

Becoming a Resilient Scientist

SERIES

Workbook V:

Managing Up to Maximize Mentoring Relationships

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Fall 2022

**This workbook is intended to accompany *Becoming A Resilient Scientist*
Unit 5: Managing Up to Maximize Mentoring Relationships.**

It is most effective when it is used after attending/watching the workshop lecture. The exercises in this workbook are designed to help you process and solidify what you've learned in the lecture and to provide you with additional resources. Although it is encouraged that you complete the exercises, it is not required.

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MANAGING UP TO MAXIMIZE MENTORING RELATIONSHIPS

MY MENTORING NEEDS

Is there something
you need mentoring on?



Make a list of all the things you currently **need, want, or expect mentoring on**. Think broadly and list as many as come to mind.

MANAGING UP TO MAXIMIZE MENTORING RELATIONSHIPS

GUIDING ROLES

There are many **different roles** that mentors may play as you move through your career. One person may serve many of these functions; however, we often need many individuals to fulfill these needs throughout our lives. Some common roles include:

Supervisor

Someone responsible for making sure work gets done

Mentor

Someone responsible for advising and guidance on personal and professional development

Coach

Someone who teaches specific skills important for advancing your work and career

Advocate

Someone who speaks up on your behalf regarding career advancement



MANAGING UP TO MAXIMIZE MENTORING RELATIONSHIPS

OUTLINING YOUR SUPPORT NETWORK

Use the space below to think more deeply about **your network**.

Name	This person currently and consistently provides me with	I would like them to provide me with... (What is missing? What do you need more of?)	I can go about discussing these wants/needs with them by...	If they are unable to fulfill these wants/needs, I can seek supplemental support with...
Supervisor(s):				
Mentor(s):				
Coach(es):				
Advocate(s):				

MANAGING UP TO MAXIMIZE MENTORING RELATIONSHIPS

THE IMPORTANCE OF MULTIPLE MENTORS

Having multiple mentors supports a **multifaceted career**, helps us **develop more broadly** across our lives, and **mitigates risks** associated with having *only one* person to serve as our mentor (or coach, advocate, boss, and so on). Before connecting with new mentors, it is important to consider what you would like to gain from this relationship

.....

Consider your answer to these questions as you seek out a new mentor:

- *What am I looking for guidance about? Does s/he have the expertise (or access to expertise) I need?*
- *Where can I find a new mentor? What networks can I tap into?*
- *Can I use my current mentor to gain additional support and connections?*
- *Once I have connected with someone, what are the signs that it will feel like a comfortable enough relationship?*
- *Are they available?*
- *How can I ask for the right balance of positive input and hard questions?*
- *Can I learn about their style from their current mentees to see if it might be a good fit for me?*
- *What are the risks/rewards of asking this person for support?*
- *Does this have to be a formal relationship, or can I go to them for support on an as needed basis?*

MANAGING UP TO MAXIMIZE MENTORING RELATIONSHIPS

SEEKING OUT ADDITIONAL MENTORS

Use this sheet to reflect on characteristics that you value and are looking for in a potential mentor.

Possible questions for a potential mentor:

- What do you envision to be the ideal mentor-mentee relationship?
- What is your work style when supporting trainees?
- What expectations do you hold for your mentees?
- What can I bring to the relationship that is helpful?



I am looking for a mentor that is...

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Strict - I do best with hard boundaries | <input type="checkbox"/> Flexible - I do best with autonomy |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Focused solely on work | <input type="checkbox"/> Focused on work and personhood as a whole |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Fact-oriented, "cut-and-dry" | <input type="checkbox"/> Facts supplemented with anecdotes |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Shares similar hobbies/interests as I do | <input type="checkbox"/> Able to introduce me to new hobbies/interests |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Instructional, direction-based | <input type="checkbox"/> Action- or model-based |
| <input type="checkbox"/> _____ | <input type="checkbox"/> _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> _____ | <input type="checkbox"/> _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> _____ | <input type="checkbox"/> _____ |

If there is someone I have in mind, I should consider whether this person is...

