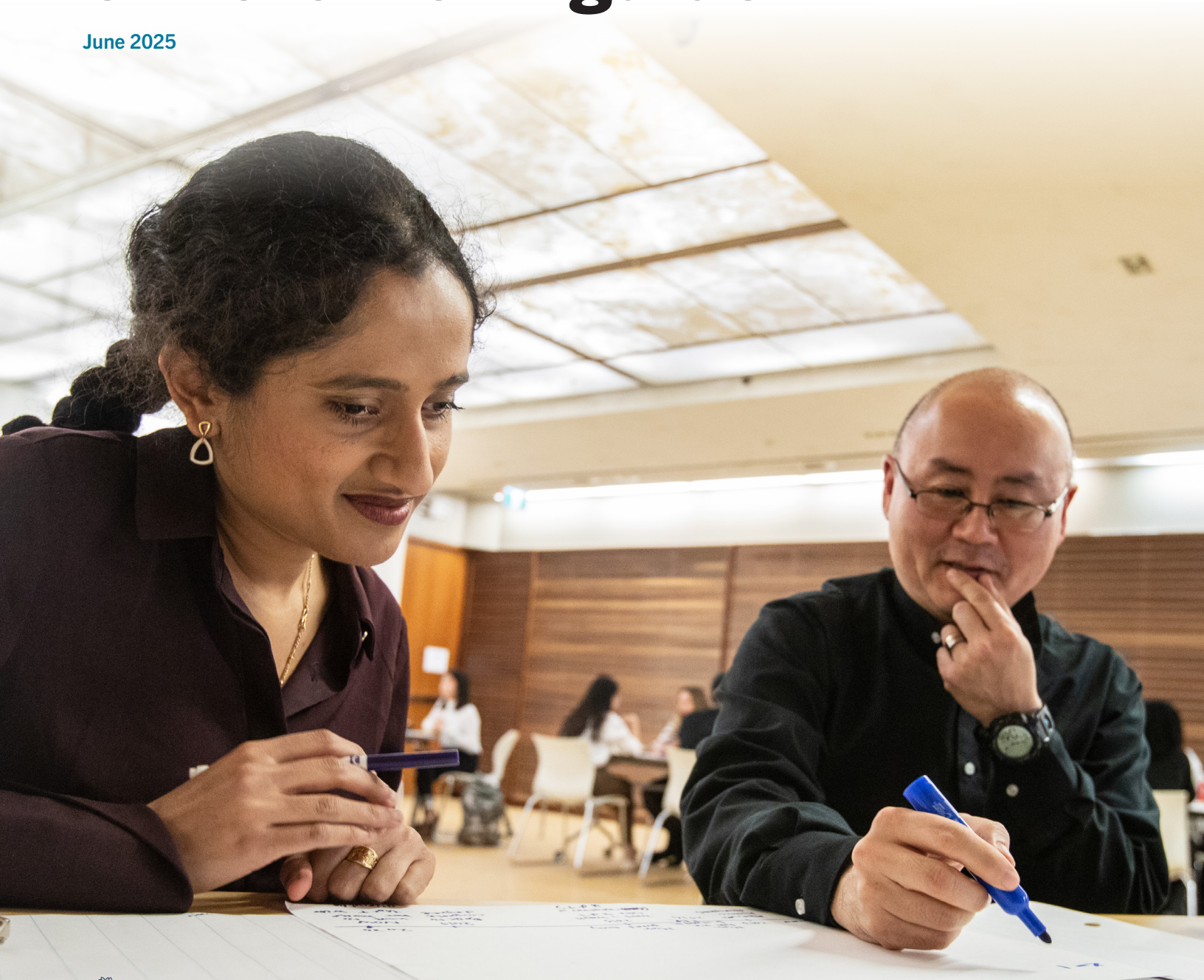
Alumni mentorship at the University of Toronto: a guide

June 2025



UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO

DEFY GRAVITY

Table of Contents

Introduction

Congratulations on becoming an alumni mentor at the University of Toronto! As a mentor, you have the opportunity to share your knowledge and experience and provide students with the encouragement and insights they need to get a great start to their careers and set a course for the future. It's a unique way to enhance students' educational experiences and a rewarding way to give back to the U of T community. Through these programs, students can gain career guidance, receive encouragement throughout their academic journey, get advice on entering the workforce, and establish professional connections. Research shows that alumni mentorship programs can improve students' employability, confidence, career success and overall university experience. It also shows that mentors learn from their mentees in the process!

This Mentorship Guide is organized into four sections, each tailored to assist you at different points in your mentorship journey with your mentees.

Part 1: Becoming an alumni mentor – This section provides an introduction to mentorship programs at the University of Toronto and outlines community guidelines for participating in these programs.

Part 2: Supporting your mentees – Here, you'll find resources designed to clarify your role as an alumni mentor and guide you in building a strong partnership with your student mentees.

Part 3: What do I do as a mentor? – This part includes additional tools and resources to help you actively support your mentees' personal and professional growth.

Part 4: What's next? – Focusing on the conclusion of the mentorship relationship, this section offers resources for guiding mentees through meaningful reflections on their learning and development throughout the program, as well as guidelines for exploring what comes next on their journey.

If you have any inquiries about this guide, we encourage you to connect with the Coordinator of Mentorship Programs within the respective faculty or academic division where you're volunteering.

Explore the full list of alumni mentorship programs available on our campuses.

Part 1: Becoming an alumni mentor

This section provides an introduction to mentorship programs at the University of Toronto's three campuses, outlines roles and responsibilities for mentors and mentees, and provides community guidelines for participating in these programs.

Overview: What is mentorship?

Founded in 1827, the University of Toronto is Canada's top university with a long history of challenging the impossible and transforming society through the ingenuity and resolve of its faculty, students, alumni and supporters. Deeply rooted in one of the world's most diverse city regions, U of T is committed to inclusive excellence. Inspiring inclusive excellence means embracing and promoting the enriching contributions that come from the diverse backgrounds, ways of knowing, ideas, perspectives and experiences represented in our community.

As an alum, you are part of a global community of more than 700,000 peers, many who have participated in the mentoring journey.

Mentorship can take many forms – long or short, in person or online, in groups or at networking events. Whichever program you participate in, we hope this experience provides as much satisfaction as it does for your mentee.

Roles and responsibilities of a mentor

Mentoring is a unique and dynamic process that evolves based on the individuals involved. There is no singular approach to mentoring, and each relationship is shaped by the goals and expectations set by both mentor and mentee. It requires dedication and effort from both parties to ensure its success. As an alumni mentor, you will:

- Share your educational background, career journey, successes, setbacks and valuable lessons you've learned from your experiences.
- Maintain regular communication with your mentees, honouring commitments and holding each other accountable for active participation.
- Invest time in building a personal connection, allowing both parties to understand each other's backgrounds and perspectives.
- Foster a culture of open-mindedness and active listening, encouraging a two-way flow of communication.
- Invite ideas and feedback from student mentees, promoting shared decision-making within the relationship.
- Cultivate an open and supportive environment to establish trust and mutual respect.

Please note that a mentor is under no obligation to hire or place a student in an internship or any other position within any organization. The program is not meant to be a recruitment or job placement service.

For more information regarding your role and responsibilities as alumni mentors, see Part 2: Supporting your mentees.

