

MORE WOMEN IN RESEARCH

'Learn and lead together'

Mentorship

***Module 1: Understanding
Mentoring Relationships***



UNDERSTAND • BUILD • SUSTAIN

Meaningful Mentoring Relationships for Research Excellence



***Purpose &
Potential***



***Types of
Mentorship***



***Finding the
Right Fit***



***Roles &
Responsibilities***



***Foundations for
Success***

MODULE 1 LEARNING OBJECTIVES

By the end of this module, you will be able to:

1. Define mentorship and distinguish it from other developmental support forms
2. Describe different types of mentorship relationships
3. Explain the roles and responsibilities of mentors and mentees
4. Identify when mentorship may be beneficial and what to look for in a mentor
5. Recognize the characteristics of effective mentorship
6. Assess whether a mentorship relationship is meeting its goals

REFLECTION

Who has influenced your journey?

Think about someone who has significantly influenced your academic, professional or personal development.

- What did they do that was helpful?
- How did they support your growth?
- What impact did they have on your career or confidence?

PEOPLE WHO HAVE INFLUENCED YOU

Were they a supervisor, sponsor,
coach, mentor, peer,
or something else?



WHAT IS MENTORSHIP?

Mentorship is a developmental relationship in which one person supports another person's personal, academic or professional growth through guidance, reflection, encouragement and shared experience.

Good Mentorship is

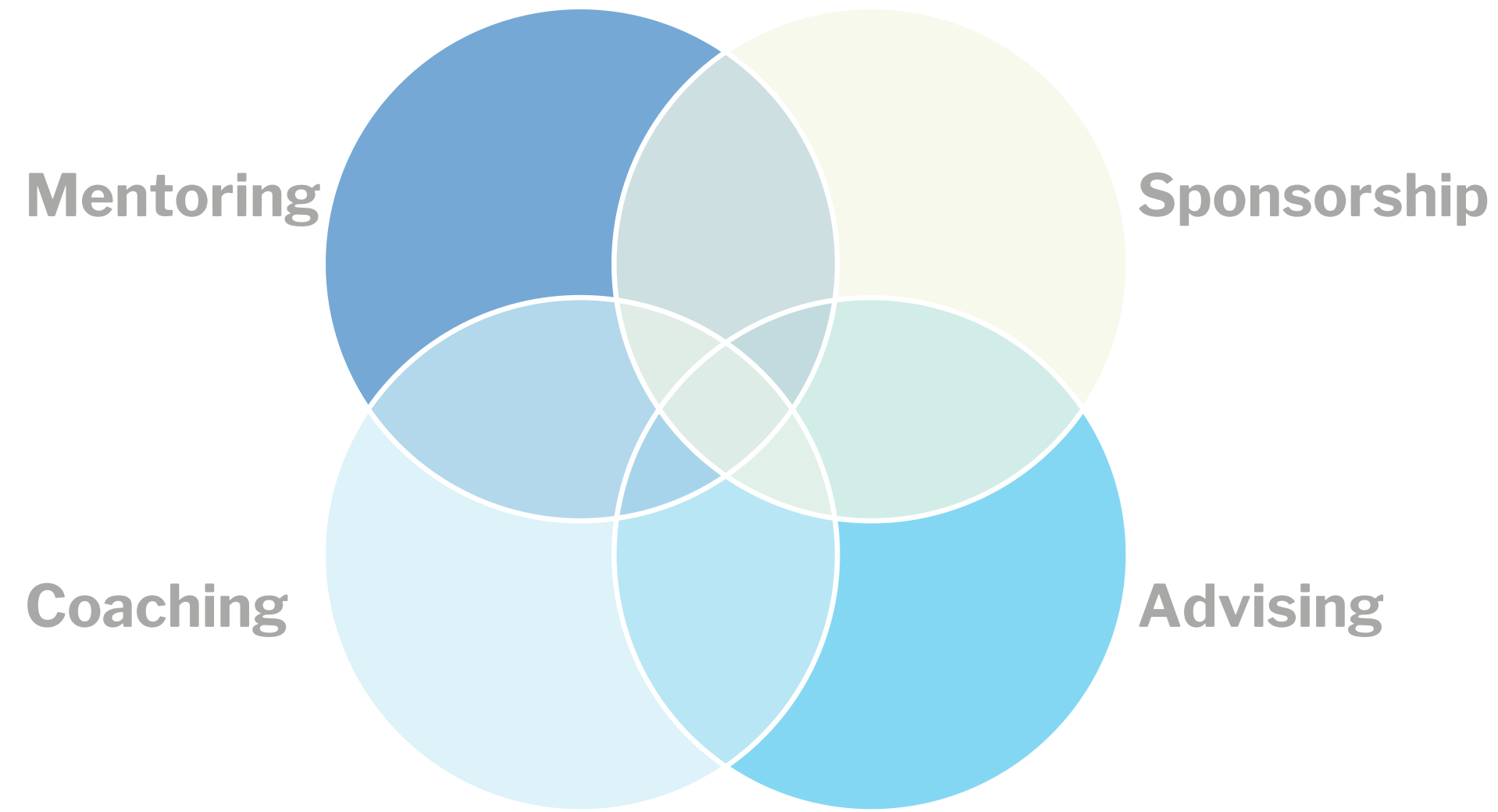
- **Voluntary** – both people chose to engage
- **Developmental** – focussed on long term growth, not just immediate tasks
- **Collaborative** – both mentor and mentee contribute
- **Built on trust** – honest communication and mutual respect are essential

