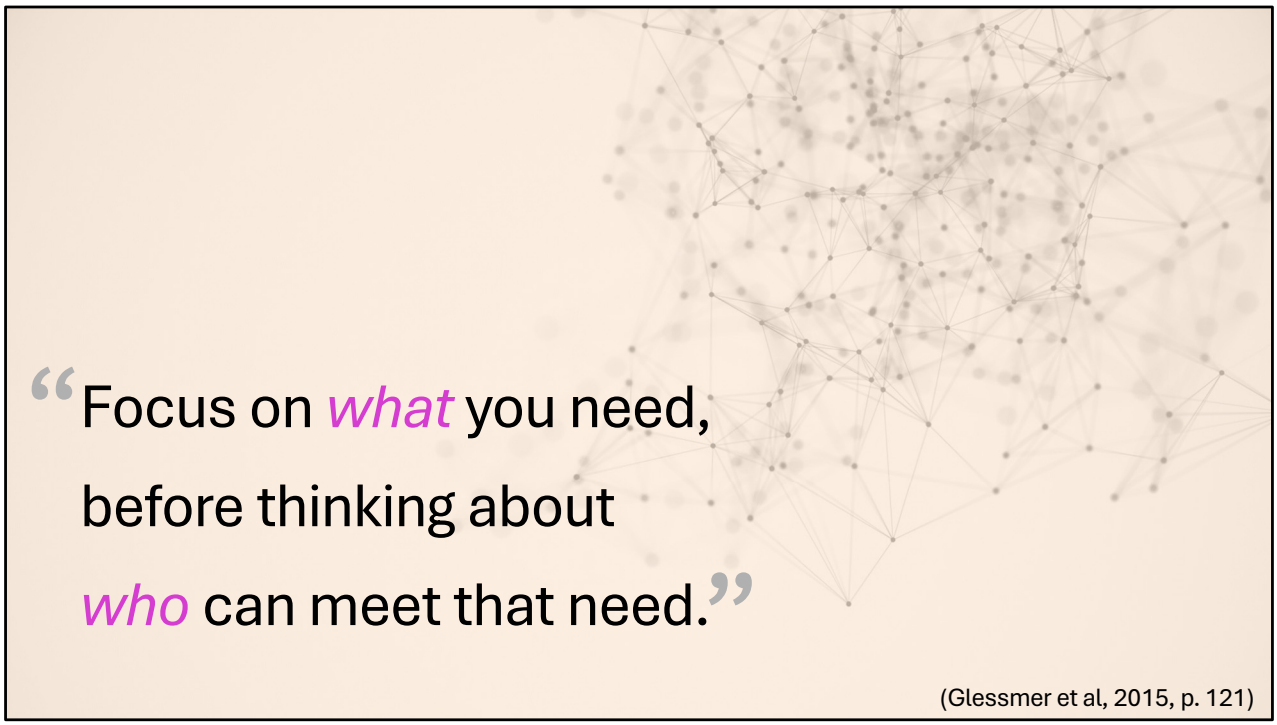
We're going to take some time to freewrite about what we need from mentoring relationships.

(freewriting – timed writing for yourself to a prompt; if you get stuck, "nothing to write" until you get unstuck. Pen/paper or computer; it's up to you)

There's no need to address every area or every example – focus on what speaks to you.

If you're having trouble thinking about what you need, you might try a persona exercise where you assume the persona of one of your mentors (real or imagined) – what would that person say that you needed?

I'll keep time and give you a 30 second heads-up.