- | | |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Available (time, energy) | <input type="checkbox"/> Skilled at providing meaningful feedback |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Willing to invest in this relationship | <input type="checkbox"/> Able to receive feedback well |
| <input type="checkbox"/> A strong communicator | <input type="checkbox"/> More of a growth than a fixed mindset |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Non-judgmental | <input type="checkbox"/> Knowledgeable of outside resources |
| <input type="checkbox"/> A good listener | <input type="checkbox"/> Passionate about the topic |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Resilient & inspirational | <input type="checkbox"/> Respectful |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Open to new perspectives | <input type="checkbox"/> Able to monitor my/our progress |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Adaptable & open | <input type="checkbox"/> A lifelong learner |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Empathetic | <input type="checkbox"/> Willing to share their knowledge |

MANAGING UP TO MAXIMIZE MENTORING RELATIONSHIPS

STEPS TO CONNECTING WITH A NEW MENTOR

Often connecting with and preparing for a meeting with a potential new mentor can be stressful, especially in academic or research programs.

Reflect on the questions below and use your answers as a guide to help prepare yourself for **contacting this person**, as well as preparing for a **first meeting** with them.



- **How** will you approach this person?
Email, phone call, text, in-person meeting?
- **When** and **what** will you communicate to this potential new mentor?
- **Which needs** of yours will you communicate to them?
- How will you **prepare to be knowledgeable** about their interests?
- What **supplemental materials** might you want to bring?
Typically some data or a CV/resumé
- **How much time** will you need to plan for your meeting?
Include the time it takes to prepare before and debrief after
- How might you **follow up** with a thank you and request to meet again (if appropriate)?

MANAGING UP TO MAXIMIZE MENTORING RELATIONSHIPS

MANAGING UP

In any mentoring relationship, we need to learn to manage up, so we can effectively work with our PI, supervisor(s), manager(s), and so on. First, reflect on the **current relationship you have with your primary mentor**.

Reflect on the areas in this relationship (i.e., communication, empathy, cultural similarities) that mesh well, while also noting areas that pose obstacles or challenges.



My **communication style** in the workplace: _____

My **mentor's communication style** in the workplace: _____

Areas in which our styles **mesh well**: _____

Areas in which our styles **pose challenges**: _____

Areas in which our styles **require adaptation**: _____

MANAGING UP TO MAXIMIZE MENTORING RELATIONSHIPS

MANAGING UP (CONTINUED)

When it comes to my overall goals, pros and cons of my mentor's approach and priorities in the following areas include:

	PROS	CONS
SCIENCE		
PROFESSIONAL/ CAREER		
PSYCHOSOCIAL		
EMOTIONAL		
Other		



MANAGING UP TO MAXIMIZE MENTORING RELATIONSHIPS

CONFLICT STYLES

Throughout many of our long-term and most of our meaningful relationships, **conflicts naturally arise**. While sometimes uncomfortable, these interactions play a critical role in any mentor-mentee relationship.

As these situations can often be challenging, it is helpful to first understand more about conflict, particularly the **conflict style of yourself and that of your mentor**. Just as each of us has differing communication styles, we each also use differing conflict styles. These styles include **avoiding, accommodating, compromising, collaborating, and competing**.



Reflect on the following questions and consider your answers as a guide in navigating your relationships with current or future mentors. Think about where you see opportunity for synergy or can decrease opposition.

- *What is my primary way of managing conflict?*
- *What is my perception of my mentor's way of managing conflict?*
- *What are the hot buttons and things that irritate them?*
- *When might the best time be to approach my mentor regarding challenging topics and conflict?*
- *Knowing this, and acknowledging that people are who they are, how will I thrive with this mentor?*
- *What cognitive distortions, emotional blind-spots, and/or assumptions are holding me back from addressing issues?*
- *What type of support might I need before and after a conflict with my mentor?*
- *Who can I turn to for that support?*

MANAGING UP TO MAXIMIZE MENTORING RELATIONSHIPS

CONFLICT STYLES (CONTINUED)

	APPROPRIATE WHEN	NOT APPROPRIATE WHEN
AVOIDING	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> When the issue at hand does not feel critical to address at this time When you do not feel safe speaking up 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> When the issue at hand does matter/make a difference When avoiding is part of an unhealthy pattern (within a relationship or situation)
ACCOMODATING	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> When any outcome is okay, or at least tolerable for both parties 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> When the difference in outcome is critical When accommodating is part of an unhealthy pattern <i>(within a relationship or situation)</i>
COMPROMISING	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> When either outcome is fine When a win/lose it better than a lose/lose 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The solution does not work for you and is not tolerable
COMPETING	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> When the solution is critical to you When you are sure you are right about the options, when safety/ethics are involved 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> When this is your go-to style and you often find yourself alienating people
COLLABORATING	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> When relationship, equality, and commitment to work from all parties is a primary driver. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> When there are limitations on time, manipulation, work overload, or other primary goals.