The University of Toronto is committed to providing students with support and quality mentoring relationships with volunteer alumni mentors. This commitment ensures that all interactions are devoid of discriminatory behaviour, offensive language, and any threat of sexual harassment.

Community guidelines

As a mentor, you play a crucial role in upholding this commitment, demonstrating a shared dedication to cultivating a secure, meaningful and enriching mentoring environment. To this end, we ask that you adhere to the following community guidelines:

As a mentor, you always want to:

- Foster an environment of mutual respect and trust
- Focus on sharing your knowledge and insight
- Support your mentee in achieving their career goals

Successful mentoring requires a reciprocal and comfortable relationship between an alumni mentor and a student mentee. Both parties must work together to be open-minded, respectful of one another and establish a partnership based on open communications and productive and proactive interactions.

Best practice	Key Focuses	Key Resources
Mutual benefit and respect	• The mentoring relationship is designed to foster the growth and development of the mentee. • The relationship should be defined from the beginning as mutually beneficial. • As an alumni mentor, you may have goals of your own, including: » Sharing knowledge about your education, career path, successes and failures » Cultivating a stronger connection with U of T community » Acquiring experience in coaching and fostering the talent of current U of T students	Thinking About Your Personal Journey is a worksheet for mentors that enables them to participate in self-reflection to develop their own unique mentoring style based on life experiences. Mentoring Skills Inventory is a worksheet that encourages mentors to reflect on their key mentoring skills and develop a plan for areas that need improvement.
Confidentiality	• Maintaining an environment of confidentiality is important in building trust between you and your mentee. Both parties are responsible for identifying and observing areas of confidentiality.	
Professional Communication	• Your mentee will look to you to set the tone for acceptable levels of professionalism. • Respond to mentee messages and inquiries in a timely and respectful manner, acknowledging their perspective and providing constructive feedback. • Clearly communicate expectations, goals, and any relevant information to ensure a productive and positive mentoring relationship.	Four Types of Listening outlines four types of listening: downloading, factual, empathic, generative. Virtual Mentoring outlines a general list of items to explore when thinking about virtual mentoring benefits and challenges. Having 1-on-1 Conversations with Mentees is a useful tool for structuring direct mentoring conversations.

continues on the next page

Best practice	Key Focuses	Key Resources
Cultural Sensitivity	• U of T is a mosaic of cultures and ethnicities. The student population represents many cultures, religion, sexual orientation, and ethnicity. As they bring their own unique experiences and perspectives, when interacting with student mentees, we encourage you to: » Be sensitive to cultural differences in communication styles, values and norms. Adapt your mentoring approach to be inclusive and respectful of these differences. » Demonstrate respect for cultural, ethnic, religious, and other forms of diversity. Be open-minded and willing to learn about and appreciate different cultural perspectives.	For more information, you can refer to some of these University Statements regarding cultural sensitivity: • U of T's Statement on Equity, Diversity and Excellence • U of T's Truth and Reconciliation Calls to Action • U of T's statement on prohibited discrimination and discriminatory harassment U of T also offers recordings of past events that may be useful for your reference: • The Institutional Equity Office (IEO) held the Inclusion in Action Speaker Series to increase dialogue and understanding of equity, accessibility, and inclusion in postsecondary environments • The Toronto Initiative for Diversity and Excellence (TIDE) designed the Unconscious Bias Education Modules to introduce the concept of unconscious bias. These modules can help foster deeper discussions on addressing bias and create a more inclusive environment. • EdX - Unconscious Bias: From Awareness to Action is an online module to help understand the concept of unconscious bias and develop skills to help you recognize and take action to manage bias.

continues on the next page

Best practice	Key Focuses	Key Resources
Accessibility Awareness	• Accommodation involves actions taken to ensure that students with disabilities or special needs have equal access to educational opportunities. The University of Toronto is committed to supporting the accessibility and accommodation needs of both students and mentors, creating an inclusive environment that enables individuals with disabilities to achieve their objectives. • Program coordinators may occasionally provide information regarding specific accommodation needs of your student mentees. In these situations, you are expected to respect students' privacy by not inquiring about the reasons for the accommodation or the details of their disabilities. Alternatively, you may proactively encourage openness by stating in your initial email, "Please feel free to let me know in advance if you have any accommodation needs."	For more information, please refer to the University's Statement of Commitment Regarding Persons with Disabilities and Volunteers & Other Service Providers - Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA) • Be aware of and accommodate any accessibility needs that your mentee may have, such as physical, sensory or learning disabilities. • Ensure that communication methods are accessible to your mentee, such as providing written materials in alternative formats if needed. • Respect any accommodations requested by your mentee and work together to ensure that the mentoring relationship is accessible and inclusive.

Expectations

As U of T Alumni Mentor, you play a pivotal role in upholding and championing the foundational principles of honesty, trust, fairness, respect and personal accountability. The community guidelines above are rooted in these principles and aim to shape and direct the conduct of both mentors and mentees towards cultivating a culture of mutual respect for the dignity, rights and well-being of others.

Part 2: Supporting your mentees

This section outlines best practices to provide optimal support to mentees, and includes toolkits and guidelines for building the best mentor-mentee relationship. It also provides information on the university's Equity, Diversity, Inclusion and Accessibility guidelines that are designed to foster an optimal experience.

Overview: What is mentorship?

Mentoring is an intentional, outcome-driven relationship designed to foster the growth and development of your mentee. Overall, the relationship is predicated on a mutual willingness to learn and share.

A good mentor:

- Has strong communication skills.
- Stimulates the mentee's own thinking and reflection and supports his or her personal development.
- Is available and willing to connect with his or her mentee, giving appropriate guidance and feedback.
- Is open-minded, flexible, empathetic, and encouraging.

Depending on the goals of the mentee, as a mentor, your responsibilities may include:

- Helping to set short-term objectives as well as short-term and long-term career goals.
- Recommending and/or creating specific learning or development opportunities.
- Sharing substantial knowledge from your field and enriching this transfer with engaging storytelling that showcases diverse career paths and experiences. This not only conveys information but also inspires and broadens the mentee's perspective. For more information, check out Part 3: What do I do as a mentor.
- Introducing the mentee to your professional network, facilitating exposure to opportunities and community connections that can be pivotal in their career development.
- Supporting the mentee's overall well-being and career wellness by offering career guidance and encouraging wellbeing.
- Recognizing strengths and areas for growth to help the mentee in their personal and professional development.

As an alumni mentor, your role is multifaceted and essential for nurturing your mentee's growth as a:

Advisor	• Serve as a sounding board and facilitator. • Maintain privacy and confidentiality. • Offer support for problem-solving without taking direct responsibility to fix issues.
Supporter	• Provide a supportive and safe environment for your mentee(s). • Direct mentees to appropriate university services or staff for further assistance.
Developer	• Guide the mentee(s) by providing structure and direction. • Observe and advise based on interactions with the mentee(s). • Empower mentees to independently manage their challenges, avoiding directives or quick fixes.
Broker	• Assess and identify skills or competency gaps. • Facilitate access to developmental opportunities. • Encourage high standards in academic and professional conduct.
Clarifier	• Support mentee's self-esteem and clarify doubts. • Explain and reinforce organizational values relevant to your expertise.
Affirmer	• Offer consistent support and demonstrate empathy. • Validate and respect your mentee's feelings and concerns, ensuring they feel heard and valued.