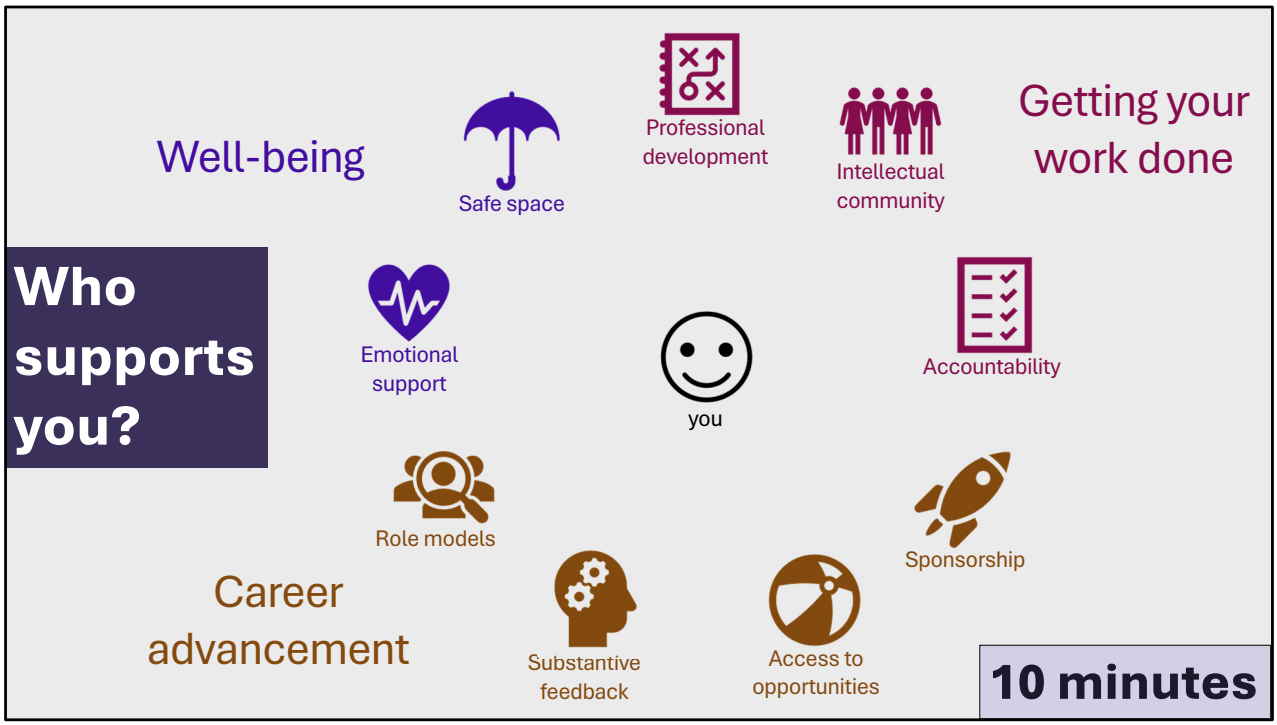


With hopefully a better sense of what you might need, let’s come back to this advice from the Glessmer paper – now it’s time to focus on who can meet that need.

Part 3

Mapping your mentoring network

We’re going to do this by mapping our mentoring networks



Let's take an initial pass at identifying mentoring relationships that you already have. You have a handout that shows two different ways of contemplating these questions – Who supports you? In what area(s)?

This will take 10 minutes. On your handout, write in the names of people who already support you in any of these areas, or other areas that are relevant to you. Don't limit your list to colleagues. Friends, family, and others from your personal life all count, too.
You can do this in the network circle or the table – whichever format works better for your brain.

It's okay to keep coming up with people later on, as these ideas sink in for you. It's normal for our mentoring relationships to evolve over time.

Discuss with others

15 minutes

Turn to a partner at your table. Take turns discussing these questions:

- Where are the gaps in your network?
- Are these gaps in areas where you need support?
- Are there individuals you're overusing?

In the mentor mapping exercise, you may have seen gaps in your network, and/or you may have noticed the same name or names coming up over and over.

Now it's time to discuss what you found on your map. Find someone at your table, or at a different table, if you prefer, to partner with. Take turns discussing these questions about your mentoring networks:

Where are the gaps in your network? Are the gaps areas where you need support?

Are there individuals you're overusing? These are people whose names appear over and over. Remember that no one mentor or mentoring relationship can support you in every way, and as a mentor, you should not be expected to support an individual in every way that they need. No unicorns!

I will tell you when half the time has elapsed so you can switch who is talking, and give you a minute or so heads up when time is almost up.

Fill the gaps

"...mentorship is a bidirectional activity..."

Everyone in your network has their own network.

(Montgomery, 2017, p. 7; Glessmer et al, 2015)

If you have gaps that you need to fill or people that you are overusing and need to relieve, the natural question is, How do I do that?

There are a lot of specific suggestions in your handout on the first page of the "Who supports you?" handout, under the heading "Filling the gaps in your network"; these are all from the Glessmer paper and Earth Science Women's Network mentoring workshop. A lot of these suggestions come down to what we saw from Beronda Montgomery earlier in the closing – "mentorship is a bidirectional activity." Offering support to people in mentoring areas where you have something to offer will often result in receiving support from those people in areas where they have something to offer. Maintaining a broad mentoring network will make it easier for you to get the support you need when you need it. The Glessmer paper puts it more succinctly: "Networking is built on reciprocity" (Glessmer et al, 2015, p. 127).

click

The other important thing to remember is that everyone in your network has their own network. You can learn about additional support through people who already support you, and through people who you support.

Remember everyone you could see in yesterday's "data professionals" lineup? All of those people – and all of the people in this room, really – are potential nodes in your network, either through individual contact or more general connections like this conference, other conferences, and listservs.

Special thanks

- Dr. Amy Burgin, University of Kansas
- Earth Science Women's Network
  - https://eswnonline.org/
- PROGRESS
  (PROmoting Geoscience Research, Education, and SuccesS)
  - https://progress.colostate.edu/

Before we go to discussion and questions in the whole room, I want to acknowledge out loud some people in my network and in their networks that made this closing session possible:

Dr. Amy Burgin, University of Kansas

Earth Science Women's Network, which created the original Mentor Mapping workshop

PROGRESS, which applies practices from ESWN to mentoring undergraduates in STEM fields.

MDLS is where we practice. We've had opportunities throughout the three days to practice making connections – I want to encourage you to keep practicing during lunch and when you get home!

Citations

Adan, E. (ca. 1914). *Apprentice* [Photograph of a painting]. Library of Congress, Washington, D.C., United States. https://lccn.loc.gov/2002709641

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Montgomery, B. L. (2017). Mapping a mentoring roadmap and developing a supportive network for strategic career advancement. *SAGE Open*, *7*(2). https://doi.org/10.1177/2158244017710288

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