After reviewing this chart, think about your answers to the following questions:

- When do you feel you use each of these styles appropriately?
- When do you use them inappropriately?
- What styles might you like to try moving forward?

<https://web.mit.edu/collaboration/mainsite/modules/module1/1.11.5.html#:~:text=The%20Collaborating%20Style%20is%20when,gaining%20commitment%2C%20and%20improving%20relationships>

https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Ralph-Kilmann/publication/265565339_Thomas-Kilmann_conflict_MODE_instrument/links/558c15d908aee43bf6ae1917/Thomas-Kilmann-conflict-MODE-instrument.pdf

MANAGING UP TO MAXIMIZE MENTORING RELATIONSHIPS

ADJUSTING TO A MENTOR'S COMMUNICATION STYLE

The table below provides **adaptations** that may help you in interactions with those using differing communication styles.

Keep in mind that **each person is different**, and most use a **mix of styles**. So, these are suggestions, not rules. Use your judgement and what you know about your mentor to choose which adaptations to try.



If your mentor is...	You can try to...
AMIABLE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be mindful of a calm, slower pace, tone, and energy • Invite conversation and opinion sharing • Welcome critical feedback, questions, and curiosity • Avoid judgment and use of aggressive tone • Listen patiently and with curiosity • Create mutual agreements on outcomes and goals • Maintain ongoing communication and collaboration
EXPRESSIVE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be respectful of the energetic/assertive energy in the conversation • Be open and responsive • Recognize debate as idea formation rather than aggression/conflict • Balance creative socialization and focused conversation • Focus on the big idea/main goal before working out an action plan • Use anecdotes as appropriate • Write down outcomes, responsibilities, timeframes. Follow up later
ANALYTICAL	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be prepared with information from multiple perspectives • Present more formally than personally, be respectful of time • Use supporting facts and precise language • Explain risks and rewards involved • Allow for process time after the interaction • Be concrete and detailed • Anticipate questions and skepticism. Follow up later in writing
DRIVER	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be respectful of time and time limits of meetings • Be direct, efficient, specific, and clear • Speak in an organized and concise manner • Be results-focused and provide evidence for support • Consider all options – If proposed a plausible solution, do not submit to a compromise that does not work for you

MANAGING UP TO MAXIMIZE MENTORING RELATIONSHIPS

ADAPTING TO ONE ANOTHER IN THE WORKPLACE

After reflecting on your style and the style of your primary mentor, it often becomes clear that **mutual adaptation is needed to foster a more cohesive and productive work environment.**

The next several pages of this workbook will help you in creating change within yourself, and will provide ways to initiate clear and efficient communication as you request adaptation from your mentor.



With the differences in the style of myself and my mentor in mind, I will actively strive to “flex” my style by...

*It can be hard to make changes to our style. In order to remember and execute the adaptations that I want to make, I will use strategies such as...
Consider self-talk, mindfulness in the moment, regulation, concrete reminders, etc.*

I will look for signs that my adaptations are working by...

Examples: Noticing the way I feel during and after interactions, noticing positive changes in the work and/or in the relationship, directly asking for feedback; seeking input from trusted supports, etc.

MANAGING UP TO MAXIMIZE MENTORING RELATIONSHIPS

COMMUNICATION ADJUSTMENTS WHILE MANAGING UP

Some communication tactics that I have noticed my mentor appreciates include...

Based on what I know about myself and about my mentor, some achievable and comfortable ways of adapting include...

Positive changes I hope to see after trying these adaptations include...

MANAGING UP TO MAXIMIZE MENTORING RELATIONSHIPS

CHALLENGING CONVERSATIONS WITH A MENTOR

Just as you need to adapt to your mentor's style, there will be times when you should **discuss mutual adaptation** and/or request that they **adapt to you**.



This can be done through conversations focused on your ultimate goals, wants, and needs. In order to have this conversation, begin thinking about the following questions:

- *What are my rights and responsibilities in the relationship?*
- *What assertiveness skills might I need when I speak with my mentor?*
- *What are our communication/conflict style differences that may arise, and how could I manage those?*
- *How can I manage the cognitive distortions that come up around these conversations?*
- *How can I manage my own stress as I enter this conversation?*
- *What perspective do I hope to get across?*
- *What might my mentor's perspective be, and how can I stay open to it?*
- *What is my clear ask (what I am hoping to convey)?*
- *How might I answer questions that my mentor has during this conversation?*
- *Are there external factors that may influence the conversation, such as deadlines, the needs of the group, the influence of collaborators, etc.?*
- *Who can I go to for support and practice?*

MANAGING UP TO MAXIMIZE MENTORING RELATIONSHIPS

MANAGING STRESS DURING CHALLENGING INTERACTIONS WITH MY MENTOR

Now reflect on the **emotions and their impact** when working on managing up



REFLECT

- *How am I coming into this? Open and optimistic? Closed and fearful? Pessimistic? Anxious? How could this be impacting my perceptions?*
- *What am I physically feeling right now?*
 - *Where in my body am I feeling it?*
 - *What data is this feeling providing me?*

Emotions are critical data and should not be ignored

However, when we act on emotions alone and do not slow down to think things through, we sometimes react emotionally instead of responding thoughtfully.