Mentorship is a relationship that supports long-term development.

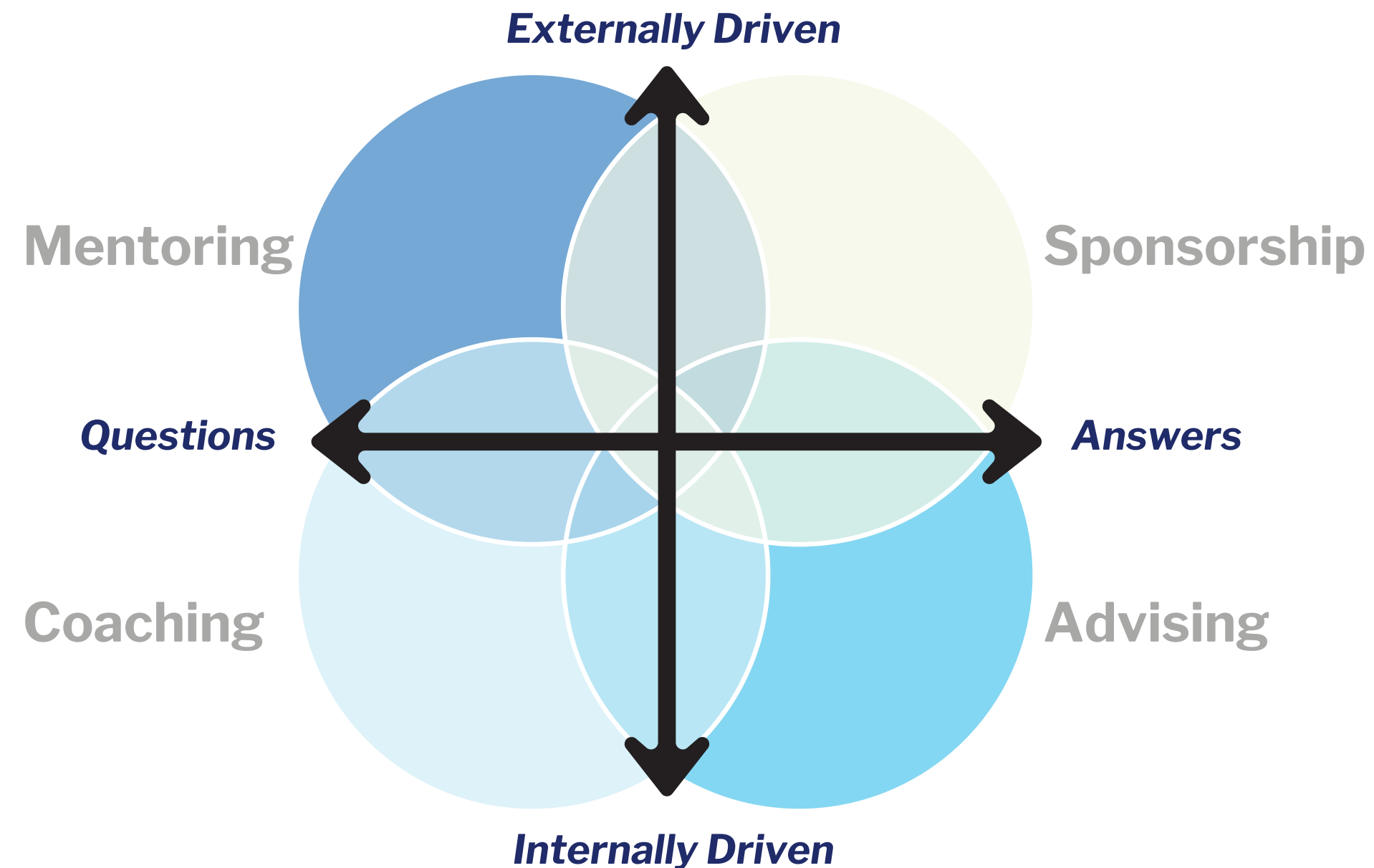
DIFFERENT TYPES OF DEVELOPMENTAL SUPPORT

