



**M Northwestern Medicine**<sup>®</sup>  
Feinberg School of Medicine

# Cultural Awareness to Enhance Mentoring Across Differences

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Preventive Medicine (Epidemiology)



# Today's Facilitators



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# Center for the Improvement of Mentored Experiences in Research (CIMER)



**Wisconsin Center for Education Research**  
SCHOOL OF EDUCATION | UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-MADISON

## **CIMER Mission**

Improve the research mentoring relationships for mentees and mentors at all career stages and disciplines through the development, implementation, and study of evidence-based and culturally-responsive interventions.

## **CIMER History**

A UW-Madison team led by Dr. Christine Pfund established CIMER in 2015 with support from the Wisconsin Center for Education Research to begin the work of expanding efforts to investigate and implement ways to improve research mentoring relationships in higher education settings.



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# Welcome

In the chat box, indicate if you are here thinking mostly about your role as mentor, a mentee or both



- Introduction/Learning Goals
- Reflecting On Diversity and your Culture Box
- Unconscious Biases and Assumptions
- Culturally Aware Mentoring: Case Study - Is it OK to ask?
- Cultural Diversity in Mentoring: The Data
- Tools, Personal Experiences, and Resources



# Learning Goals

- Increase awareness of our own social identities and our perspectives about others' social identities (i.e.,: race/ethnicity, gender, social class/socioeconomic status, sexual orientation, (dis)abilities, and religion).
- Recognize the impact of conscious and unconscious assumptions, preconceptions, biases, and prejudices on the mentor-mentee relationship and acquire skills to manage them.
- Identify concrete strategies for learning about others' social identities and improving mentor-mentee relationships through culturally responsive mentoring.



# Reflecting on Diversity



# Activity: Reflecting on Diversity in the Mentoring Relationship



## Activity Overview & Instructions

- Think of a specific mentee or mentor with whom you are currently working.
- Write down their initials.
- Thinking about social identities (e.g. race, ethnicity, culture, gender identity, religion, ability status, etc.), take 1 minute to list on paper or in your head ways in which your social identities are different, or might be perceived to be different, from your mentee or mentor.
- Then please share in the chat some of the differences you identified.



# Activity Reflection Questions

Reflect on the following questions for 2 minutes

- How do these differences impact your relationship with your mentee or mentor?
- Which differences from your list enhance your mentoring relationship?
- Which differences sometimes seem difficult or get in the way of the relationship?
- How can (or do) you capitalize on these differences to create a high quality research experience for mentee(s)?



# Culture Box Activity



# Purpose of the Culture Box Activity

- We don't leave our culture or social identity behind us when we enter a research group, or a mentoring relationship
- Often hard to know how and if to get to know each other's cultures
- Many of us have not reflected deeply about our cultures that we bring with us
- The Culture Box provides an opportunity to reflect on our cultures, which ones are most important and meaningful, and share those with colleagues



## Here is what we will do...

- We will share our own ‘culture boxes’ briefly
- You will be sent to breakout rooms to share yours – 4 people each
- Assign a time keeper to make sure everyone gets a chance
- Take turns (1 person does both items before going to the next)
  - What did you bring?
  - Why is it important to you, and what part of you does it represent?
  - Others are able to ask about it as time allows
- You will get warnings with 10, 5 and 1 minute left!!
- Return to full group for short debrief

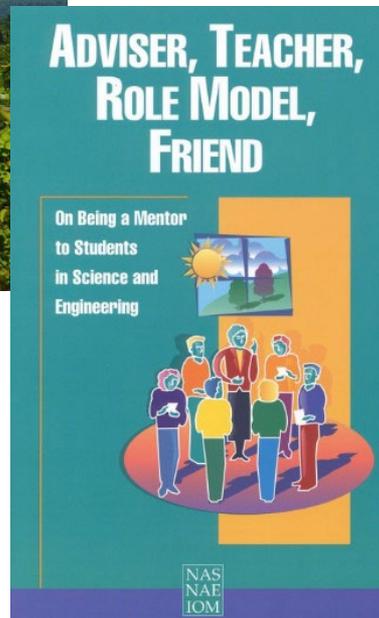
# Rick's Culture Box

Race???

White?