Limits of mentorship

As an alumni mentor, it is important to understand the boundaries of your role to maintain a healthy and productive mentorship relationship. Below are some key aspects of what you are **NOT** expected to:

- **Tutor/Teach:**
  - » You are not expected to act as a tutor or teacher for your mentee(s).
  - » Your role is to share experiences and wisdom, not to provide formal teaching or transactional services.
- **Counsel:**
  - » You are not responsible for counselling your mentee(s) on personal or mental health issues.
  - » If mental health concerns arise, it is important to refer these matters to the program coordinator.
  - » Direct mentees to appropriate university resources for professional support when needed. For a full list of on-campus resources, check out Section 3 “What Do I Do as A Mentor?”
- **Be a hiring manager:**
  - » The mentorship program is not intended to guarantee employment within your organization or serve as a job placement service.
  - » While you can provide career advice and networking opportunities, there should be no obligation to hire mentees.
  - » Focus on fostering professional growth and development rather than securing immediate job positions for mentees.

Building your partnership

Successful mentorship begins with a solid partnership between mentors and mentees, founded on trust, clear communication, and shared goals. Here are ways to build the partnership.

1. Establish trust

Establishing trust can be challenging, as both mentor and mentee come into the relationship with their own expectations, hopes, and prior experiences. These factors significantly influence the relationship’s development, its objectives, and the boundaries set by both parties.

- **Consistency is key:** Ensure that your actions align with your words. Demonstrating consistency between what you say and what you do is vital for building trust.
- **Follow through on commitments:** Make it a priority to keep promises and fulfill commitments. This reliability proves your dependability to your mentee.
- **Prepare for busy schedules:** Recognize that both you and your mentee will have other commitments and responsibilities. What matters is how you communicate and manage expectations during busy times.

2. Clear communication

Make it a priority to keep lines of communication open and clear and establish how best to communicate.

Effective communication is the cornerstone of any successful mentorship relationship. It ensures that both mentors and mentees understand each other clearly and can work together efficiently towards common goals. Here are some guiding principles:

- **Establish preferred communication methods:** Whether it’s email, phone calls, text messages, or face-to-face meetings, choosing the right channels will help maintain a steady flow of communication.
- **Practice active listening:** Active listening involves fully concentrating, understanding, responding, and then remembering what is being said. This not only aids in better understanding but also shows respect and value for each other’s viewpoints.
- **Encourage openness and honesty:** Promote an environment where both mentors and mentees feel safe to express their thoughts, concerns, and feedback honestly. Openness fosters trust and helps establish an environment for growth.

- **Provide constructive feedback:** Provide constructive feedback that is specific, actionable, and kind. Feedback should be framed positively and should focus on behaviors that the mentee can improve or change.
- **Set clear objectives:** It is encouraged that you and your mentees create a mentor-mentee agreement at the beginning of your relationship. The goal of this agreement is to set objectives for your mutual effort. It is mutual in that both parties should benefit in satisfaction and happiness. You can refer to Appendix A: Mentorship Agreement for a template.

3. Shared goals

Establishing shared goals at the beginning of a mentorship relationship is fundamental to its success. These goals provide a clear direction and purpose, aligning the mentor and mentee towards common objectives. When setting these goals, it is crucial for both parties to collaborate in defining what they hope to achieve, ensuring that the goals are specific, measurable, achievable, relevant and time-bound (SMART).

- **Specificity and measurability:** Ensure that the goals set are specific enough to provide clear guidance and measurable so that progress can be objectively assessed. For instance, a goal could be for a mentee to improve public speaking skills by presenting at a certain number of meetings or events within six months.
- **Achievability:** Set goals that are challenging yet achievable within the timeframe of the mentorship. Unrealistic goals can demotivate and frustrate both parties, while easily achievable goals may not push the mentee to fully develop their potential.
- **Relevance:** Align the goals with both the mentee's career aspirations and the mentor's areas of expertise. This relevance increases the value of the mentorship, ensuring that the mentee can apply what they learn directly to their career path.
- **Timeliness:** Establish a timeline for reaching these goals that matches the duration of the mentorship program. Time-bound goals create urgency and prompt action, keeping the mentorship active and focused.

You can use the Student Life Mentorship and Peer Program Goal Setting template to help you and your mentees to set SMART goals and develop strategies to achieve them

Conversation guide for building your partnership

Goals of the partnership	Guiding questions
Well-defined goals	• What do we hope to achieve over the duration of our partnership? • What are the most important achievements you'd like to focus on throughout our partnership? • What success looks like for you at the end of our partnership, and how can we work towards that?
Mutual Responsibility	• What are the roles and responsibilities of each partner? What expectations do we have of one another? • What are your expectations of me as a mentor, and what can I expect from you as a mentee?
Accountability	• How do we ensure that we will each do what we say we are going to do? • What check-ins or follow-ups would help us stay on course? • How can we support each other in staying accountable to our goals?
Relationship Ground Rules	• What guidelines will we follow over the course of our relationship? (i.e., time, feedback, role expectations, communication style, stumbling blocks, closure) • What are the expectations around time and communication in this relationship? • How should we deal with obstacles should they arise?

continues on the next page

Goals of the partnership	Guiding Questions
Confidentiality	• What are our expectations around confidentiality? • How should we handle sensitive topics that come up during our conversations?" • Are there any boundaries around sharing information outside of our meetings?
Boundaries	• Are there any topics or areas you feel should be off-limits in our discussions? • What boundaries would help us create a constructive and respectful dynamic? • How can we define the scope of our relationship to make sure we both feel supported without overstepping?
Plan for moving forward	• What do we need to include in order to make this agreement work for us? • What is our process for achieving learning goals? • What action steps are necessary for achieving these goals?
Creating SMART goals	Goals should be: • **Specific:** What are you trying to accomplish in this relationship? • **Measurable:** In what ways can success be measured? • **Action-Oriented:** What concrete goals will you be able to achieve as a result of the mentoring relationship? • **Realistic:** What other resources are available you need to help you in your pursuit? • **Timely:** will you be able to achieve the learning goals within the duration of our mentoring relationship?

Equity, Diversity, Inclusion (EDI) in Mentorship

As an alumni mentor, you play a pivotal role in embedding EDI principles and approaches into our alumni mentorship programs at the University of Toronto. It is the university's commitment to foster an inclusive environment where every participant feels valued, empowered, and respected.

What is EDI? For more information, check out the EDI in Research & Innovation website

Equity recognizes and accounts for everyone's unique identities, needs and situations, and allocates resources to achieve equal outcomes. It is about ensuring fair and respectful treatment, access, opportunity, and advancement for all individuals while striving to identify and eliminate systemic barriers and biases that have prevented the full access of some groups. It accounts for everyone's different and unique identities, lived experiences, and backgrounds, and reflectively allocates for resources needed to reach an equal outcome.

Diversity encompasses a wide range of personal attributes including race, place of origin, religion, immigrant and newcomer status, ethnicity, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, age, abilities, socioeconomic status, and many other aspects of human qualities.