	Supervisor/Advisor	Sponsor	Coach	Mentor
Primary Focus	Research training, academic progress & scholarly output	Career advancement, visibility & access to opportunities	Performance improvement, goal achievement, & behavioural change	Long-term personal, career, and professional development
Main Approach	Provides direction, instruction & evaluation	Advocates & creates opportunities	Helps you discover your own solutions through questioning, feedback and accountability.	Shares experience, perspective and guidance to support your long-term development.
Expertise	Yes subject matter expert	Usually senior & influential	Not necessarily	Similar experience
Typical Outcome	Successful research, degrees, publications, and academic competencies	Increased visibility, advancement, and access to influential networks	Improved performance, skills, and achievement of specific goals	Greater confidence, professional identity, & career growth
Summary	Trains & assesses you	Champions you	Challenges you	Guides you

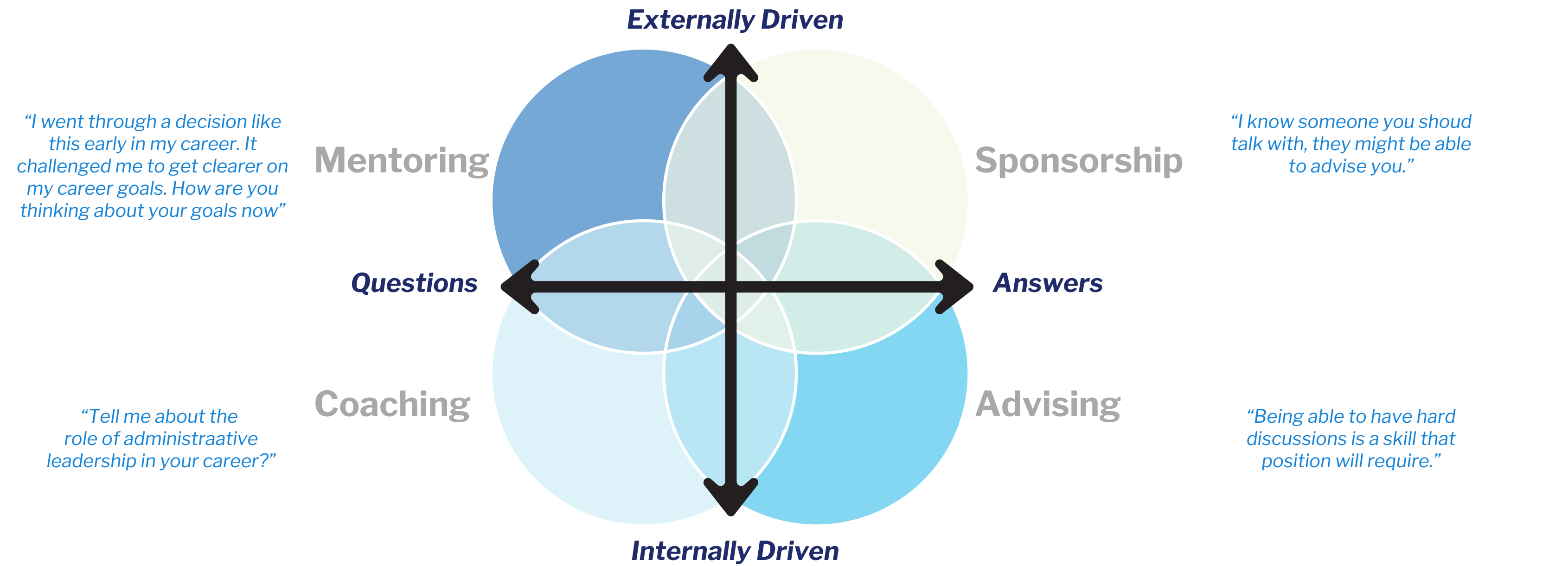
DIFFERENT TYPES OF DEVELOPMENTAL SUPPORT



