

Course 1: The Strategic Postdoc

Module 2: Applying for and Choosing the Right Postdoc

Session 1: Planning Your Search and Scouting for a Postdoc

Activity 1.2: Building your Mentoring Network

Who's currently in your mentoring network?

1. Make a list of 5 people that have provided any type of mentoring, career advice, and/or support for you. Think about people who have helped your productivity, professional development, and/or mental health. For each person, write down their name, the type of support they provided, and describe your relationship.
 - a.
 - b.
 - c.
 - d.
 - e.
2. Mentors can fulfill different types of roles, providing different types of guidance and support. In the table below, classify your **CURRENT** mentors into each category. For this exercise, think about your peers, lab mates, research mentors (past and present), people that you met at conferences, etc. There may be people who fit in more than one category, so it's OK to repeat their names.

Mentor Roles	Current Mentors
Intellectual Feedback: People who provide critical feedback that helps you to improve your work (e.g., someone who can give you input on a grant proposal or paper).	
Sponsorship: People who use their power and influence on your behalf to shape the story about who you are and the importance of your work (e.g., someone who can write you a strong letter of recommendation).	
Accountability: People who check to make sure that you are making quality and timely progress in your work (e.g., someone who helps you ensure you are meeting deadlines or milestones for finishing your thesis).	
Role Models: People who exhibit the values, attitudes, and behaviors that you aspire to emulate as a person and a professional (e.g., people who you look up to, inspire you, or are in the career you want).	
Professional Development: People (or organizations) who provide professional development training to advance your work and career (e.g., someone who can help you develop certain skills or obtain experiences you need or want to achieve your goals or desired career).	

Emotional Support: People who provide support to help you maintain personal well-being (psychological and physical) as you navigate the ups and downs of your work and career (e.g., people who provide support during the hard times).	
Financial Support: People who you could go to in hard situations for financial support (e.g., people who can help you identify sources of funding).	
Other:	

* Table adapted from Branchaw, Butz, & Smith (2019) Entering Research (2nd edition) Macmillan

Build and expand your mentoring network:

3. Reflecting on question 2 might have made you realize that there are some areas where you don't have mentors. That's OK! Building and expanding your mentoring network is a constant process and as your career evolves, so do your mentoring needs. Here, we invite you to list the top 5 areas (from the table above) where it would be nice to have more mentors. To help you do this, think about the training goals for the postdoc that you identified in [Activity 1.1](#), as you may want to prioritize finding mentors that align with and can help you accomplish those goals.
 - a.
 - b.
 - c.
 - d.
 - e.
4. For each area identified in **Question 3**, generate a list of possible mentors that you would like to contact that could fill the gaps in your mentoring network.

Mentor Roles	Prospective Mentors
Intellectual Feedback:	
Sponsorship:	
Accountability:	
Role Models:	
Professional Development:	
Emotional Support:	
Financial Support:	
Other:	



We recommend that you **revisit questions 3-4 at least once a year**. Reflect on who's currently in your network, identify areas of growth where mentorship is needed, and contact potential mentors to fill out the gaps in your mentoring network. Doing this at least once a year will help you grow and adjust your mentoring network or circle of support to your goals and needs as they progress and evolve.