Inclusion refers to the practice of creating environments where everyone is welcomed, feels valued, respected, and is able to fully participate

What is intersectionality? Learn more about intersectionality via UTSC's resources

Intersectionality is a framework for recognizing that individuals' lives are shaped by multiple interrelated social identities such as race, class and gender interact and relate with social constructs to create unique experiences of discrimination in ways that are complex and different from when considering one identity alone. For instance, a Black woman with disability in the classroom may experience the world based on her gender, ability and race—a unique experience base on how those identities intersect in her life. Understanding intersectionality is key to appreciating the diverse experiences of your mentees.

Mentees may have unique lived experiences in both their academic and career journeys. As a mentor, understanding and appreciating these experiences is crucial for providing meaningful support. Here are a few reasons why EDI and intersectionality are important:

- **Empathy:** By understanding the various identity attributes of your mentee, you can better empathize with their experiences and offer tailored guidance and support.
- **Validation of experiences:** Sharing similar experiences, especially those related to navigating and overcoming challenges related to one's identity (race, immigration status, gender, sexual orientation, ability) can be incredibly empowering and help mentees feel seen and understood.
- **Promotes advocacy:** By being open to listening and discussing the lived experiences of your mentee, you help creating an open environment that can encourage mentees to advocate for themselves and others in their academic and professional spaces.
- **Role modeling:** As a mentor, you serve as a role model. By sharing how you've navigated situations based on your own unique experiences and identities in your career, you set an example for your mentees to follow. This can inspire them to be themselves and to contribute to a more inclusive workplace.

Here are some ways you can actively promote EDI within our mentorship programs:

- **Reflect on your own identities:** Consider how your own identities have shaped your experiences in your academic and career journey. Reflect on times when your identity may have created challenges or opened up opportunities.
- **Listen actively:** Give your mentees the space to share their experiences without judgment. Listening actively shows respect and acknowledges the value of their lived experiences.
- **Share your stories:** Depending on your comfort level, share stories from your own career journey that illustrate how your intersectional identities influenced your path. Discuss challenges you've faced and how you've overcome them, as well as the support systems and resources that have helped you.
- **Encourage self-advocacy:** Empower your mentees to advocate for themselves in their academic and professional environments. Discuss strategies for navigating spaces that may not always be inclusive and offer guidance on finding allies and building supportive networks.
- **Highlight resources and support systems:** Make your mentees aware of resources available to them both at the university and in their professional fields. This could include affinity groups, mentorship programs, professional associations, and mental health resources.
- **Stay informed and educated:** Continuously educate yourself on issues related to EDIA and intersectionality. Understanding the evolving language and frameworks around these topics will help you provide more informed and sensitive support to your mentees.

Identities and career development

The relationship between identity and career can have a profoundly positive impact on both personal and professional growth. When individuals recognize and embrace the unique aspects of their identity—whether that be culture, ethnicity, gender, socioeconomic background, First-in-Family to attend university, or personal values—they are often able to leverage these aspects as strengths that contribute to their success.

- Embracing one's identity can help individuals align their career paths with their values, passions and authentic selves. This fosters greater confidence in their decisions and enhances job satisfaction as they pursue roles that resonate with their identity.
- Individuals from equity deserving communities often encounter challenges in their career journey. By navigating these challenges, they develop resilience, perseverance and adaptability.
- People who embrace their identity can build strong networks, which can offer emotional support, career guidance, and access to new opportunities, which are essential for long-term career growth.
- Embracing identity allows individuals to seek careers that align with their values and personal missions, pursue roles in certain industries or organizations with an inclusive environment, aligning their career with personal beliefs.

Example conversations with mentees

- **Discussing challenges:** "I remember when I started in my field, I felt like I didn't quite fit in because of my identity. It was tough, but I found a community of peers who understood my experience. Have you had similar experiences?"
- **Navigating professional spaces:** "In my career, I've had to navigate spaces where my identity wasn't well-represented. One thing that helped me was finding mentors and allies who could advocate on my behalf. How have you been finding your experience in your field so far?"
- **Building community:** "Building a supportive community was crucial for me. At U of T, I joined [specific group/association], which really helped me connect with others who had similar experiences. Are there any groups or networks you're interested in?"

EDI resources on campus:

Resources for the University of Toronto community including faculty, staff and students:

- Support, awareness, and education are provided by the U of T Institutional Equity Office to enhance the university's capacity for equity, diversity and inclusion throughout the community.
- Indigenous Student Services/First Nations House provides culturally relevant services to Indigenous students in support of academic success, personal growth and leadership development. They also offer learning opportunities for all students to engage with Indigenous communities within the University of Toronto and beyond.
- Health & Wellness provides a range of health services for students' physical and mental health, wellness programs and information to help support them in achieving their personal and academic goals.
- The Multi-Faith Centre supports the spiritual well-being of everyone on campus and provides opportunities for people to learn from each other while exploring questions of meaning, purpose and identity. The Centre's facilities and programs accommodate a wide variety of spiritual and faith-based practices and encourage interfaith dialogue and spiritual development as part of the learning experience for all students.
- The Sexual & Gender Diversity Office works to create supportive and inclusive environments within the university while promoting continuous learning, support, and advocacy around issues of sexual and gender diversity.
- Accessibility Services offers resources to assist students with ongoing or temporary disabilities. These resources help students navigate academic accommodations and connect with a supportive community of peers.
- U of T: Navi, is a chat-based virtual assistant. Navi can provide information on many topics, including admissions, financial aid, getting involved, careers, convocation and more. Additionally, NAVI can provide more specific information regarding mental health resources.

Additional resources for U of T alumni:

- The Career Guide for Trans and Nonbinary Students offers tailored support through the Sexual & Gender Diversity Office and Career Exploration & Education, helping you and students understand your rights in the job market and career development.
- The Disclosure and Accommodation Guide for the Workplace provides guidance on how to disclose disabilities and request accommodation effectively in your professional environment.
- The Institutional Equity Office invites members at the university to attend the Inclusion in Action Speaker Series to increase dialogue and understanding of equity, accessibility, and inclusion in postsecondary environments
- The Toronto Initiative for Diversity and Excellence designed the Unconscious Bias Education Modules to introduce you to the concept of unconscious bias. These modules can help foster deeper discussions on addressing bias and create a more inclusive environment.
- EdX - Unconscious Bias: From Awareness to Action is another online module that help you understand the concept of unconscious bias and develop skills to help you recognize and take action to manage bias.

For more information, you can refer to some of these University Statements regarding EDI:

- The University's Statement on Equity, Diversity and Excellence
- The University's Truth and Reconciliation Calls to Action
- The University's Statement on Prohibited Discrimination and Discriminatory Harassment
- The University's Statement of Commitment Regarding Persons with Disabilities

Appendix A: Mentorship agreement

A mentorship agreement is a valuable tool to help clarify the expectations and responsibilities of both the mentor and the mentee at the beginning of their relationship. By establishing clear objectives, methods, and goals, this agreement acts as a guideline to ensure both parties are aligned and can fully benefit from the experience. For example, a mentorship agreement might be used to outline the specific skills a mentee seeks to develop under the guidance of you a mentor, thereby setting the stage for focused and meaningful interactions that directly contribute to the mentee's career progression.

The mentor and mentee are voluntarily entering into this mentoring relationship. We want this to be a rich, rewarding experience and understand that setting some ground rules will help.