DIFFERENT TYPES OF DEVELOPMENTAL SUPPORT



“I am thinking about applying for a leadership position that just opened up? What do you think?”



WHY MENTORSHIP MATTERS

Mentorship is not about having someone tell you what to do - it is about having someone who helps you learn, grow and navigate your career with greater confidence.

- Good mentorship complements—not replaces—formal supervision and training.
- A great mentor helps you get out of your own way and reach your potential.
- Sharing expertise, resources, and connections can break down barriers to access.
- Connecting with a great mentor can lead you to other great people, creating a ripple effect of access to knowledge and resources.

Mentorship helps researchers navigate opportunities, challenges and career growth with greater confidence.

MENTORSHIP FOR WOMEN RESEARCHERS

Women researchers may benefit from mentors who can help them:

- Navigate career transitions and competing responsibilities.
- Build confidence and professional identity.
- Expand professional networks and collaborations.
- Learn strategies for overcoming barriers and setbacks.
- Identify opportunities for leadership, funding and career progression.

Mentorship cannot remove systemic barriers—but it can help women researchers navigate them with greater confidence, support and opportunity.

THE BENEFITS AND LIMITATIONS OF MENTORSHIP

Mentorship can...	Mentorship cannot...
Build confidence and resilience	Guarantee promotions or funding
Provide guidance and perspective	Solve organisational problems
Expand networks and opportunities	Replace supervision or training
Encourage reflection and growth	Remove systemic barriers
Support career planning	Make decisions for you

Mentorship is a powerful resource—but it works best when combined with your own initiative and other sources of support.

WHAT DOES A MENTOR DO?

- Share experience, perspective and lessons learned
- Listen, ask questions and encourage reflection
- Support career planning and professional growth
- Provide honest, constructive feedback
- Connect mentees with opportunities and networks
- Encourage independence—not dependence

A mentor guides the journey—they do not direct it

WHAT MENTORS SHOULD NOT DO

A mentor is not responsible for:

- Solving every problem
- Making decisions on the mentee's behaviour
- Providing all the answers
- Acting as a supervisor, counsellor or manager
- Guaranteeing promotions, grants or jobs
- Being available at all times

Mentorship is guidance—not rescue.



BEING AN ACTIVE MENTEE

An Effective Mentee:

- Takes ownership of their own development
- Comes prepared with questions and goals
- Is open to feedback and willing to reflect
- Follows through on agreed actions
- Respects the mentor's time and boundaries
- Appreciates and acknowledges the mentor's support

Great mentorship begins with an engaged mentee.

COMMON MISCONCEPTIONS ABOUT BEING A MENTEE

Myth	Reality
My mentor will solve my problems.	My mentor helps me think through my options.
I should wait for my mentor to contact me.	I take initiative in the relationship.
Good mentees always agree with their mentor.	Respectful discussion and different perspectives are healthy.
One mentor can meet all my needs.	Different mentors can support different needs.
Asking for help shows weakness.	Seeking support is a sign of professional growth.

Mentorship is a powerful resource—but it works best when combined with your own initiative and other sources of support.

SHARED RESPONSIBILITY

Mentor

- Experience
- Perspective
- Feedback
- Encouragement

Trust
Respect
Open Communication
Committment

Mentee

- Initiative
- Curiosity
- Preparation
- Follow-through

Great mentorship happens where both people actively contribute

REFLECTION

What do you need most right now?