Scandinavian roots in farming, land, work  
Identity with time – civil rights, Vietnam, environmentalism

Privilege?





# Nammi's Culture Box



## Breakout Rooms – 20 minutes

- Share your ‘culture boxes’ briefly
- Assign timekeeper
- Take turns (1 person does both items before going to the next)
  - What did you bring?
  - Why is it important to you, and what part of you does it represent?
  - Others are able to ask about it as time allows
- You will get warnings with 10, 5 and 1 minute left!!
- Return to full group for short debrief



# Debrief – stop sharing slides



# Reflect on Unconscious Biases & Assumptions



# Much Recent Attention being Given to Unconscious Bias and Assumptions

- *Unconscious beliefs and attitudes that influence our behaviors and decision-making, and eventually determine the climate of relative opportunity and challenge for mentees, in particular those who are underrepresented.*
- Many new workshops and trainings developed
- New requirements for training for search committees and other settings
- Won't spend a lot of time here, but want to briefly introduce and remind people what it is, what it occurs, and how critical it is in our own self-awareness journeys
- A short video to watch

[https://www.ted.com/talks/verna\\_myers\\_how\\_to\\_overcome\\_our\\_biases\\_walk\\_boldly\\_toward\\_them?language=en#t-334121](https://www.ted.com/talks/verna_myers_how_to_overcome_our_biases_walk_boldly_toward_them?language=en#t-334121)



## What did you take away from the video?

- Did you learn anything new about unconscious biases and assumptions?
- How do you see unconscious biases or assumptions as having impacts in your mentoring relationships?
- Reflecting on them now, are you thinking about any new ways you might consider unconscious biases in your mentoring relationships?



# Culturally Aware Mentorship

Made possible through the National Research Mentoring Network (NRMN)

- 5-year, Multi-PI, U54 award began September, 2014
- Many activities – one of most unique is effort to move toward Culturally Responsive Mentoring
- 8 of us from across the U.S. spent 18 months creating novel day-long workshop
- Led by Angela Byars-Winston U Wisconsin Madison
- Assumes some basic mentorship skills training
- Tested in >10 settings around the U.S.
- Initiated RCT with 2 versions July, 2019

# Culturally Aware Mentoring Designers

Amanda Butz (Wisconsin)

Angela Byars-Winston (Wisconsin)

Rick McGee (Northwestern)

Sandra Crouse Quinn (Maryland)

Carrie Saetermoe (CSU-Northridge)

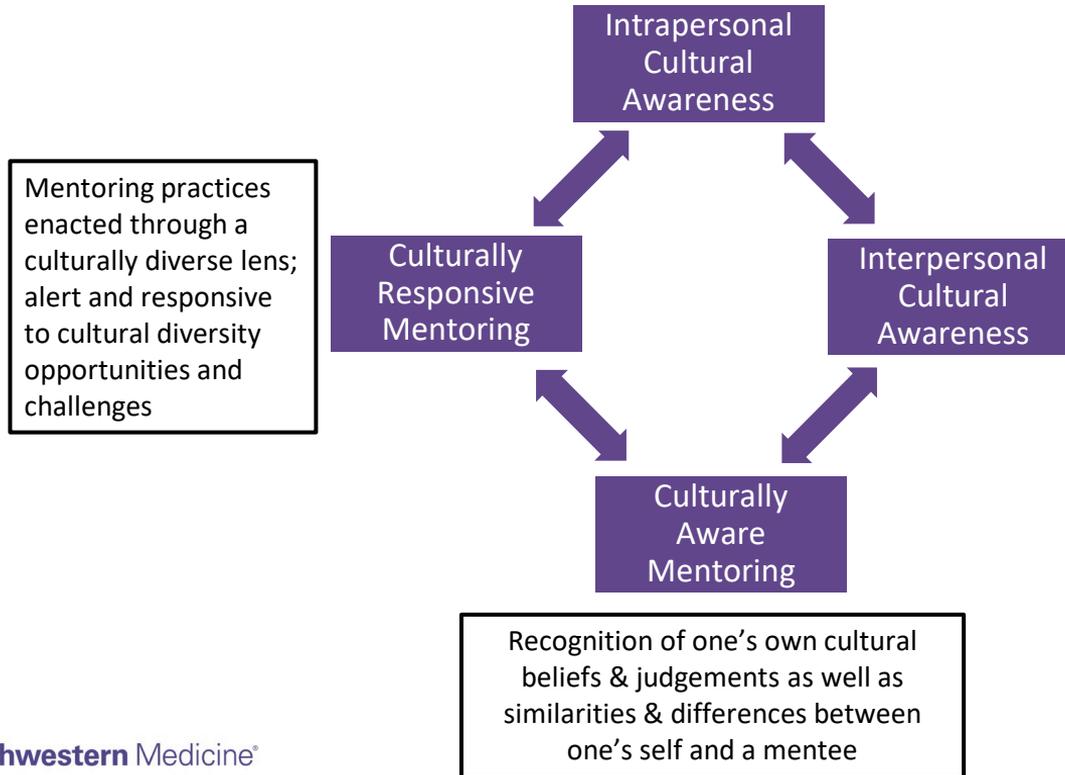
Stephen B. Thomas (Maryland)

