



RETHINKING MENTORSHIP

A practical, evolving workshop on building reciprocal,
academic partnerships

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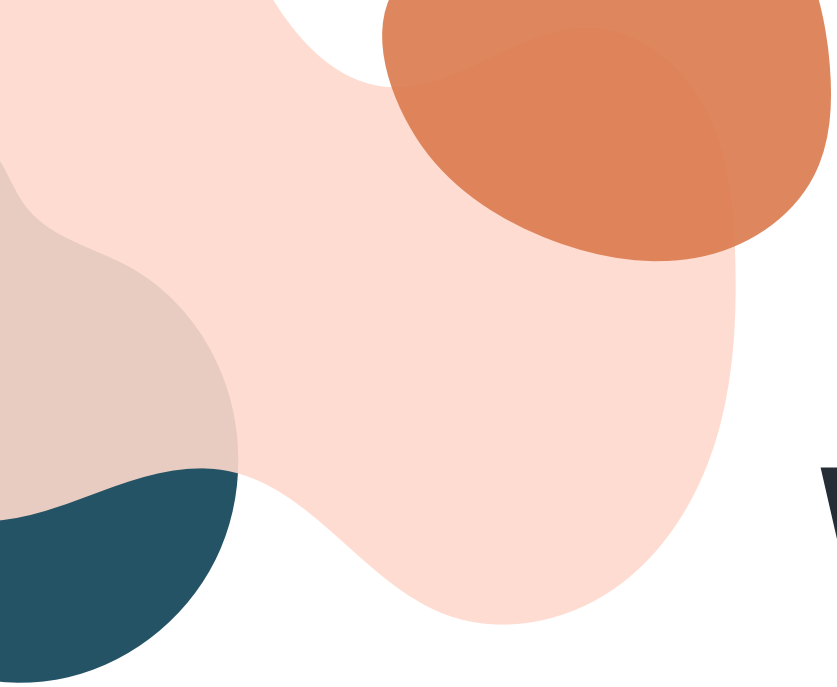
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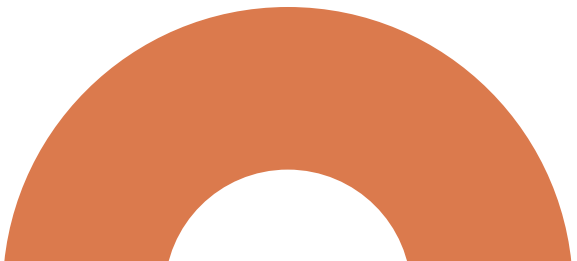
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WELCOME & STORYTIME

- **Carrie's story**... started as a librarian in April 2019
- **Rachel's story**... started as a librarian in September 2024



WHAT WE'LL COVER

- Welcome & Storytime
 - Examining Mentorship Models
 - Finding & Facilitating Mentors
 - Activities
 - Takeaways
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TRADITIONAL MENTORSHIP

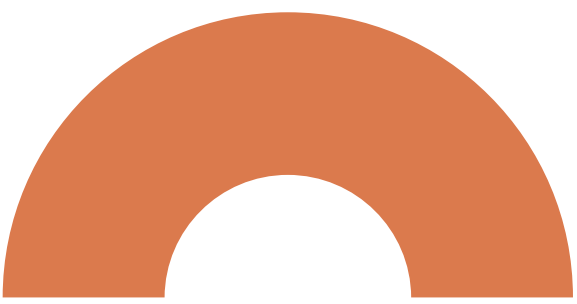
Merriam-Webster states:

MENTOR (noun): a person who gives help and advice to a less experienced and often younger person especially in a professional or academic context.

