

MORE WOMEN IN RESEARCH

'Learn and lead together'

Mentorship

***Module 3: Sustaining Mentoring
Relationships***



MODULE 2 RECAP

During Module 2, you:

1. Reflected on your professional goals and mentoring needs.
2. Developed your personal **Research Mentorship Roadmap**.
3. Identified mentors and built a broader support network.
4. Explored how trust, communication and shared expectations strengthen mentoring relationships.
5. Learned practical tools—including the **Mentoring Partnership Agreement**—to support productive mentoring relationships.

**Strong mentoring relationships are built intentionally.
Now we'll explore how to sustain them over time.**

UNDERSTAND • BUILD • SUSTAIN

Meaningful Mentoring Relationships for Research Excellence



***Navigating
Challenges***



***Ethics &
Boundaries***



***Growth Through
Change***



***Respect &
Inclusion***



***Mentoring
Forward***

MODULE 3 LEARNING OBJECTIVES

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

1. Recognize common challenges that arise within mentoring relationships.
2. Apply practical strategies for managing difficult conversations, boundaries and power dynamics.
3. Build inclusive mentoring relationships across differences in culture, gender and experience.
4. Respond appropriately to ethical dilemmas and situations that may undermine trust or professionalism.
5. Conclude mentoring relationships positively and reflect on their own continuing growth as mentors and mentees.

PART 1:

RESPONDING TO CHALLENGES

REFLECTION

Which of these situations have you experienced?



What conversation could help move the relationship forward?

EVERY CHALLENGE BEGINS WITH A CONVERSATION

Although every situation is different they often begin with the same questions:

Have our expectations changed?

Are we communicating openly?

Have our priorities shifted?

Is this still the right mentoring relationship



HELPING WANJIRU RECONNECT

What might be happening?

- Competing priorities or unexpected workload
- Changing availability or responsibilities
- Unclear expectations about meeting frequency
- The relationship has lost momentum

What could help?

- ✓ Don't assume a lack of interest.
- ✓ Ask whether circumstances have changed.
- ✓ Discuss a meeting schedule that works for both of you.
- ✓ Revisit your goals and expectations.

Good mentoring relationships adapt to changing circumstances.



HELPING AISHA REBUILD COMMUNICATION

What might be happening?

- Small concerns have gone unspoken.
- Feedback has become less frequent.
- Both people are making assumptions.
- Trust needs to be rebuilt through conversation.

What could help?

- ✓ Raise concerns early.
- ✓ Listen without becoming defensive.
- ✓ Focus on the issue, not the individual.
- ✓ Agree on practical next steps.

Honest conversations build stronger mentoring relationships.



HELPING AKINYI REALIGN EXPECTATIONS

What might be happening?

- Goals have changed.
- Different expectations have emerged.
- Success is being defined differently.
- The relationship needs a new direction.

What could help?

- ✓ Revisit your original goals.
- ✓ Ask what each person hopes to achieve now.
- ✓ Clarify roles and responsibilities.
- ✓ Agree on the next phase of the relationship.

Effective mentoring evolves as people's needs evolve.



PART 2:

BUILDING RELATIONSHIPS THAT LAST

BUILDING RESPECTFUL & INCLUSIVE RELATIONSHIPS

Great mentoring relationships are built on more than expertise.



They are built on:

- Mutual respect
- Trust
- Inclusion
- Professionalism
- Openness to learning

Effective mentoring values the person as much as the professional.

BUILDING TRUST

Building Turst Through Everyday Actions

Trust grows when people...	Trust weakens when people...
Keep commitments	Frequently cancel without explanation
Communicate honestly	Break confidentiality
Respect confidentiality	Ignore agreed actions
Follow through on agreed actions	Make assumptions
Admit mistakes	Dismiss concerns
Listen with curiosity	Give inconsistent messages

Trust grows through consistency—not perfection.