Emily Utzerath (Wisconsin)

Veronica Womack (Northwestern)



# The Journey toward Culturally Responsive Mentoring





# Case Study:

Is it OK to ask?



## Case Study: Is it Ok to Ask?

Several years ago, I had a first-year graduate student do a rotation in my lab. She seemed really smart and generated a lot of data. I think that she had a positive experience working with our research team, but there are a few questions that still linger in my mind. This particular student was an African American woman, originally from a small town. I always wondered how she felt on a big urban campus. I also wondered how she felt about being the only African-American woman in my lab. In fact, she was the only African-American woman in our entire department. I wanted to ask her how she felt, but I never asked. I still wonder how she felt, and how those feelings may have affected her experience.



# Case Study Instructions

- We will move you into breakout rooms (4-5 per room)
- Once in the breakout rooms...
  - You can access the case study via the link provided in the chat box
  - Assign roles:
    - A FACILITATOR to help ensure everyone has a chance to share
    - A TIMEKEEPER who will keep track of time. We will be sending you a 5 minute and 1 minute warning in the chat.
    - Share your initial reactions to the case and discuss the questions
- You will receive reminders with 5 and 1 minutes remaining before returning you to the main room to share with the larger group
- If you need help in the breakout room, send a chat to the facilitators



## Discussion Questions

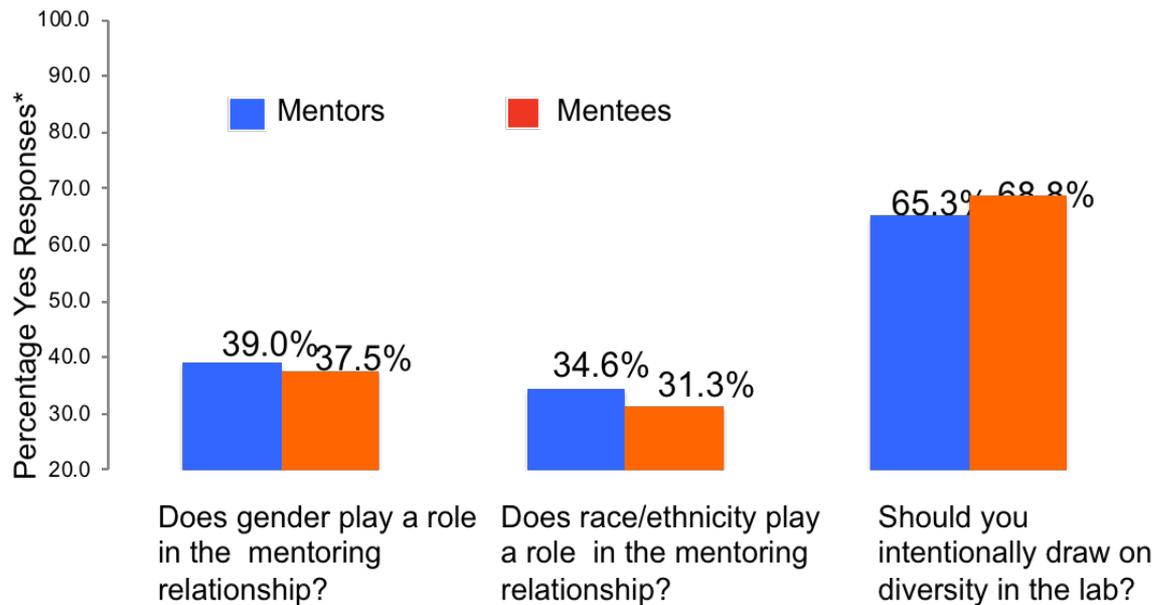
- Should the mentor have asked? Why or why not?
- What might the mentor's intent have been in asking the question, and what might the impact be on the mentee?
- How might you react differently to this case if the student was the only openly gay student in the department?
- How do you engage in such conversations based on interest without feeling or expressing a sense of judgment about differences?
- How do you ask without raising issues of tokenism?