*“...a good **mentor** can model for you the things you need to do to learn and grow, what battles to fight, what steps to be taken...”*

- Judy Rosemarin

(Merriam-Webster, n.d., “mentor”)



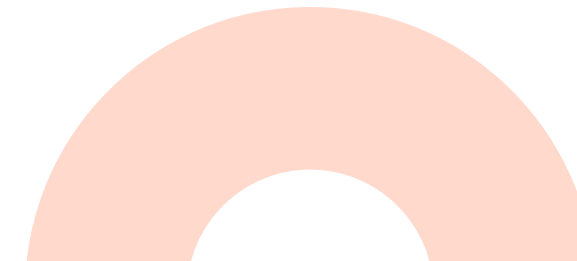
COLLABORATIVE/RECIPROCAL MENTORSHIP

Some evolving definitions....

- From (Stanford Medicine, n.d.) = “**Peer mentors** are individuals at **similar career stages or near-peers...** (are) mentors who had successfully advanced in some measure beyond the career path of the mentee...”
- From the (Defense Civilian Personnel Advisory Service [DCPAS], n.d.) = **collaborative mentoring happens in a group...** peer mentoring is with an individual in the same grade/org./job... and purpose is to **support colleagues** in their professional development, **facilitate mutual learning**, & build a **sense of community...**