- *What is my emotional “reaction” tendency?*
- *How do I act when I don’t integrate both emotion and thoughtfulness in my reactions?*
- *Instead of reacting, how would I like to respond to those feelings?*
Examples: breathe, ask clarifying questions, slow down and summarize, pause, refocus on the process and recalibrate...)

MANAGING UP TO MAXIMIZE MENTORING RELATIONSHIPS

IMPACT OF COGNITIVE DISTORTIONS ON MANAGING UP

Often, a large barrier to managing up is the **presence of cognitive distortions**. We begin to significantly worry about our interactions which makes the process much more challenging in practice.

In this exercise, examine the presence of your distortions, and work on ways to **deal with those distortions** so that you can create more successful interactions with your mentor.



First, think of a specific situation that you are currently having difficulty approaching or talking to your mentor about. Consider the cognitive distortions you are or might be experiencing.

Now, circle the cognitive distortion that may be present for you:

All or nothing thinking	Mind-reading
Catastrophizing	Predicting the future
Overgeneralizing	Minimizing the positive
Emotional reasoning	Imposter fears
Jumping to conclusions	Other: _____



Use the blank tables on the following pages to work out how you are currently feeling about **two independent scenarios** and **which cognitive distortions** you may be experiencing while navigating them.

MANAGING UP TO MAXIMIZE MENTORING RELATIONSHIPS

IMPACT OF COGNITIVE DISTORTIONS ON MANAGING UP (CONTINUED)

The worst-case scenario response(s) that are playing around in my mind.

SCENARIO 1	SCENARIO 2

Concrete evidence that demonstrates this scenario is a possibility.

SCENARIO 1	SCENARIO 2

Distorted thoughts, experiences, and anxieties that could be prompting these worries.

SCENARIO 1	SCENARIO 2

MANAGING UP TO MAXIMIZE MENTORING RELATIONSHIPS

IMPACT OF COGNITIVE DISTORTIONS ON MANAGING UP (CONTINUED)

Am I acting based on cognitive distortions?

SCENARIO 1	SCENARIO 2

What concrete evidence from past encounters with my mentor may be impacting my decision making?

SCENARIO 1	SCENARIO 2

If the worst-case scenario came to be, how could I manage it?

SCENARIO 1	SCENARIO 2

MANAGING UP TO MAXIMIZE MENTORING RELATIONSHIPS

MANAGING STRESS DURING CHALLENGING INTERACTIONS WITH MY MENTOR

How can I use what I have learned about effective communication, support systems, resources, and resilience in this scenario?

SCENARIO 1	SCENARIO 2

Who can I go to for help managing these distortions?

SCENARIO 1	SCENARIO 2



The **best-case scenario** is _____

The **most probable scenario** is _____

- *What evidence do I have to demonstrate that the best/most probable scenarios may be a possibility?*
- *If these scenarios were to become reality, how can I reflect on this experience in the future to manage future cognitive distortions?*

MANAGING UP TO MAXIMIZE MENTORING RELATIONSHIPS

PURSUING CHANGE IN YOUR MENTORSHIP

Not everything will always be obvious, especially when navigating social and professional dynamics. The relationship with your mentor, like many others, comes with a set of **unwritten expectations**, such as:

- It should be rewarding and valuable.
- It should be built on mutual respect, trust, commitment, and common goals.
- Both parties should be willing to make adjustments to meet the needs of the partnership
- If your needs are not being met, it is a natural and usually appropriate to take action (or not to).



If the relationship you have with your mentor is or feels **unsafe, toxic, traumatic, harmful, chronically distressing, or generally unsupportive**, then changes must be considered.

Common signs that you may need to consider making a change include consistently feeling...