# Cultural Diversity in Mentoring: The Data

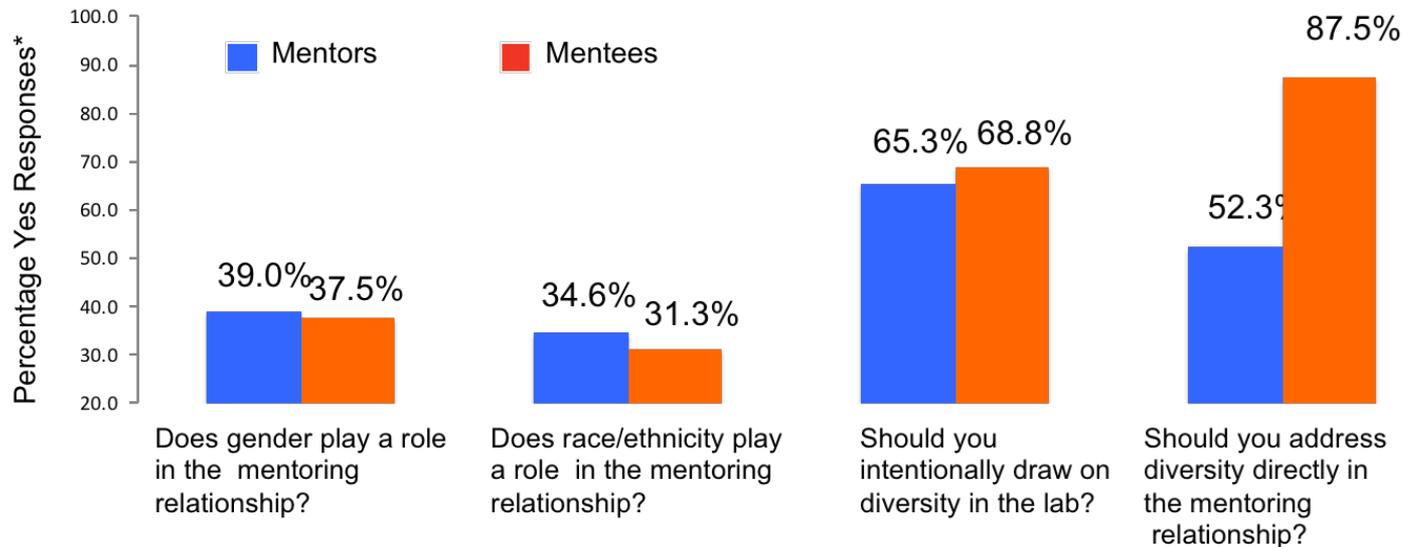


# Cultural Diversity in Mentoring: Quantitative Results



\*Results compare Yes responses with those responding No or not indicating an opinion

# Cultural Diversity in Mentoring: Quantitative Results



\*Results compare Yes responses with those responding No or not indicating an opinion