**I WANT TO
BECOME A
STRONGER
RESEARCHER.**

**I'M THINKING
ABOUT MY NEXT
CAREER MOVE**

**I'D LIKE
COLLEAGUES WHO
UNDERSTAND
WHAT I'M GOING
THROUGH**

**I WANT TO EXPAND
MY NETWORK AND
OPPORTUNITIES**

FINDING THE RIGHT MENTORSHIP FOR YOUR NEEDS

Academic Mentorship

Someone with research experience or expertise in your field

- Strengthen research and technical skills
- Navigate research process and challenges
- Improve academic productivity
- Build credibility in your discipline

Career Mentorship

Someone to help you think strategically about your career path

- Clarify career goals and options
- Prepare for leadership advancement
- Navigate career transition
- Build confidence in decision making

Peer Mentorship

Someone at similar career stage facing similar challenges

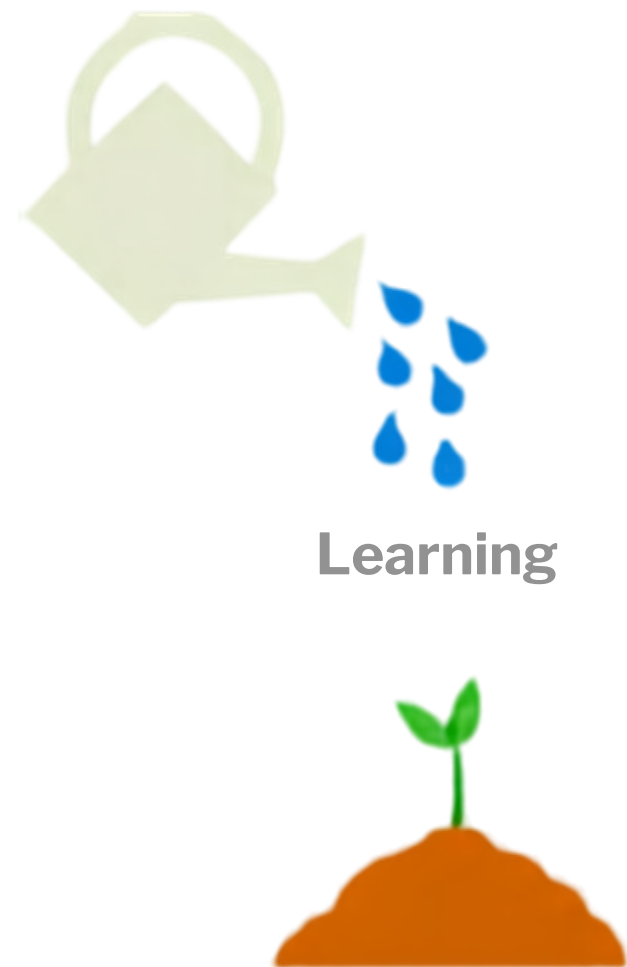
- Share ideas and resources
- Solve problems together
- Provide mutual encouragement and accountability
- Reduce isolation and build community

Group or Network Mentorship

Multiple mentors and broader professional community

- Access diverse perspectives and expertise
- Build professional networks
- Discover opportunities and collaborations
- Learn in a supportive community

