Women in Academia - Coaching & Mentoring
There are many different paths up the mountain

Many different ways of getting to the top

What we would like to achieve this afternoon:

- Describe our effort to build a solid working relationship with the Coach/Mentor group - which we did through trying out coaching techniques together and reflecting on the experience of using them in coaching/mentoring.

- Offer a chance to try out techniques used:
  - Career narratives
  - Goal setting
  - Expanding thinking and reframing issues

- Explore the extent to which we become a self-sustaining force

- Ideas we came up with to engage with the University on gender issues
Sustainability of the mentor group

Aims of the group at the outset;

• to enhance the mentoring and coaching skills of the participants
• to develop a self sustaining cross institutional network of women
• to influence cultural change within their departments and faculties

To achieve this we developed;

• Swift trust - by-passes typical development phases. Achieved through thorough matching process eg gender and presumption of professional competence
• Quality of exchange in group – open, deep, personal
• Building of trust - being vulnerable with regard to each other
• Collaboration and self direction of the group

Durham University, Newcastle University and OECam
Women in Academia Coaching and Mentoring Programme
The spectrum of skills used

COACHING
- Listening
- Questioning
- Reflecting
- Paraphrasing
- Summarising

PULL
Helping someone solve their own problem

DIRECTIVE
- Making suggestions
- Giving feedback
- Offering guidance
- Giving advice
- Instructing

PUSH
Solving someone’s problem for them

NON-DIRECTIVE

MENTORING
We used a number of techniques – and are going to introduce you to 3 at a simple level

• Life narrative - Constructivist
• Goal setting - Behavioural
• PET’s & PIT’s - Cognitive

• The first engages with subjective views and experiences in the search for meaning in the career journey.
• The second helps to focus a person on goals that have benefits to subjective success
• The third enables a coach/mentor, to recognise performance enhancing, versus performance inhibiting thought patterns. With care, patterns can be questioned with a view to someone becoming more positive about their situation.
Inevitable need for speed now, but not representative of programme

• Complete the exercise (3 mins)
• Reflect with partner (2.5 mins each)
• Review with facilitator (2 mins)

• THEN MOVE TABLES AND REPEAT WITH NEXT EXERCISE
Life line

- The coachee/mentee is asked to pinpoint significant life career events on a straight line, with positive events above the line and negative events below the line and then reflect on those events.
- The life-line can also be used to make future projection in which the coachee/mentee is asked to point out the anticipated events in a life-line from now till later in the career path.
Life line – track significant life/career path experiences

Focus on points above the line – what characterises them?

If there are dips – hold them lightly and focus on what helped you move above the line?
Draw the ups and downs of career / life to date
Reflection

- Life-line encourages mentees/coachees to consider variables relevant to support (e.g. the nature of work life, the structure of a job, the demands of world of work, etc.) in ways that are illuminating.

- Helps a person make sense of experiences

- Illustrates values, beliefs, rationale for decisions
Goal setting (1/2)

- At the moment what are your overall goals for your career in academia?
  __________________________
  __________________________

- What are your goals for the next three to five years?
  __________________________
  __________________________

- What are your goals for this coming academic year?
  __________________________
  __________________________

- What are your goals for next semester?
  __________________________
  __________________________
  __________________________
  __________________________
  __________________________

List the things you will do between now and our next meeting that relate to your goals for this Semester. These may be specific to your teaching and your research, or departmental citizenship. To this list then add anything else that you want to accomplish during the Semester

- __________________________
- __________________________
- __________________________
- __________________________
- __________________________
- __________________________
Goal setting (2/2)

• Ask yourself which of these activities you really enjoy doing. Which do you find a drag? Which do you avoid doing? How many of the things that are "a drag" relate to your life time goals?

• What are the consequences of achieving these goals? (e.g. How will I feel? What are the rewards? What will others think of me?) Some consequences will be extrinsic (fame and credibility) while others will be intrinsic (self-actualization and mastery).