- From the (Case Management Society of America [CMSA], n.d.) = **Reverse mentorship** is collaborative... **early career** pros share **insights and knowledge** with more **seasoned colleagues**.

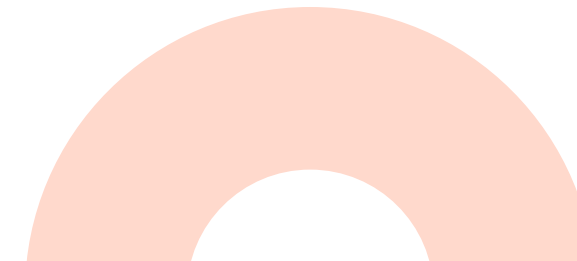


WHAT'S YOUR EXPERIENCE?

- **Question 1:** What is a word or phrase that comes to mind when you hear the term “traditional mentorship?”
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WHAT'S YOUR EXPERIENCE?

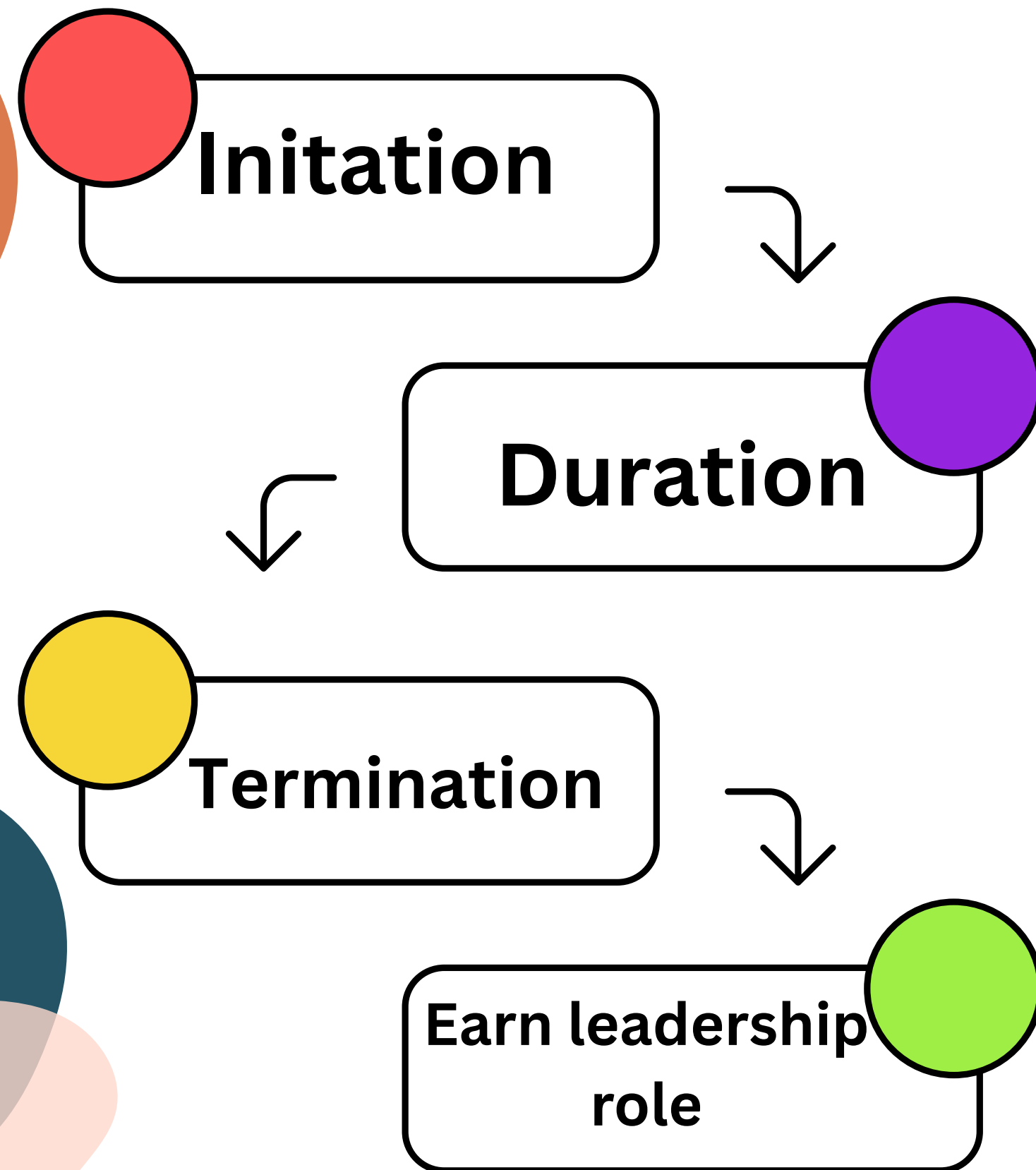
- **Question 2:** What is a word or phrase that traditional mentorship often misses?
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TRADITIONAL MENTORSHIP