USING INFLUENCE RESPONSIBLY

Mentoring often involves differences in:

- Experience
- Seniority
- Academic position
- Access to opportunities
- Professional networks and influence

Effective mentors:

- ✓ Encourage independent thinking
- ✓ Share opportunities fairly
- ✓ Support growth and confidence
- ✓ Use influence to empower other

Mentoring should empower—not create dependence.



LEARNING FROM DIFFERENT PERSPECTIVES

Mentoring relationships may bring together people with different:

- Cultures and languages
- Gender identities and experiences
- Disciplines and institutions
- Career stages
- Communication styles

Inclusive mentoring is strengthened by:

- ✓ Curiosity
- ✓ Respect
- ✓ Cultural humility
- ✓ Willingness to learn



Difference is a strength—not a barrier

CREATING HEALTHY BOUNDARIES

Healthy mentoring balances support with professionalism.

Good boundaries include:

- Respecting confidentiality
- Being clear about roles
- Respecting time and commitments
- Maintaining professional relationships
- Recognising when additional support is needed



Clear boundaries build trust—not distance

RESPONDING ETHICALLY

Pause

What feels uncomfortable or concerning?

Discuss

Can this be addressed together?
Do you need additional advice or support?

Reflect

Which mentoring principle is involved?

- Respect
- Fairness
- Confidentiality
- Professionalism



Ethical mentoring begins with thoughtful reflection and honest conversation

REFLECTION

Think about one mentoring relationship in your life.

Which foundation would strengthen it most?

- Trust
- Communication
- Inclusion
- Clear expectations
- Healthy boundaries

What is one small action you could take to strengthen that relationship?

PART 3:

Moving Forward

HELPING MUMBI MOVE FORWARD

**Before deciding to end the
relationship, ask:**

- Have my mentoring needs changed?
- Have we discussed those changes openly?
- Could we redefine the relationship?
- Would expanding my support network be helpful?

Mentoring relationships should evolve as careers evolve.



WHEN MENTORING RELATIONSHIPS CHANGE

Mentoring relationships may:

- Continue with new goals
- Become less frequent
- Shift from mentoring to collegial partnership
- Expand to include other mentors
- Reach a natural conclusion



Change is a sign of growth—not failure

ENDING A MENTORING RELATIONSHIP WELL



A positive conclusion includes:

- Acknowledging what you've learned together
- Celebrating progress and achievements
- Expressing appreciation
- Discussing future contact, if appropriate
- Leaving the relationship with mutual respect

Ending well honours the relationship and the people within it.

BECOMING THE MENTOR OTHERS NEED

Every researcher has something to offer.

You can mentor by:

- Sharing your experience
- Listening generously
- Encouraging confidence
- Opening opportunities
- Supporting the next generation



You do not need to be at the end of your career to make a difference.

FINAL REFLECTION

ONE IDEA I WILL TAKE AWAY IS...

Think back to where you began.

Complete these sentences...

ONE CONVERSATION I NEED TO HAVE IS...