Mentee Name: _____ Mentor Name: _____

Date:

To get the most out of your mentoring experience, you should talk about the expectations and

goals that you and your mentee have for the mentoring relationship.

Agree on Expectations: How will the relationship work?

1. Meeting together: What works best? Will we meet (in-person, phone, email):
2. How will we contact each other?
    a. Mentor:
    b. Mentee:
3. In general, how often would we like to meet/interact (e.g., once per week, every other week, etc.)? Renegotiate as needed.
4. If we can't make an expected meeting/interaction, how will we get in touch?

Agree on goals: What do you hope to gain from the relationship?

1. What are the mentee's goals for this mentoring relationship? What are the 3 things your mentees would like to learn or develop?

	Mentee's Goals
Goal 1	
Goal 2	
Goal 3	

2. What are your goals for this relationship? What would you like to share with or impart to your mentee?

	Mentee's Goals
Goal 1	
Goal 2	

Agree on privacy, confidentiality and trust:

1. We both agree to protect each other's privacy and abide by the boundaries of the mentoring relationship.
2. We both agree to appreciate that our conversations are confidential, and we will maintain privacy.

We both agree that if either of us wishes to leave the program early, we must advise the program coordinator

Part 3: What do I do as a mentor?

Overview

There are many tools and resources to help you actively support your mentees' personal and professional growth. Career Learning is a major part of this process. This includes learning how to convey your own personal story and experiences in your career journey. This section can help you learn how to best convey these stories.

Career learning

Many alumni mentorship programs at the University of Toronto are designed to provide students opportunities to explore different career paths, expand their professional networks, and make a successful and informed transition from university to the workforce.

Career learning opportunities should be designed and delivered in a holistic manner that attends to the intersecting facets of one's career: identity, academic background, values, skills interests and more.

As career learners, mentees are well-positioned for a lifelong career success when they intentionally engage in career learning experiences that support them in:

- Gaining insights and communicating their strengths, values, interests, and skills.
- Acquiring knowledge and reflecting on experiences to help generate career possibilities.
- Focusing on career decisions, priorities, strategies and plans.
- Taking action towards desired career goals.

Power of story

Career learning extends beyond structured curriculum and career courses; it thrives through storytelling and linking learning with life experiences shared by faculty, staff, peers and alumni.

As an alumni mentor, your stories and lived experiences are invaluable resources for your mentees. These stories can help student mentees realize they are not alone in navigating similar challenges and affirm their experiences and questions. By sharing your stories and experience, you play a crucial role in supporting your mentees to:

- Explore how their identity relates to the industry/occupation of their interest.
- Receive guidance, advice and insight in the industry/occupation of their interest.
- Achieve their personal & professional development goals.
- Normalize uncertainty and exploration.

As mentioned in Part 2: Supporting Your Mentees mentees, particularly those from equity-deserving communities, benefit greatly from learning how alumni mentors with similar identities leveraged opportunities and resources at the university while navigating their academic and career journeys. Depending on your comfort level, you can share experiences and learnings related to your intersectional identities which may have influenced your career exploration as a way to affirm diverse students' experiences; this could include things like family care duties, accessibility needs, racial identity and sexual orientation, and experience as first in family to attend university. Students are particularly curious how mentors navigate these intricacies and develop community and support at U of T and in your professional career.

Here are a few simple questions that can help you to reflect on your own experience when connecting with your mentees:

- What work experiences have you had? What challenges and successes have you experienced along the way?
- How has your identity supported your career navigation and success?
- What skills, personal characteristics, mindset, resources, and supports were helpful to you?
- How did pivotal career moments challenge or reinforce your values, beliefs, and convictions?
- What is one idea that I want to be sure to remember/carry with me from the activity as I build my relationship with my mentee?

Sharing your own career story

True mentoring is much more than just answering occasional questions, it's an ongoing relationship of learning, dialogue, and challenge. This form of experiential learning can be very powerful and inspirational to students who are learning about potential paths for after graduation and want to know the stories of U of T alumni who went through the same process. Sharing your career story is a powerful tool in the mentoring relationship. Your experiences, challenges, and triumphs can provide valuable insights and inspiration for your mentee. Here are some tips on how to effectively share your career story:

1. **Be authentic and honest**
   Share both your successes and setbacks. Authenticity helps build trust and demonstrates that challenges are a natural part of any career journey.

2. **Highlight key milestones**
   Discuss significant moments in your career, such as promotions, career changes, and major projects. Explain why these milestones were important and how they influenced your career path.

3. **Discuss challenges and how you overcame them**
   Talk about the obstacles you faced and the strategies you used to overcome them. This can provide practical advice and encouragement for your mentee.

4. **Share lessons learned**
   Reflect on the lessons you've learned throughout your career. Share insights that could help your mentee navigate their own career path more effectively.

5. **Talk about decision-making processes**
   Explain how you made key career decisions, including the factors you considered and the outcomes. This can help your mentee develop their own decision-making framework.

6. **Incorporate personal values and motivations**
   Discuss the personal values and motivations that have guided your career choices. This can help your mentee understand the importance of aligning career decisions with personal values.

7. **Encourage questions and dialogue**
   Invite your mentee to ask questions and engage in a dialogue about your career story. This can help them relate your experiences to their own situation and gain deeper insights.

8. **Connect your story to their journey**
   Relate aspects of your career story to your mentee's goals and challenges. Highlight similarities and offer tailored advice based on your experiences.

By sharing your career story, you provide a tangible example of how a career can evolve and offer valuable lessons that can help guide your mentee's own journey.

Engaging mentees

As an alumni mentor, your role is crucial in guiding and inspiring your mentees. To build a strong, supportive relationship, you need to actively engage with empathy and effective communication. The **ROPES Learning Cycle** can help you achieve this by providing a structured approach to mentoring.

	Actions	Guiding questions
Review: Assessing prior knowledge	• Ask questions to understand what your mentees already know. • Express curiosity by drawing out mentees' existing knowledge and build on it to create a connection.	• What career skills or experiences have you already developed? • Can you share a recent situation where you applied problem-solving skills at work or in school? • What do you feel most confident about in your career journey so far?
Overview: Setting the stage	• Refer to an agenda or highlight goals and outcomes as you build your relationship. • Keep the overview short and to the point.	• We'll explore how to effectively network in the industry. By the end of this session, you'll hopefully know some key strategies for building meaningful connections. • We'll focus on refining your resume to highlight transferable skills. You can take my suggestions and edit your resume.
Presentation: Delivering the content	• Use visual, auditory, and kinesthetic aids to make the presentation dynamic. • Use concrete examples to illustrate key points.	• Here's an example of a LinkedIn profile that effectively showcases a professional's skills. Let's walk through how they structured their experiences. • Let me show you a scenario of someone transitioning careers and how they leveraged their previous experiences.
Exercise: Applying the knowledge	• Allow mentees to be active participants in their own knowledge creation. • Offer feedback and acknowledge their responses to show active listening.	• Let's take a few minutes to update your resume based on the feedback we've discussed. • Why don't you practice your elevator pitch with me? I can offer you some feedback after.
Summarize: Recapping the learning	• Highlight the main concepts or themes covered. • Provide a segue into the next topic or conclude the session effectively.	• We talked about effective networking techniques and how to tailor your approach for different platforms. What's one action you'll take moving forward? • We discussed different ways to highlight transferable skills on your resume. What's one thing you're going to change based on our conversation?