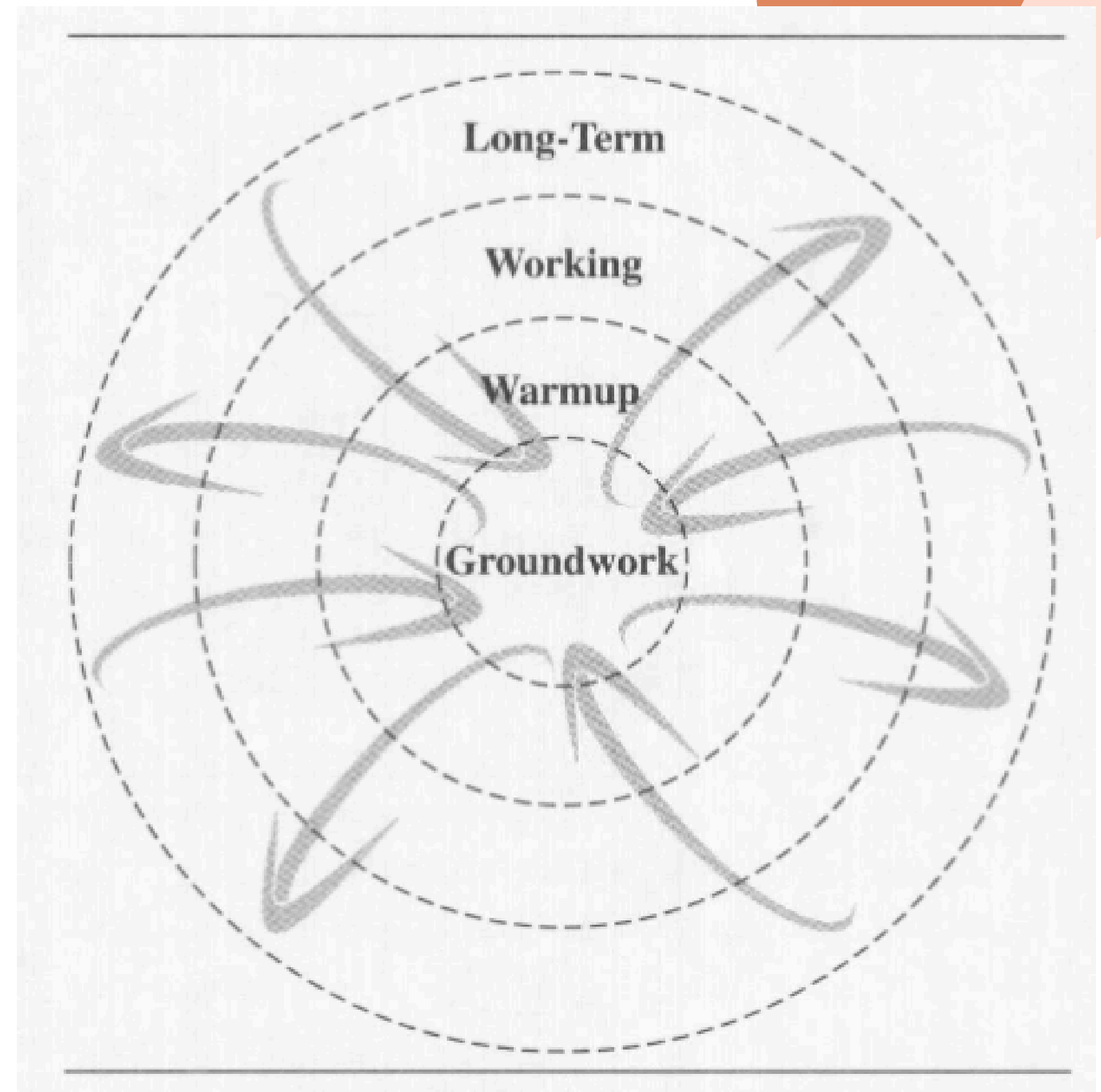
- Hierarchical
- Often one-directional
- Expertise = fixed
- Formal mentorship program
- Pressure to perform competence
- Empty vessel theory
- Fear of vulnerability
- Gatekeeping

