What problem is this workshop designed to fix?

When students and postdocs talked in counseling appointments about their issues/difficult situations with their research mentors, we noticed three things. Trainees…

1. **Didn't look for red flags**: Trainees were focused on pedigree, reputation, and presumed opportunity that they failed to seriously consider the possibility of relationship problems. They also thought hard work would overcome any issue.

![Look for it](image1)

2. **Didn't recognize red flags**: Unable to define what factors would be considered red flags in a mentoring relationship.

![Recognize it](image2)

3. **Denied/Dismissed red flags**: Their continued desire for the opportunity and/or concern about how to deal with the situation made trainees minimize or hide a problem, which frequently continued to degrade.

![Manage it](image3)
Learning Outcomes:
By the end of this workshop, and will be able to

1. Define mentorship and the lifecycle of a mentorship relationship
2. Articulate the 7 supervisory responsibilities of a research mentor
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4. Describe strategies to seek support

4 foundational things you need to know to manage up effectively

Your Relationship With Your Research Mentor is...

“a complex and multidimensional process through which emerging scientists acquire the:

1. norms and standards,
2. values and attitudes, and
3. knowledge, skills, and behaviors...

to develop into successful independent researchers”

Managing Your Relationship With Your Research Mentor

Think of a memorable mentor or memorable moment when you are mentored... what did your mentor do or say that made them memorable to you?

“a complex and multidimensional process through which emerging scientists acquire the:

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The Life Cycle of a mentorship relationship is

- Establishing a relationship with a mentor
- Maintaining a relationship with a mentor
- Ending a relationship with a mentor
- Self Reflecting & Identifying what type of mentor you need
- Finding a mentor

A Constant Gardener: Regularly assessing your mentor and the health of your relationship

as you identify another developmental goal, the cycle begins again
Managing Your Relationship With Your Research Mentor

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Recognize it

4 foundational things you need to know to manage up effectively

PhD advisors/PIs have a supervisory component to their mentoring role; You need to monitor your relationship through that lens

Supervisors are the people…who monitor and regulate employees in their performance of assigned or delegated tasks.

Supervisors are usually authorized to recommend and/or effect hiring, disciplining, promoting, punishing, rewarding, and other associated activities regarding the employees in their departments.

* Supervisor definition source: http://www.businessdictionary.com/definition/supervisor.html
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* Supervisor definition source: http://www.businessdictionary.com/definition/supervisor.html

Frequently, the problems that students and postdocs reported were supervisory problems.

The supervisor has authority to execute or assign ALL these tasks (in the lab).

1. Set expectations/Take baseline assessment
2. Delegate/teach/train effectively
3. Give kudos and corrective feedback continuously
4. Recognize progress & reward achievement
5. Articulate & enforce consequences
6. Manage conflict
7. Provide support

PhD advisors/PIs have a supervisory component to their mentoring role

Which means that you, emerging scientist, need to regularly assess the functionality of your mentor and the health of your relationship through a supervisory lens every 1-3 months.
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### 7 Supervisory Responsibilities

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### Learning Outcomes:

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Managing Your Relationship With Your Research Mentor

20 + 1 Questions to Manage Your Relationship: Assessing Your Research Mentor’s Supervisory Ability and the Functionality of Your Relationship

Effective supervision has been positively correlated with productivity and high morale. Since part of your research mentor’s role includes supervisory responsibilities, one way to evaluate the health of your relationship with your research mentor is to assess your relationship every 3-6 months through the lens of their supervisory role. Other than hiring/fitting, supervisors have seven main responsibilities, listed below. If you rate less than a 7 in any area, it can help to reach out to other mentors for perspective and guidance. They can help you develop strategies to proactively fill the gaps in your training or address issues in your relationship and achieve your goals.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Criteria</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I can articulate my mentor’s performance/productivity expectations for me</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I can describe my mentor’s conduct/behavioral expectations for me in the lab</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My mentor’s conduct/behavior towards me is appropriate/professional</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My mentor regularly gives me feedback</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My mentor acknowledges my progress towards stated goals</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My mentor has articulated clear consequences to me if I do not meet performance/productivity expectations</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>My mentor has articulated clear consequences to me if I do not meet behavioral/conduct expectations</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My mentor fairly enforces poor performance and behavioral/conduct consequences with me</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My mentor fairly enforces poor performance and behavioral/conduct consequences with others in the lab</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My mentor has demonstrated an ability to effectively manage conflict in the lab</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My mentor has demonstrated an ability to effectively manage conflict between us</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My mentor has offered me support when I face challenges</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My mentor’s actively supports my training goals</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My mentor clearly supports my career goals</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

20 + 1 Questions to Manage Your Relationship: Assessing Your Research Mentor’s Supervisory Ability and the Functionality of Your Relationship

Any area you rate yourself a 8 or above:

You’re doing great! Celebrate it!

Any area you rate yourself between a 4-7:

Might need some attention. Watch it.

Any area you rate yourself between a 1 - 3

Needs attention in the next 1-3 months. Manage it.
Learning Outcomes:
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Hey! Remember when we said this?

Supervisory issues with your research mentor are complex situations. A ‘red flag’ approach is one way to manage complex situations or systems.

1. A red flag is a sign something is wrong.
2. Many complex things are successfully managed by focusing on the red flags.
3. When you see a red flag: 1) action is required, 2) time is of the essence & 3) it usually involves outside help.