• Go back and note the consequences for each goal. Are there ways to supplementing the consequences to heighten your motivation?
Reflection

• Help mentee/coachee to visualize and plan actions to achieve what they want -- then carry it out

• Define real life actions -- separates action from just wishful thinking

• Forces mentee/coachee to set priorities, therefore helping them to limit involvement in distracting things

• Makes mentee/coachee responsible for own success or failures
PITs and PETs

Factors that serve as guides and motivators, are rooted in the core belief that one has the power to produce desired effects by one's actions, otherwise one has little incentive to act or to persevere in the face of difficulties. Self-efficacy beliefs regulate human functioning through cognitive, motivational, affective, and decisional processes. They affect whether individuals think in self-enhancing or self-debilitating ways; how well they motivate themselves and persevere in the face of difficulties; the quality of their emotional life, and the choices they make at important decisional points.

Performance Enhancing Thinking (PETs)

Performance Interfering Thinking (PITs)

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Tick the PIT’s you recognise

• I must have approval from other people.
• I must prove myself capable, competent and important.
• I must have order around me in order for me to function properly.
• I must have others upon which to rely and depend.
• I must feel bad when I am not in the REF
• I must respect the opinions of authorities and I cannot question them or ‘push back’

• I am a failure if I am unable to do everything.
• I must have justice, fairness, equality and democracy or work is not good.
• People and external events cause my difficulties - I am a victim of circumstance. Until these things change, I cannot help but feel disturbed.
• I must not feel worried, guilty, or emotionally upset.
Tick the PET’s you recognise

• I don’t need approval from other people to act
• I base capability, competence and importance on real evidence
• Some order is good but I can still operate where there is confusion
• It’s nice to rely on others but I am able to act for myself
• The REF is NB, but I am not a failure because I am not in
• You can question the opinions of respected authorities

• If I am unable to do everything – this does not make me completely ineffective.
• Justice, fairness, equality can be desired but lack of it does not stop me
• People and external events cause some difficulties – but there is a lot I can do to help myself
• I might feel concerned but I don’t need to feel guilty, or emotionally upset – just challenged
Reflection - expanding thinking and reframing

Is your belief realistic? What’s the evidence? Is your belief logical?

Is your belief helpful? Does it help you achieve your goal?
Reflection

• We used reflection to move our practice beyond anecdotal and common sense logic to critical professional thinking where we look again and challenge what is usually taken for granted and make the familiar strange in order to look at things in a new light.

• Reflection was not an ad hoc activity but intentional to develop of a way of working that becomes part of being a mentor/coach in academia.

• We used reflection to recognise the limits of professional knowledge and action, build up a cycle of critical consideration, maximise the capacity for critical thought, and to produce a sense of professional freedom and a connection - rather than a distance, from the people we are trying to support.
Extent to which we became a self-sustaining force… it is early days

- We will be meeting for an annual refresher acting as peer supervision for one another and discussing approaches to expand our knowledge further.

- We are engaging with the St Andrew’s SUMAC tool to provide a centralised base for matching purposes.

- 3 of the 6 participants from Durham are in the process of developing their own departmental mentoring scheme and are working with the in house coaching network co-ordinator in order to share best practice and cross-departmental support where requested.
Ideas we came up with to engage with the University on gender issues...

- Press for universities to be open with data relating to recruitment, progression and retention of female academics.
- Encourage the uni’s to sponsor a departmental champion who can track progress, advise on gender equality issues and share best practice.
- Engage senior mentors/coaches in development sessions that provide opportunities to focus on relevant topics, and opportunities to network with each other.
If you would like to discuss the programme further please contact:

- Professor Ashley Adamson, ashley.adamson@newcastle.ac.uk

Professor Jane Macnaughton, jane.macnaughton@durham.ac.uk

- Dr Liz Kemp, liz.kemp@newcastle.ac.uk (Academic Staff Developer)

Mrs Sophie Sowerby, sophie.sowerby@durham.ac.uk (HR Staff Developer)