Engaging your mentees using participatory techniques can enhance communication and foster a more inclusive and supportive environment. Here are three effective techniques to consider:

1. Drawing people out

- Support people in clarifying their ideas and encourage deeper thinking.
- Let the speaker know you understand them and are interested in hearing more.
- Example: Use prompts like "What do you mean by...?" or "Can you say more about that?" to encourage further explanation.

2. Mirroring

- Paraphrase the speaker's words verbatim to show understanding.
- Effective for building trust, especially in newly formed groups.
- Example:
  Repeat the speaker's exact words to the group.
  If the speaker uses more than one sentence, extract and repeat key words they used.
  Avoid imitating the speaker; use your own voice and gestures.

3. Balancing

- Prevent the initial speakers from dominating the conversation and encourage broader participation.
- Helps draw out opinions from others who may feel silenced or hesitant to speak.
- Example: Use prompts like "Okay, now we know where three people stand; does anyone else have a different opinion?" or "Are there other ways of looking at this?" to invite diverse perspectives.

By incorporating these participatory techniques, you can create a more dynamic and engaging mentoring environment, ensuring that all voices are heard and valued.

Here are some additional tips to get you thinking about the interaction you will have with your mentee and how you would like to enhance your relationship.

- In most circumstances your mentee will be looking for guidance through their career. How will you help fill knowledge gaps and what opportunities will you suggest helping mentee grow and excel?
- Relationships take time and effort. An effective mentor takes the time to really get to know the mentee and as a result the mentee can learn more about themselves in the process. A mentor's responsiveness to a mentee's needs, goals, feelings, communication style, etc. can add to the strength of the relationship. What do you need to know about your mentee to form a strong relationship? What does the mentee need to know about him/herself?
- It can be easy to fall into a pseudo supervisor role for your mentee. Resist the pull. Focus on helping your mentee with their broader career path. Offer guidance and constructive feedback in a way that is supportive, not evaluative. How will you give feedback to your mentee as a mentor and not as a supervisor? What boundaries/ guidelines are important to you in this relationship?

Identifying and referring students in difficulty

Occasionally your mentees may encounter personal, academic and professional difficulties. As an alumni mentor, it is essential that you are able to recognize signs of distress and direct them to the appropriate resources.

Remember, you are not expected to support your mentees beyond your comfort level, skills, and time commitment. If you encounter a situation that feels beyond your capacity to handle, contact your division's alumni mentorship programs coordinator promptly for support and guidance on how to proceed.

What are the signs when your mentees are in difficult situations?

Changes in behaviour	• Withdrawal from social interactions and academic work • Unexplained bursts and disruptive behaviour
Changes in mood	• Noticeable changes in mood from one session to the next • Expressions of feelings of despair and hopelessness
Changes in appearance	• Noticeable weight gain or loss • Lack of personal care
Significant changes in identity or relationships	• Break-ups or illness/death of a family member • Personal, sexual, or cultural identity exploration
Situations requiring immediate referral on action	• Suicide references: Direct or indirect mentions of suicide, feelings of worthlessness, or hopelessness • Harm to others: Verbal/non-verbal threats, intimidating behavior, violent acts • Substance abuse: Drug and alcohol misuse

As an alumni mentor, you can intervene by:

- Paying attention as the student describes their situation.
- Asking questions to ensure you understand their specific needs.
- Showing empathy and concern for their well-being.
- Offering hope and providing reassurance.
- Sharing Resources such as printed information, website links to students. You can refer to Appendix B – Tools and Resources for more information.
- Arranging a follow-up meeting to check on their progress.
- Referring them to appropriate resources on campus, depending on the concerns.

Resources on campus

Academic issues

- **The Registrar's Office:** For St. George students, their college or faculty registrar is their resource for all academic advising issues.
- **A professor and/or TAs:** If your mentee is having difficulty in a course or have gotten a dismaying mark on an exam or paper, suggest they speak to their TA or professor.
- **The Centre for Learning Strategy Support** offers workshops on academic strategies and individual meetings with learning strategists, on topics such as exam anxiety, time management, and writing challenges.

Physical and mental health

- **The Registrar's Office** can also help with personal emergencies and financial counseling.
- Accessibility Services offers services for students with physical, mental health, or learning disabilities.
- Health and Wellness provides a range of health services (appointments and walk-ins) and wellness programs.
- Contact your **Mentorship Programs Coordinator** to notify them of the situation so they can intervene as needed.

Finding community

- Sexual & Gender Diversity Office (SGDO) provides resources, and educational opportunities to support 2SLGBTQ+ students, staff, and faculty
- Multi-Faith Centre provides an inclusive space for you to engage in community, where you can learn, grow and explore diverse cultural and spiritual perspectives.
- Hart House is a centre for experiential education outside the classroom at U of T, they provide range of programs and services in fitness & wellness and arts.
- Clubs & Leadership Development provides students with leadership training opportunities to develop critical skills in team dynamics, conflict resolution, equity and inclusion

Career exploration

- Career Start is a self-directed online career tool that encourages students to choose from nine common career stages and discuss their next steps using suggested supports and strategies.
- Career Services at U of T Mississauga, U of T Scarborough, and Career Exploration & Education St. George offers over 50 programs, resources, and services, including resume reviews, interview preparation, job shadowing, job boards, employer information sessions, and career fairs.
- Career Navigator connects students with their alumni network and showcases possibilities with a University of Toronto degree.
- U of T Hub on Ten Thousand Coffees enables students to connect with alumni for networking opportunities over a coffee chat.

Facilitating growth and development

In today's dynamic job market, career paths are no longer the linear progressions they once were. Unlike traditional linear career paths, non-linear career paths involve career changes and seizing opportunities outside of one's initial field of study or industry. This non-linear approach to career development allows for greater flexibility, diverse experiences, and the opportunity to continually grow and adapt in a rapidly changing world. Embracing this new paradigm can lead to unexpected and rewarding opportunities.

Fostering a non-linear career mindset

As an alumni mentor, you can inspire your mentee to actively pursue new experiences by networking, acquiring new skills, and exploring various job roles. This approach will help them embrace curiosity, openness, flexibility, optimism, calculated risk-taking, and persistence. To help your mentees embrace new opportunities and share their own unique career paths, consider asking these questions to invigorate these qualities:

Curiosity and openness	• What are some industries or roles you've always been curious about but never explored? • How can you learn more about these areas?
Flexibility	• How open are you to taking on roles that might not align with your original career plan? • What skills or experiences could you gain from these opportunities?
Optimism	• Can you identify potential benefits of switching career paths, even if the change seems daunting? • How can you maintain a positive outlook during times of uncertainty?
Calculated risk-taking	• What are some risks you are willing to take to pursue a new career opportunity? • How can you mitigate potential downsides of these risks?
Persistence	• How do you handle setbacks or rejections when exploring new career paths? • What strategies can you use to stay motivated and persistent in your efforts?

Effective networking strategies for career success

Networking is a critical element of career development, as it opens doors to opportunities that may not be accessible through traditional means. Networking goes beyond simply exchanging business cards or connecting on LinkedIn. It's about building meaningful relationships that support both personal and professional development. As an alumni mentor, you can help your mentees navigate their career paths and expand their professional networks.