**ONE ACTION I WILL TAKE IN THE
NEXT MONTH IS...**

**ONE WAY I CAN SUPPORT
ANOTHER RESEARCHER IS...**

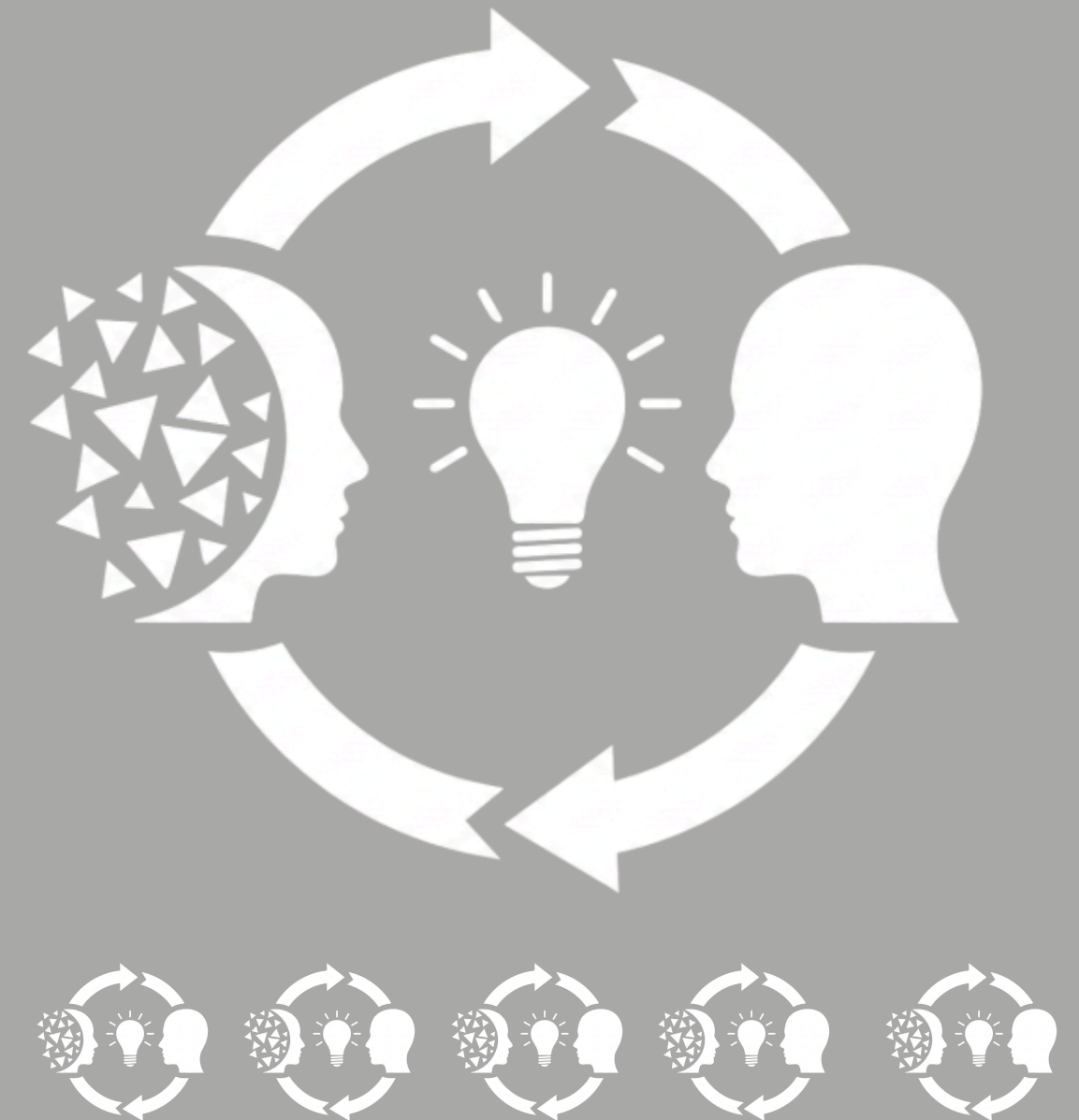


What is one commitment you will make to yourself today?

MODULE SUMMARY

In this module we explored how to:

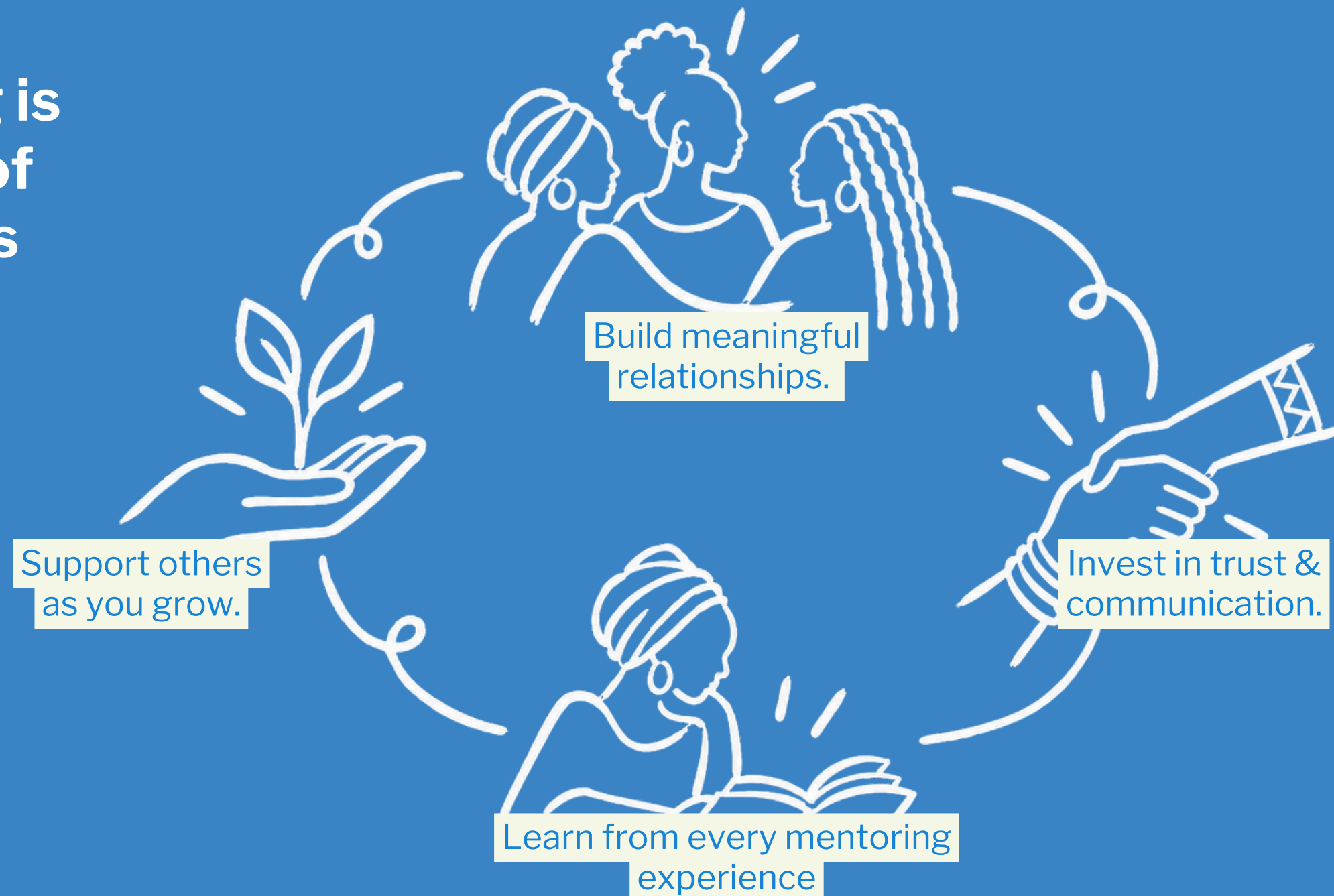
1. Navigate common mentoring challenges.
2. Build respectful, inclusive and ethical relationships.
3. Manage transitions and conclude mentoring relationships professionally.
4. Continue growing as both a mentee and a mentor.



COURSE CONCLUSION

UNDERSTAND • BUILD • SUSTAIN

**Mentoring is
a journey of
continuous
learning.**



**Together, we
strengthen
research
by strengthening
one another.**

YOUR MENTORING JOURNEY CONTINUES

Think about your next step.

1. Continue developing your **Mentorship Roadmap**.
2. Begin a **Mentoring Partnership Agreement**.
3. Reach out to a mentor.
4. Schedule your next mentoring conversation.
5. Support another researcher.

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IN RESEARCH**



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