- Generally confused or mislead
- As if you have had very little or no growth/have made no progress
- That you are not learning from them or the mentor relationship
- They are unable/unwilling to provide you a safe/supportive environment
- Mutual adaption attempts consistently fail
- Unheard, invisible, or looked down on
- Unsafe, disrespected, treated unfairly, or bullied
- That they are hindering opportunities to fail, learn, and grow
- Like a failure, incompetent, or inherently flawed after you speak with them
- That you are blown off, ignored, or bottom-tier in priorities
- That your goals have changed/they no longer carry the expertise you need
- That the other party is disinterested in providing guidance or seems annoyed with the responsibilities in the relationship

MANAGING UP TO MAXIMIZE MENTORING RELATIONSHIPS

MAKING DIFFICULT DECISIONS

In all outlined cases on the previous page, it is critical to speak with a **trusted support person** in your life. These feelings are critical data that something is happening in yourself and/or in the relationship. It is challenging to reconcile these feelings alone, especially when we are living in them. Utilize your relationships with trusted others as you choose a plan of action.



Who can you go to for support with these issues:

Family: _____

Friends: _____

Institutional supports/offices: _____

Mental health professionals: _____

Trusted colleagues: _____

Other mentors: _____



Consider what might get in the way of asking for help/support.

What are the **barriers** to this?

In addition, what might you do to **overcome those barriers** given the critical nature of asking for help in these difficult circumstances?

MANAGING UP TO MAXIMIZE MENTORING RELATIONSHIPS

MAKING DIFFICULT DECISIONS (CONTINUED)

When considering hard choices, first gain perspective by determining if the issues is a **"PROBLEM"** (large and critical), or more of a **"problem"** (small and more manageable). Then, **consider your options to create change** –even the uncomfortable ones – while evaluating the risks and rewards of each of your choices.

Keep in mind the idea of **discomfort tolerance**: *Just because something is uncomfortable doesn't mean we shouldn't consider it as a possible choice for positive change.*

Choices to create change:

1. Accept things how they are and do nothing
2. Try to change the situation
3. Try to change ourselves and our response to the situation
4. Leave the situation



A Decision Framework

First, identify the magnitude of the issue at hand.

a "problem"	a "PROBLEM"
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Challenging, frustrating, uncomfortable – but doable• Something you are working on together• A reframing opportunity• Not impacting growth, progress, passion, or confidence	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Hindering your growth• Sapping your passion for science• Irreparable• Damaging/traumatic• Leaves you feeling stuck and/or alone

MANAGING UP TO MAXIMIZE MENTORING RELATIONSHIPS

CONSIDERING ALL OPTIONS

Do Nothing	Change the Situation
<p><i>When...</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> You are generally happy and getting many of your needs met You are close to the end (or end of something) and do not wish to derail progress It is a short-lived experience <p><i>Requires that you...</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Accept that it is what it is and that there is no such thing as perfect find a way to let go when faced with what is bothering us Deal with the emotions at play that can get in the way Find ways to fill areas where we feel we are lacking support, information, etc. Take care of your well-being 	<p><i>When...</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> When you have not yet discussed the issue with your PI When things are generally positive, but the issue is a concern You really love the science, do not feel you can work in the environment, and hope to find a way to make it work <p><i>Requires that you...</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Talk with your PI and/or other relevant parties Revisit earlier discussion about assertive communication Get advice/guidance from mentors and institutional support systems Deal with the emotions at play that can get in the way Take care of your well-being
Change my Responses	Leave the Situation
<p><i>When...</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> You tried to change it and were not successful You have decided that you cannot want or do not want to leave <p><i>Requires that you...</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Are certain that you made efforts to change the situation -- remember the concept of a CLEAR ASK Find ways to fill areas where we feel we are lacking support, information, etc. Deal with the emotions at play that can get in the way Find support on and off campus Take care of your well-being 	<p><i>When...</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> You realize the situation is beating the love of science out of you You appreciate that staying is impacting your health You are just starting in a group and have other options (rotating grad students, have your own funding or other institutional support) <p><i>Requires that you...</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> First try to improve the situation (usually but not always) Carefully think through options and approaches forward Engage important institutional resources on campus Take care of your well-being Work (over time) to let go and deal with the hurt, so you can move on successfully

MANAGING UP TO MAXIMIZE MENTORING RELATIONSHIPS

REFLECTING ON YOUR OPTIONS

Option 1: *Accept How it is and Do Nothing*

Risks:

Rewards:

Option 2: *Try to Change the Situation*

Risks:

Rewards:

Option 3: *Leave the Situation*

Risks:

Rewards:

Option 4: *Try to Change ourselves and our response to the situation*

Risks:

Rewards:

NOTES