Encourage mentees to see networking as a learning opportunity rather than a task to check off. Adopting a curiosity-driven approach can help them discover new ideas and perspectives, reducing the stress that often accompanies networking. This mindset shift will make the experience more enjoyable and fruitful.

Key elements of effective networking

- **Personal reflection:** Encourage mentees to reflect on their own experiences and goals before they begin networking. Understanding what they can offer and what they hope to gain will guide them in forming purposeful, meaningful connections.
- **Finding your community of support:** Help mentees connect with individuals who share similar interests and career aspirations. Mentorship programs and events are excellent avenues for mentees to connect with professionals globally. Remind them to participate actively in discussions and to follow up with contacts afterward.
- **Preparation and research:** Guide mentees in preparing before they reach out to new contacts. Encourage them to research the person's career path and interests to make their conversations more relevant and demonstrate genuine interest.
- **Gentle networking:** For mentees who may find networking intimidating, suggest starting with low-pressure approaches like sending an email or connecting via social media. Remind them that networking is a skill that improves with practice, and it's okay to start small.

Help mentees develop thoughtful questions that lead to deeper conversations. Some areas they can explore include:

	Guiding questions for mentees
Career path & training	• What has your career path been like? What was the most unexpected learning that happened along the way? • Where do you see this field in 5 years? • If you could do it all over again, would you choose the same path for yourself?
Current position & skills	• What skills are essential for success in your role? • How would you recommend I build this skill competency? • Could you tell me about one main challenge of your position?
Company culture	• What kind of professional development opportunities exist? • What kind of supervision did you have starting out and what kind do you have now? • In your opinion, what is the most important equity, diversity, inclusion and access initiative the company has undertaken in the past year?
Career advice	• What advice do you wish you had received when you were starting out? • What other jobs or fields would you suggest I explore? • Is there anyone else you think I should speak with?

Encountering challenges – reframing failure

As an alumni mentor, one of your key roles is to help your mentees navigate challenges and reframe moments of failure. Mentees may struggle with setbacks, especially early in their careers or academic pursuits. By guiding your mentees to reframe failure, you can help them transform these difficult experiences into opportunities for growth and learning.

Reframing failure: a growth opportunity

Failure is not the end of the road; it is part of the journey toward improvement. When your mentees face challenges, encourage them to acknowledge their initial emotional response—whether frustration, disappointment, or self-doubt. These emotions are valid and part of the learning process.

However, the key to growth lies in how they interpret these moments. Encourage your mentees to shift their perspective from "I'm not good enough" to "What can I learn from this?" This mindset allows them to extract valuable lessons from their experiences and apply them to future challenges.

Here are a few strategies you can use to guide them through this reframing process:

- **Ask reflective questions:** Help your mentees to think critically about their challenges by asking, "What went wrong?" and "How can this experience help you improve?"
- **Focus on effort and resilience:** Emphasize that success is built on perseverance, and failure is merely a step toward progress. Help them understand that their effort is what matters most in the long run.
- **Introduce the power of 'yet':** When mentees feel defeated, remind them that they haven't succeeded yet. This small shift in language fosters a growth mindset and keeps them motivated.

The role of growth mindset

One of the most valuable tools you can provide your mentees is the ability to develop a growth mindset—the belief that experience and skills can be cultivated through effort, feedback, and persistence. When your mentees hit a roadblock, emphasize that they are adaptable and capable of learning from every challenge they encounter. Remind them that failure is not permanent but rather an invitation to refine their approach and try again.

As a mentor, you have the unique ability to model this mindset through your own experiences. Sharing your personal stories of overcoming failure or setbacks can make these concepts more relatable and demonstrate that growth is possible even from difficult situations.

Tips for supporting mentees

- **Validate their emotions:** Acknowledge that facing failure is tough, but it's important to not let it define them. Offer empathetic support and remind them that setbacks happen to everyone.
- **Promote reflection:** Encourage your mentees to reflect on their experiences and identify specific areas for improvement. This step transforms failure into a constructive learning experience.
- **Celebrate resilience:** Recognize their efforts in overcoming challenges, regardless of the outcome. Celebrating resilience encourages them to stay persistent and engaged in their development.

By helping your mentees reframe failure, you are equipping them with lifelong skills to tackle future challenges with confidence and resilience. This not only supports their career growth but also strengthens their ability to adapt and thrive in the face of adversity.

Appendix B — Tools and resources

Additional resources for alumni mentors

- Identify, assist, refer (iar) asynchronous online training - prepares you with skills and information to support individuals experiencing different types of challenges that impact mental health.
- Digital Connections Toolkit is a resource developed by the University of Toronto's Innovation Hub to help students facilitate connections online. This resource offers different online engagement tools based on interaction type, group size and platform.
- You can watch boundary awareness in your mentorship relationship to help you understand and create boundaries with yourself and your mentees
- Thinking about your personal journey is a worksheet for mentors that enables them to participate in self-reflection to develop their own unique mentoring style based on life experiences.
- Building rapport is an asynchronous training module that outlines the importance of building rapport in a mentoring relationship

On and off campus resources for mentee engagement

Mental health and wellness

- University of Toronto Health and Wellness (UT Mississauga, UT St. George, and UT Scarborough) – provides a range of health services for students physical and mental health, wellness program
- University of Toronto Community Safety Office - offers short-term support and assistance for students experiencing personal safety concerns such as stalking, bullying, threats, intimate partner, or family violence, and more.
- University of Toronto Campus Safety Special Constable Service (for emergency)
  - » St. George (416) 978–2222
  - » Mississauga (905) 569–4333
  - » Scarborough (416) 978–2222
- Navi is a virtual resource to help students find the mental health resources they need.
- Mental Health Resources Serving Toronto
- Ontario 211 is a helpline that easily connects people to different social services, programs and community supports
- Community Resource Centres – Toronto Central

Career resources

- Career Start is a self-directed online career tool that encourages students to choose from nine common career stages and discuss their next steps using suggested supports and strategies.
- Career Services at U of T Mississauga,

Part 4: What's next?

This section outlines suggestions on when and how to conclude the mentorship relationship and how to build opportunities for lifelong learning.

Impactful reflection

A crucial part of concluding your mentoring relationship involves reflecting on the experience and discussing the outcomes with your mentee. Ending this journey may bring about feelings of uncertainty. As you and your mentee approach the end of your time together, it's beneficial to close and redefine the relationship thoughtfully. This process offers a chance to highlight the personal and mutual learning and development that has occurred. Revisiting the learning goals set during the early stages of your journey can serve as a foundation for reflecting on growth and planning future steps. Preparing for closure helps articulate the evolution of your relationship and ensures a positive conclusion. Consider the following questions to facilitate a thoughtful reflection between you and your mentee, whether through an informal conversation or individually in written form, depending on what works best for both of you.

