

# CREATING A MENTORING PHILOSOPHY STATEMENT



Educational  
Improvement  
and Innovation

OHSU Mentorship Academy  
Provost Office  
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## Why you should articulate a mentoring philosophy:

A well-articulated and deeply felt mentoring philosophy can help guide you when faced with difficult situations with learners. In addition, by reading your statement, new or potential mentees will know how you think about your role and what they might be able to expect. Therefore, it is key to allow your authentic self to be visible in your mentoring philosophy statement. Finally, you may draw on your statement for grant applications, P&T packets, Ed Portfolios, or future job applications.

Choose whichever reflective prompts below that resonate with you; no need to think through all of these points. Take brief notes as you reflect.

### MENTORING EXPERIENCES + IDEOLOGIES

- Why is mentoring important, generally?
- What is your purpose as a mentor? What do you most deeply want as a mentor?
  - What inspires you when working with learners?
  - What is your mental framework or schema for mentoring?
- Autobiographical - How were you mentored in the past? In what ways was that a good fit for you? What parts of previous mentorship could have been improved when you were the mentee/learner?
- What role does empathy play in mentoring?
- Do you have a motto or tagline as a mentor? Or do you have a guiding life philosophy that can be applied to your mentoring approach? How does that impact your mentoring?
- How central is the identity of “mentor” or “educator” to your professional identity overall? Are you primarily something else? (Scientist? Healer? Curious person?) Or does “mentor” really define how you think of yourself while at work? If it’s a more peripheral identity, how do the other ways you identify professionally impact the way you do your mentoring and interact with students? This is one way to describe what sets you apart as a mentor.
- Is there a particular mentor-mentee relationship from your career thus far that epitomizes how you interact with learners that you can draw on as you write?
- What would an outside observer see when you interact with learners?
- Are there any elements of the OHSU Graduation Core Competencies that you incorporate into your mentoring?

The following is a list of skills you may want to refer to in your statement. Read through this list and take brief notes on elements that are part of your mentoring practice (or not) and if there are salient parts of these to emphasize.

### MENTORING SKILLS

#### OHSU Mentorship Academy Skills:

- |                                       |                                      |
|---------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| • Maintaining Effective Communication | • Addressing Equity and Inclusion    |
| • Aligning Expectations               | • Fostering Independence             |
| • Assessing Understanding             | • Promoting Professional Development |

#### Additional Mentoring Skills:

- Supporting different types of learning (mastery, transformational, critical thinking)
- Encouraging mentee motivation and ownership of goals/projects
- Developing relationship with mentees
- Explaining your thought processes
- Evaluating the effectiveness of mentor-mentee relationships



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## Growth Mindset Opportunity

As you are reflecting on these prompts from page 1, is there a **course correction** you need to make if your mentoring isn't aligning with what you want it to be? What areas do you want to **grow or develop** new skills in as a mentor? The mentoring philosophy you draft should be viewed as a working document and can include area(s) of mentorship that you are actively working on. Being a mentor entails a sophisticated and nuanced set of skills and being intentional about growing in certain areas models lifelong learning for your mentees.

### DRAFT STATEMENT

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Start drafting your statement, drawing on anything that stood out to you from Steps 1 and 2. This is a personal statement, so you should use a first-person perspective; a confident, professional tone; and specific examples to illustrate points as needed. You can use the six OHSU Mentorship Academy Skills as the main categories to organize your draft if those are helpful. Or you can look through notes you've taken and focus on themes that recur and organize your draft by these themes. Or you can organize it by order of importance of the various elements as you see them, etc.

**Length:** A typical mentoring philosophy statement may be 1 paragraph to 1 page long

**Examples:**

- <https://blackscienceblog.wordpress.com/my-mentoring-philosophy/>
- <https://sites.temple.edu/ncdavatzes/sample-page/mentoring-philosophy/>

### ASSESS STATEMENT

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*Once you have a complete draft, assess it by looking for these aspects of strong philosophy statements and make any needed additions or revisions:*

- Did you include any specific examples?
- Does your statement center the needs and goals of mentees (in at least some aspects)?
- Have you demonstrated reflection and self-awareness?
- Does it demonstrate what you value in mentoring?
- Does it indicate how you create inclusive environments as a mentor?
- Do you include any of the Mentorship Academy skills or anything that was helpful from the modules?
- Does it authentically represent you?
- Is your statement clear, and is it easy to follow?

### NEXT STEPS

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*After you have a final draft, you can consider the following next steps:*

- Post on your lab or other website so potential students can see it.
- Use it as a starting point to build out a Mentoring section on your website and point mentees to resources related to being mentored.
- Share with current learners/post-docs during a 1:1 or group meeting.
- Refer back to it as necessary to facilitate conversations with mentees or help you address difficult situations.
- Put on your calendar once/year to review it – any new changes? Any mentor skills you want to grow in now? Do at least 20 minutes/year of focused reflection on your mentoring philosophy.
- Include it in your Educator's Portfolio.

### NOTES FOR MENTORSHIP ACADEMY PARTICIPANTS:

- Refining this statement as you proceed through the modules will help solidify your learning and reflections.
- You will be asked to share your statement at the end of the 7 modules.