RECIPROCAL/ COLLABORATIVE MENTORSHIP

- Shared leadership
- Two-way learning
- Expertise is always evolving
- Space for uncertainty
- Supporting collegiate growth
- Visible design/processing
- Encouraging personal strengths



Merriam & Thomas, 1986

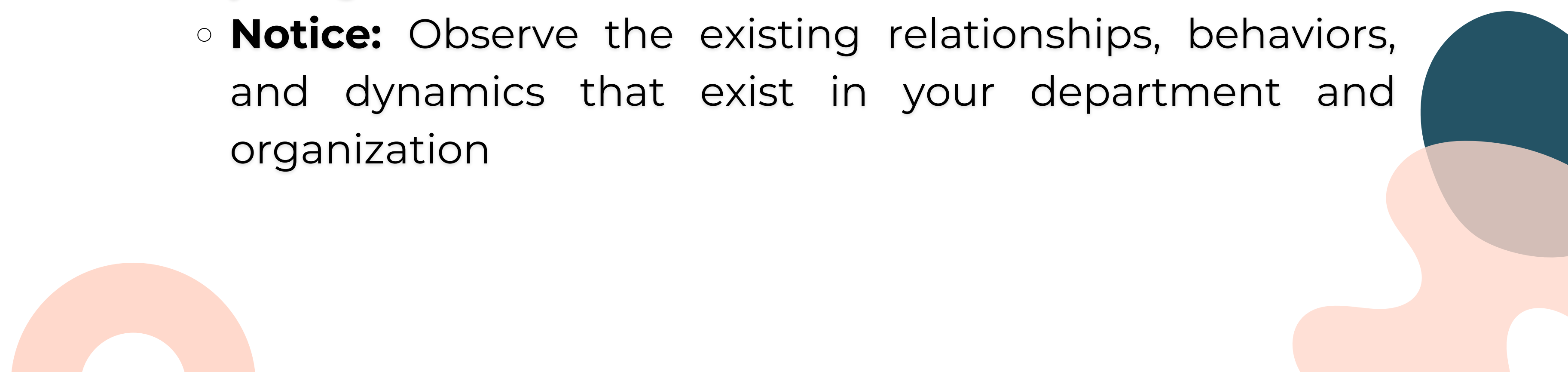


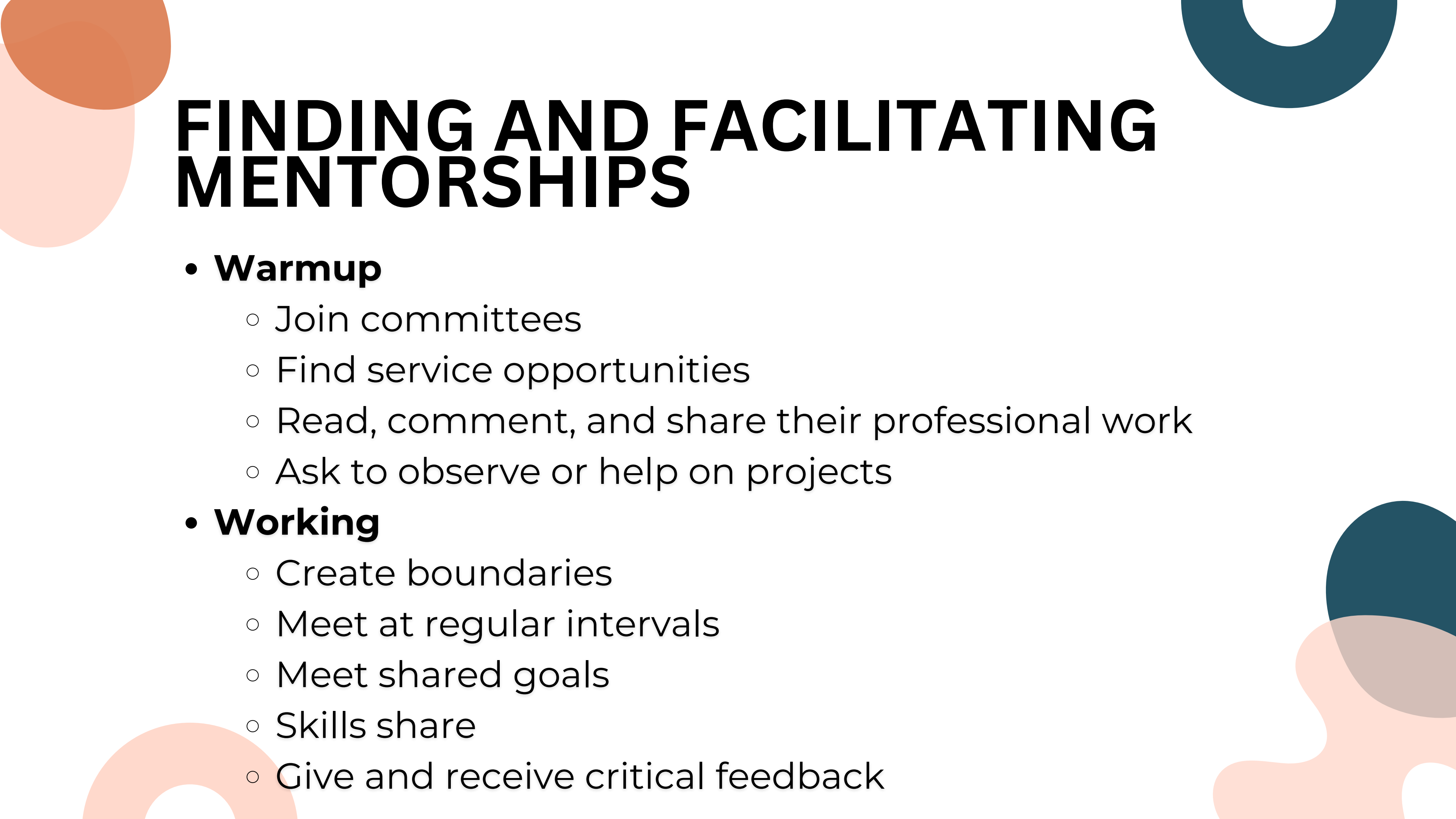
Kochan & Trimble, 2000



FINDING AND FACILITATING MENTORSHIPS

- **Groundwork: Reflect & Notice**

- **Reflect:** Consider the qualities you value in a potential relationships, the qualities you could contribute, and your goals
 - **Notice:** Observe the existing relationships, behaviors, and dynamics that exist in your department and organization
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FINDING AND FACILITATING MENTORSHIPS

- **Warmup**

- Join committees
- Find service opportunities
- Read, comment, and share their professional work
- Ask to observe or help on projects