	Guiding questions for mentors and mentees
Revisit your purpose	• What were our goals in working together? • Why did we join the mentorship program? • Which goals did we accomplish together, and which ones remain a work in progress?
Reflecting on growth	• What were the most significant personal and professional changes we experienced during our mentoring relationship? • How has our mentoring relationship influenced our approach to challenges and opportunities? • What were the most valuable lessons we learned from our time together?
Feedback and improvement	• Is there anything you think we could have done differently to enhance your learning experience? • How has our relationship evolved over time? • What are our thoughts and feelings as we bring this chapter to a close?
Future directions	• How do we plan to apply the insights and skills gained from our mentoring relationship in our future endeavors? • What are our next steps, and how can we continue to build on the progress we've made?
Ongoing connection	• How can we stay in touch and continue to support each other's growth? • Are there any specific areas where we would like ongoing advice or mentorship?
Personal reflections (for alumni mentor)	• What has been the most rewarding part of this mentoring experience for us? • How has this relationship impacted our personal development? • How can you apply the insights and skills gained from the mentorship relationship, such as leadership in one-on-one advising, to your professional roles, like supervising employees in the workplace?

Ending a mentoring relationship

It's crucial to establish a safe exit plan at the beginning of a mentoring relationship so that if it needs to end early, both parties feel supported and comfortable. The key to ending a mentoring relationship is to be direct and honest rather than avoiding the issue. Acting with integrity and respect for your mentees ensures smooth communication. Remember, it's natural for the relationship to change or evolve over time. Ending the mentoring relationship respectfully acknowledges each other's time and opens up opportunities for other development and support.

When and why should you end your mentoring relationship?

1. Pre-set end date
In many mentorship programs, a pre-set end date is determined by the program coordinator. This structure includes specific start and end dates, providing a clear timeline for the mentoring relationship.

2. Choosing your own end date
When given the flexibility to choose your own end date, it's best to set this date at the beginning of the relationship. This initial end date can be adjusted as the relationship progresses but establishing it early on creates a structured framework for your mentoring journey. Based on this date, you and your mentees can develop a plan for your time together, which is crucial for setting and achieving goals. This planning should be part of the initial discussions when sharing expectations and setting intentions.

If the mentoring relationship has already begun without an end date, assess the current status of the relationship and the progress made toward the goals. From this point, alumni mentor and mentee can collaboratively decide on a suitable timeframe needed to achieve their objectives.

3. Ending prior to the agreed-upon end date
Mentoring relationships can require significant emotional and mental energy from both parties. Sometimes, it's necessary to step away to replenish energy. Ending a mentoring relationship early doesn't have to be uncomfortable; it can be a time to assess progress and celebrate accomplishments. Here are some scenarios where ending early might be appropriate:

- **Completion of mentoring goals:** Once specific goals are met, continued mentoring may no longer be necessary. This signifies that the mentoring relationship has fulfilled its purpose.
- **Balancing commitments:** Changes in personal or professional circumstances, such as new job opportunities or increased commitments, can disrupt the mentoring relationship, making early termination necessary.
- Mismatched Expectations and Needs: When either party feels their expectations and needs are not being met, it can lead to dissatisfaction and reduce the effectiveness of the relationship. In such cases, ending the mentoring relationship allows both participants to seek more compatible opportunities.
- Lack of Chemistry or Compatibility: If the mentor and mentee cannot establish a strong connection and rapport, it's best to end the relationship and find more suitable matches.
- Personal Growth and Independence: As mentees acquire necessary skills and knowledge, they may outgrow the need for continued mentoring, indicating a successful transition to independence.

Signs it's time to end the mentoring relationship

Here are indicators that it might be time to conclude your mentoring relationship:

- Conversations have become flat and predictable.
- Goals have been met.
- Meetings are focused on unrelated topics.
- Lack of meetings for weeks or even months.
- Changes in goals or priorities.
- Uncertainty about commitment from either party.

Remember, ending the relationship now doesn't mean you can't reconnect with your mentee in the future. In formal programs with an assigned end date, you can continue a less formal ongoing relationship if both parties see value in maintaining the connection.

Guide to end your mentoring relationship

Another person may change over time. When you decide to end the formal mentoring relationship, consider the following suggestions:

1. Set a specific date: Inform your program coordinator and your mentee about the date for your last meeting well in advance.

2. Start positively: Acknowledge what you have gained from the relationship and express appreciation. Use the conversation as a learning opportunity to discuss what worked well and what could be improved.

3. **Be honest and supportive:** Explain the reason for ending the relationship candidly and diplomatically. Rehearse what you plan to say and be prepared to provide specific examples.

4. **Tie up loose ends:** Ensure that no details are left unresolved. If possible, provide alternatives or referrals.

5. **Maintain confidentiality:** Keep the details of the termination conversation confidential.

By setting clear expectations and communication, both alumni mentor and mentee can ensure that the relationship can be ended smoothly and respectfully. This will prevent uncomfortable conversations or awkward disappearances.

Continuing learning

As a mentor, your role doesn't have to end with the formal closing of the mentorship program. One of the most valuable lessons you can share with your mentees is the importance of continuous learning throughout their careers. By fostering a mindset of lifelong learning, you're helping your mentees stay adaptable, curious, and open to new opportunities as they grow professionally.

Here are some key strategies you can share with your mentees to encourage them to keep learning after the program concludes:

- **Stay connected:** Encourage your mentees to maintain the relationships they've built, not just with you but with their broader network. A quick email check-in or virtual coffee chat can keep connections strong and open doors for future collaboration.
- **Find new mentors:** Let mentees know it's okay—and even encouraged—to seek out new mentors as their careers evolve. Different stages of their journey will require different kinds of guidance, and they should feel empowered to approach other professionals who can provide fresh insights.
  - » The U of T hub on Ten Thousand Coffees is a free, online networking platform for the entire U of T community to make new connections easily and efficiently. More than 14,000 alumni professionals and students use the hub to give and get career advice.
  - » There are other mentorship programs at their colleges, faculties, and academic departments that can help them connect with other alumni mentors.
- **Engage in professional development:** Direct your mentees toward professional development opportunities such as workshops, webinars, or industry events. These experiences help them stay updated on trends and give them practical skills for career advancement. Encourage your mentees to check out other resources and programs hosted by Career Exploration & Education such as:
  - » In the field offers an opportunity to learn about different careers in an industry by visiting an organization's workplace.
  - » Job shadowing offers an opportunity for deep insight into a particular role. Through a short-term placement, you can connect with diverse individuals, explore potential career paths, deepen understanding of your interests, values, and skills, and gain first-hand insight into a day in the life of a role.
  - » Identities @ work brings together students, recent alumni, a career educator, and a campus partner to discuss, unpack, challenge and reflect on questions about work and our identities.
  - » Students & alumni networking events connect mentees with alumni and professionals in different industries, help them gain valuable insights, and expand their network.
- **Self-directed learning:** Encourage them to take ownership of their learning. Books, podcasts, and online resources are a great way to stay informed and grow personally and professionally.
  - » **LinkedIn learning:** Offers courses across various industries and skill sets.
  - » **Coursera:** Provides access to university-level courses on a wide range of subjects.
  - » **Udemy:** Great for flexible, affordable learning on topics from programming to leadership.
  - » **Local industry-specific events:** Point them to local or regional conferences and networking events in their field.

Contact

Should you have any questions, comments, feedback, please contact your divisional alumni mentorship program coordinator. We truly appreciate your participation, and we hope that you will enjoy the experience.

UNIVERSITY OF
TORONTO

DEFY
GRAVITY