MENTORSHIP ACROSS YOUR CAREER



Learning

**PHD
STUDENT**

Independence



**EARLY
CAREER**

Leadership



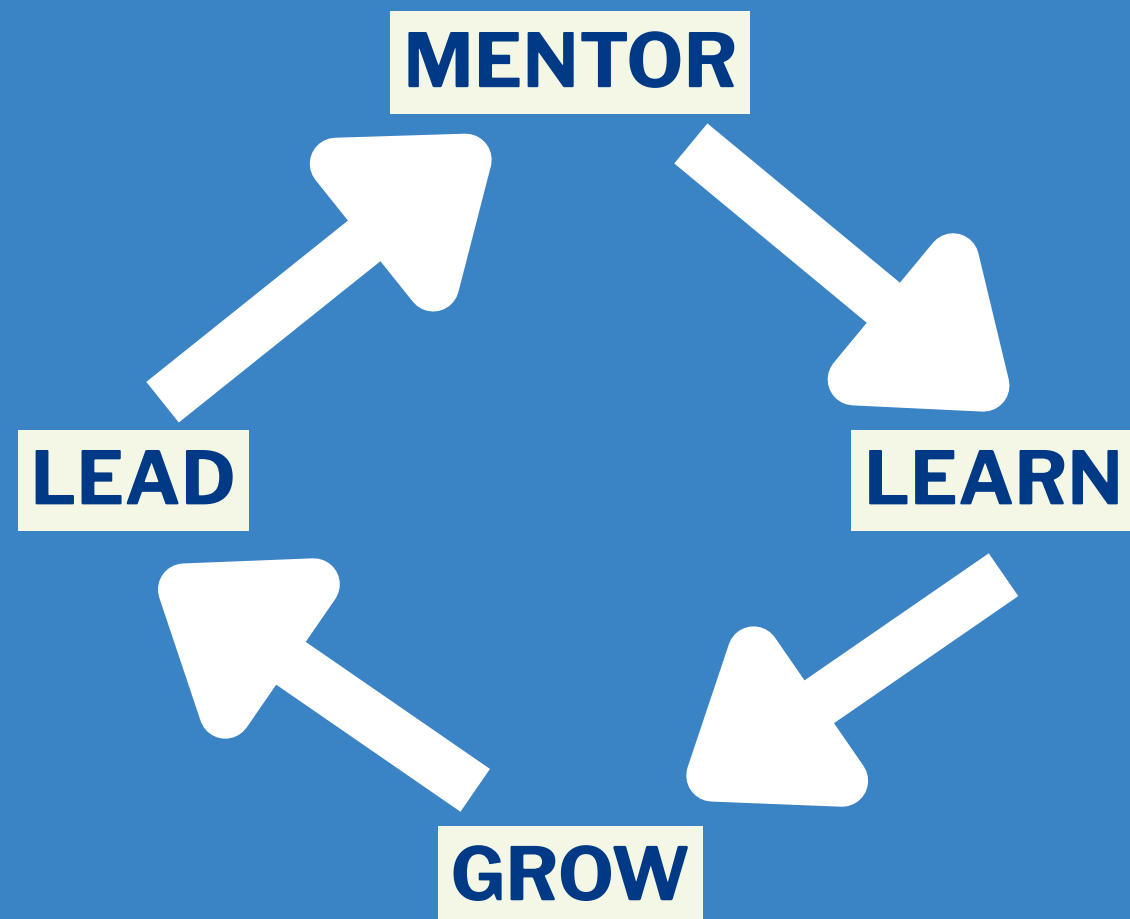
**MID
CAREER**

Giving Back



**SENIOR
LEADER**

MENTORSHIP COMES FULL CIRCLE



Why mentor?

- Give back
- Develop leadership skills
- Strengthen the research community
- Support the next generation
- Continue learning yourself

Mentoring is not the end of your journey—it is the next stage of your growth

FINDING THE RIGHT MENTOR

Consider seeking a mentor when you...	Look for someone who...
Face a new challenge	Has relevant experience
Want to develop new skills	Is willing to invest in your growth
Are making an important career decision	Listens well
Feel stuck or isolated	Challenges you constructively
Want to expand your opportunities	Shares your values

The best mentor is the right mentor—not necessarily the most senior one

ARE YOU READY TO BE A MENTOR?

Ask yourself

1. Have I learned lessons that could help someone else?
2. Can I listen without trying to solve every problem?
3. Am I willing to invest time in another person's growth?
4. Can I encourage rather than direct?
5. Am I still willing to learn?

HOW DO YOU KNOW MENTORSHIP IS WORKING?

Mentorship is successful when

- You feel safe and trust the relationship
- You have honest conversations
- You feel you're growing in confidence and independence
- You feel challenged as well as supported
- You recognise how your needs and goals change overtime

Good mentorship helps you become more capable—not more dependent.

FINAL REFLECTION

Looking Ahead

Take a moment to reflect on what you've learned.

Complete these three statements:

1. The kind of mentor I need most right now is someone who...
2. One step I will take in the next month to strengthen my mentoring network is...
3. As my career develops, I hope to support others by...

MODULE SUMMARY

Key Takeaways

1. **Mentorship is a developmental partnership** built on trust, respect and shared responsibility.
2. Different mentors provide different kinds of support - no one mentor can meet every need.
3. Your mentoring needs will change as your career evolves.
4. Great mentoring relationships are intentional and require active participation from both mentor and mentee.
5. Mentorship is a cycle - you will benefit from mentors today and have opportunities to mentor others in the future.

NEXT MODULE

Building Effective Mentoring Relationships

We'll explore how to:

- Identify and approach potential mentors
- Set expectations and goals
- Communicate effectively
- Build trust and navigate challenges



**MORE WOMEN
IN RESEARCH**



©2026