

Faculty Supporting Faculty: The Mentoring Model Workshop

Task 1: Use active listening to set agreed-upon goals & milestones, clarify expectations

Background: "Respectful, active listening" has been cited as the premier mentoring art. You are no doubt familiar with the hallmarks of active listening: engagement with what the other person is saying, questioning for clarification, refraining from giving opinions or suggestions, reflecting back what you hear, exhibiting body language that indicates attention and interest. Active listening is not a discussion, but a prerequisite step to meaningful discussions.

Why now? Of course the mentoring relationship involves freewheeling discussions, mentor guidance, and so forth, but active listening has a special role in the early phases of the relationship, where an immediate back-and-forth discussion may cause the mentoree to hold back or shade their message to the mentor's reaction, and where mentors may be quick to assume they understand what their mentorees have in mind.

Active listening is also a real aid to the empathetic understanding that helps get the mentoring relationship off to a successful start. In this task, the mentor does the listening, but it is at other times an equally important skill for the mentoree. In fact, when you get bogged down or feel off track, a few minutes of active listening can help get you back in synch.

This task has two parts:

Part 1, mentor and mentoree arriving at an agreed-upon, mutually-understood goal (in Individual Plan terms, an *Initiative*) that is part of the mentoree's Individual Plan. Here's where the mentor consciously applies active listening.

Part 2, mentor and mentoree working out milestones -- indicators of successful progress along the way -- and a general idea of how they will interact around them.

Part 1 - Format and Task:

Mentors and mentorees work in pairs. (If your actual mentoring colleague is not here, pair up with someone in the same role.)

3-4 minutes: Mentoree talks about a selected initiative from the 2001-2002 plan. What is it? Why is it important to you? What does it have to do with your larger direction and purposes? Mentor does not talk -- not even questions for clarification at this point. You can jot down a few notes, but generally try to stay with the mentoree, just listening (make eye contact, nod -- the usual.).

2-3 minutes: When the mentoree is done (or time is called), the mentor says, "Is there anything else?" giving the mentoree an opportunity to add, elaborate, qualify. Often the most important information comes out in this "Oh, yeah--" phase.

2-3 minutes: Mentor reflects back what you've heard, listing as specifically and precisely as possible what the mentoree said and, if you feel comfortable about it, any important feelings you picked up.

Mentoree listens, affirms or corrects, until there is a sense of common understanding, when the mentoree "signs off".

REPORTS: After you complete Part 2, mentors should be prepared to report their mentoree's goal, and a little of the background around it, to the group.

Task 1, Part 2: Mentor and mentoree block out milestones.

Format and Task: With your mentoring colleague, sketch out **milestones** -- indicators that things are proceeding successfully -- for at least 3 major checkpoints towards your initiative. Suggested times are 30 days, 90 days, and 6 months, but you may decide to use other intervals. Also discuss and jot down what help the mentoree would like, or the mentor would like to offer, towards the milestone. If there's help the mentoree needs that the mentor would find impractical to offer, the mentor can suggest an alternative. (Since our time is limited here, you may need to renegotiate some of these details later on.) The Notes column is for anything else worth noting that comes up in the discussion.

Milestone Worksheet

When	Milestone	Help Needed/Offered to Get There?	Notes
30 day check or			
90 day review or			
6 mo. evaluation or			

RESULTS: The mentoree should keep this worksheet; you may want to make a copy for the mentor.