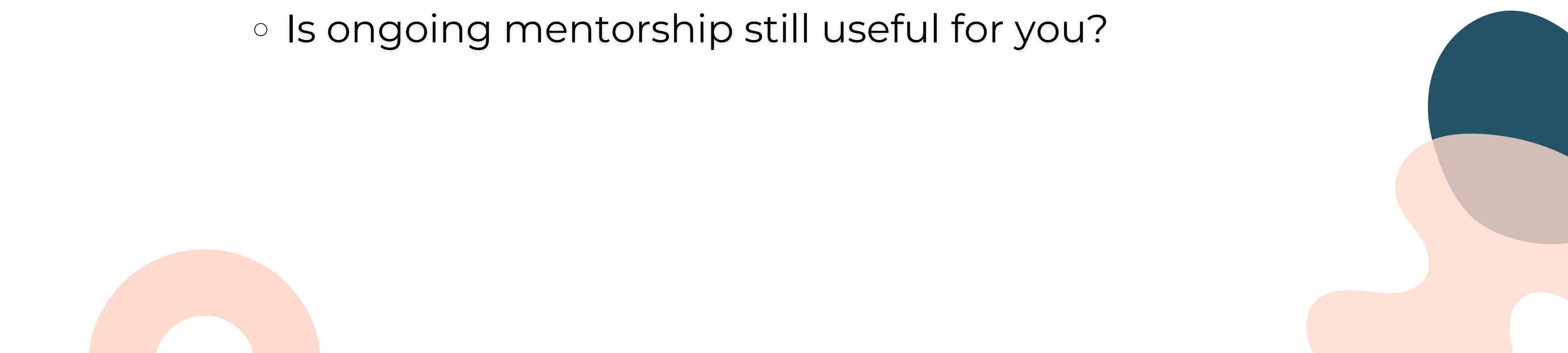
- **Working**

- Create boundaries
- Meet at regular intervals
- Meet shared goals
- Skills share
- Give and receive critical feedback



FINDING AND FACILITATING MENTORSHIPS

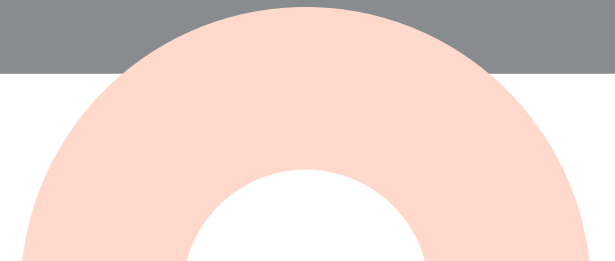
- **Long-Term**

- Have you facilitated respect and trust on both ends?
 - Is ongoing mentorship still useful for you?
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REFLECT ON YOUR MENTORSHIP GOALS



- What **qualities** and **skills** do you bring to a reciprocal mentorship?
 - What **qualities** and **skills** are you looking for in a reciprocal mentorship partner?
 - **How** might those qualities manifest in your work environment?
 - What **professional skills** or **organizational goals** do you want to work on?
 - If you don't have a reciprocal partnership in mind, **where** might you meet someone? What might their job title be?
- 