Pediatric physiology & disease states

Cars

Physics of an internal combustion engine

Professional relationships with power differentials

Babies

Any Work Situation

Dissect

Assess

Fix

Why not just figure it out yourself?

Because your situation might involve issues in multiple areas that will require a case management approach (conservative interventions, frequent assessment, close monitoring) – and possibly clout – over a period of time.

1. Not clear on expectations
2. Conflict with someone in lab
3. You’d like more feedback
4. Disagreement about readiness to advance to candidacy

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Mentors, Advocates and Allies, oh my!

Mentors
- Individuals who have tangibly helped your advance your work or your career
  - Anyone who has mentored you in some other capacity
  - Previous advisors
  - Faculty
  - Anyone who ever wrote you a letter of recommendation
  - Program coordinators, (if you’re a McNair scholar, etc.)

Advocates
- Individuals or offices specifically tasks with supporting you
  - Dean of Students
  - Department chairs
  - Student Health
  - Office of the Ombuds
  - Care Advocate, etc.
  - Student leaders

Allies
- Individuals who would be familiar and sympathetic to your situation
  - Faculty in your/other departments
  - Staff
  - Department administrator
  - Fellow students
  - Individuals you connected with at a conference
You might wonder who it is safe to talk to. Scope it out!

It's absolutely okay to ask and clarify how someone can help you and the level of confidentiality they can offer, before you disclose anything.

You're going to have to talk to someone.....

Mentors, Advocates and Allies, oh my!

You can use the third person until you feel safe.

Not: “How can you help me, I am experiencing this”

But: “How do you help students experiencing this?”

“What advice do you give to someone whose advisor might be sitting on their paper?”

“Ask for a friend. I want to help them, but I’ve never had this happen before”

It's absolutely okay to ask and clarify how someone can help you and the level of confidentiality they can offer, before you disclose anything.
Mentors, Advocates and Allies, oh my!

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Not: “How can you help me, I am experiencing this”

But: “How do you help students experiencing this?”

It’s absolutely okay to ask and clarify how someone can help you and the level of confidentiality they can offer, before you disclose anything.

“Can you talk a little about about how you (your office) has supported students/postdocs who are experiencing challenges in their labs?”

“Asking for a friend”

“No, I’m just information gathering.”

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Mentors, Advocates and Allies, oh my!

Situation:
You haven’t seen too much of your mentor – they’ve been busy. But yesterday they told you you weren’t meeting their expectations for a while now and your work isn’t ‘sufficiently rigorous’. You have a meeting scheduled next week.

1. Don’t tell story chronologically, unless asked to do so.
2. **Pick an area instead and identify the main issue** (*meeting expectations*)
3. Rather than accusations, focus on information gathering
4. **Ask for advice, perspective**…particularly how others have handled such situations

How to focus on getting help?
Give them the abstract first:

“I’m asking people I respect for help in skilfully respond to some feedback.”

“My advisor just told me in passing that I was not meeting expectations and ‘we should talk.’”

“I was wondering about how you would advise students to prepare for such a meeting.”

Mentors, Advocates and Allies, oh my!

Situation:
A year ago, your research mentor said earlier that you would be first author on a paper for a project you took over from a postdoc. But last week in lab meeting, she announced that the postdoc would be first author.

1. Don’t tell story chronologically, unless asked to do so.
2. **Pick an area instead and identify the main issue** (*rewarding achievement*)
3. Rather than accusations, focus on information gathering
4. **Ask for advice, perspective**…particularly how others have handled such situations

How to focus on getting help?
Give them the abstract first:

“I realize I’m unfamiliar with the process of deciding who is first author.”

“I would appreciate your perspective on what criteria should shape students’ thinking on deciding authorship.”
Mentors, Advocates and Allies, oh my!

**Situation:**

A year ago, your research mentor said earlier that you would be first author on a paper for a project you took over from a postdoc.

But last week in lab meeting, she announced that the postdoc would be first author.

**Find time to meet:**

“I’d appreciate your advice about a situation in a collaboration I’m a part of.”

“I’ve discussed it with my advisor, but I would also appreciate an outside perspective.

Could we talk for about 15 minutes?”

---

**How to focus on getting help?**

Give them the abstract first:

“Thank you for meeting with me.

“I’ve been part of a collaboration with a postdoc in my lab for the past 6 months. There was a verbal agreement between all parties that I would be first author based on my contribution. However, yesterday in a meeting, my PI suggested that the postdoc would be first author.

“I’m not sure how to approach this. I’m looking for advice, because I want to respond professionally.”

---

**How people can help**

Because your situation might involve issues in multiple areas that will require a case management approach (conservative interventions, frequent assessment, close monitoring) – and possibly clout – over a period of time.
Learning Outcomes:
We're at the end of this workshop, and you can now:

1. Define mentorship and the lifecycle of a mentorship relationship

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Your relationship with your research mentor is "a complex and multidimensional process through which emerging scientists acquire the norms and standards, values and attitudes, and knowledge, skills, and behaviors to develop into successful independent researchers."

Anything in the red zone is a red flag, and you might need to manage up

Find Mentors, Advocates and Allies: Your framing is one of a request for advice and mentorship: "How do things work here and how have others handled this?"