PRACTICES WE'VE FOUND MEANINGFUL

Intentional Practices

- Building **trust over time** = safety
- Recognizing that **collaboration grows** over time
- **Prioritizing collegiality over competition**
- **Respecting differences** in experience without centering power
- **Fostering** individual strengths

Safe Feedback

- Naming **uncertainty** openly
 - Assuming **positive intentions** in misunderstandings
 - **Transparency** through problems
 - Being **open to growth** through thoughtful feedback
 - Talking through **discomfort**
- 



MINI-MENTORSHIP AGREEMENTS

What would you want to agree too in a short, shared 3 statement agreement?

Examples: We will....

- **share leadership** when possible
 - **ask questions** without judgement
 - **support** each other's growth opportunities
 - **communicate honestly with kindness**
 - **value each other's** time, labor, and contributions
 - **talk openly** about authorship, ownership, & recognition
 - **advocate for each other** when opportunities arise
- 



KEY TAKEAWAYS

- Mentorship doesn't have to be hierarchical or traditional
- Collaborative mentorship can offer unique opportunities for growth
- Mentorship starts by courageously reaching out
- Mini-mentorship agreements can turn intention into practice



Questions?

Please feel free to reach out to either of us with **questions, ideas,** or interest in **collaborative mentorship research in academia.** We want to learn more, too!

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- Coulter, J. (2025, November 3). ***Reverse mentorship: Learning from the next generation***. Case Management Society of America.
<https://tinyurl.com/5amcj8ba>
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ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Selected Articles:

- Cordell, E., & Luke, S. M. (2024). **Answering the call for community: Establishing a collaborative peer support system for faculty librarians.** *Journal of Library Administration*, 64(7), 767-785. <https://doi.org/10.1080/01930826.2024.2388493>
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- Gerke, J., Couture, J., & Knievel, J. (2023). **Once you get tenure, You're on your own: Mentoring and career support for mid-career academic librarians.** *College & Research Libraries*, 84(6), 843-861. <https://doi.org/10.5860/crl.84.6.843>
- Hansen, M., Le-May Sheffield, S., Santucci, A., & van der Rijst, R. (2025). **Transcending hierarchies: Mentorship as reciprocal growth.** *International Journal for Academic Development*, 30(2), 137-142. <https://doi.org/10.1080/1360144X.2025.2495377>
- Kochan, F. K., & Trimble, S. B. (2000). **From mentoring to co-mentoring: Establishing collaborative relationships.** *Theory into Practice*, 39(1), 20-28. https://doi.org/10.1207/s15430421tip3901_4
- McGowan, B. S., & Dawkins, V. B. (2025). **Bridging the leadership gap: The role of mentorship in advancing African American librarians in health sciences.** *The Journal of Academic Librarianship*, 51(1), Article 103000. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.acalib.2024.103000>
- Mudau, T. J., & Sikhwari, M. G. (2025). **Advancing women into leadership positions in South African educational institutions: The role of education and mentorship.** *Journal of Education and Learning Technology*, 6(4), 189-202. <https://doi.org/10.38159/jelt.2025645>
- Roubinov, D. S., Accurso, E. C., Folk, J. B., & Haack, L. M. (2023). **Peer mentorship: An underrecognized tool to faculty success.** *Academic psychiatry*, 47(1), 109-110. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s40596-022-01676-3>

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- NCFDD. (n.d.). **Redefining mentorship in higher education** [White paper]. <https://tinyurl.com/bde4r8am>
- PLD Mentoring Software. (n.d.). **Reciprocal mentoring** [Short guide]. <https://tinyurl.com/525fh7ut>
- UC Santa Cruz. (n.d.). **Peer mentorship resources.** The Teaching and Learning Center. <https://tlc.ucsc.edu/mentoring/peer-mentorship/>
- National Institute for Health and Care Research. (n.d.). **Reciprocal mentoring** [pilot framework]. <https://tinyurl.com/3rhrwjhp>