Byars-Winston, Leveritt, Pfund, Branchaw and Benbow, 2019. *J Div Higher Ed.*

# Tools, Personal Experiences, and Resources



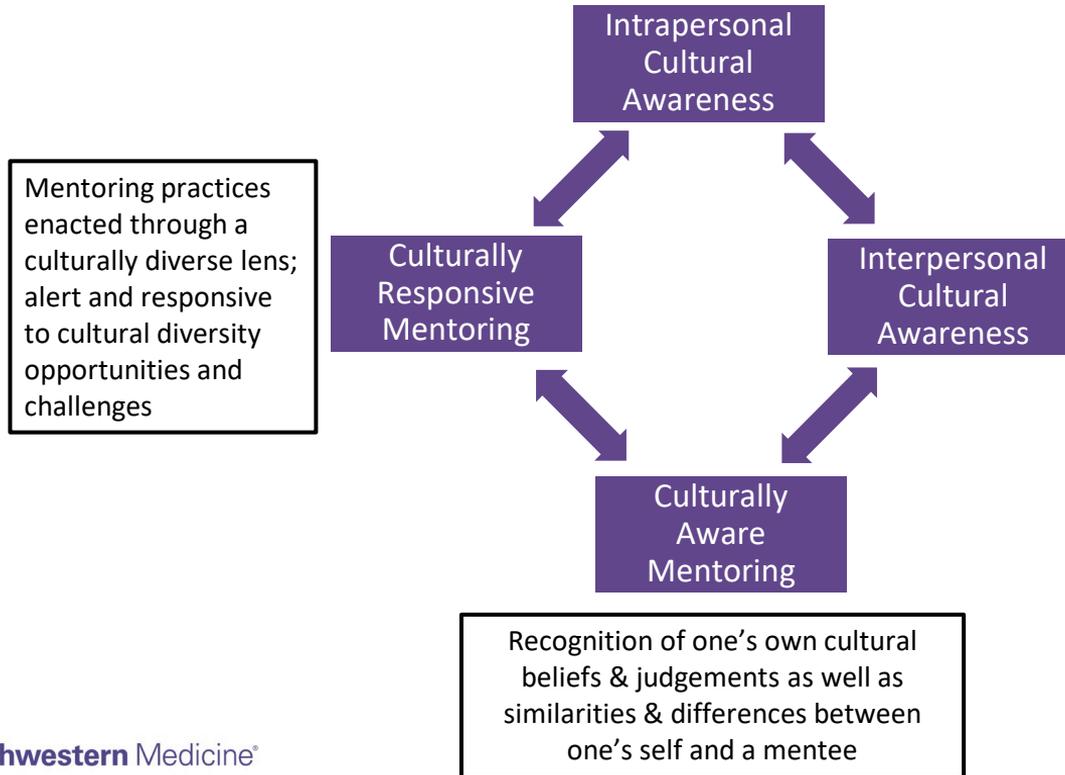
## Tools: Broaching complex topics

- Be proactive and focus on establishing **trust**
- Share of yourself, ideally first
- Listen to understand
- Respect boundaries
- Don't make assumptions
- Be willing to be uncertain and uncomfortable
- “Tune in” and watch for openings to acknowledge and validate others’ lived experiences
- Role model strategies and articulate values



What are some ways that you have broached complex topics across differences as they affect mentoring relationships?

# The Journey toward Culturally Responsive Mentoring





What is one new thing you can do in the next week in your mentoring relationship(s)?

Please share in the chat



## More Resources

- Strategies for advancing cultural awareness  
<https://nccc.georgetown.edu/curricula/awareness/index.html>
- The NIH Diversity Program Consortium (DPC) resource page  
[https://www.diversityprogramconsortium.org/pages/anti-racism\\_resources](https://www.diversityprogramconsortium.org/pages/anti-racism_resources)
- Actionable intrapersonal steps shared in the shutdownstem website  
<https://www.shutdownstem.com/action> (click on Researchers)
- The Smithsonian's Talking About Race page  
<https://nmaahc.si.edu/learn/talking-about-race>

# Local Resources

- YWCA Evanston Equity Institute workshops  
<https://www.ywca-ens.org/equity-institute/>
- To identify your own implicit biases, you can take the IAT online at [implicit.harvard.edu](https://implicit.harvard.edu)
- NU Office of Equity Trainings for your unit  
<https://www.northwestern.edu/equity/resources/training/campus-training.html>
- Searle Center has diversity, equity, inclusion events and workshops  
<https://www.northwestern.edu/searle/initiatives/calendar.html>



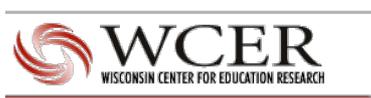
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Womack VY, Wood CV, House SC, Quinn SC, Thomas SB, McGee R, and Byars-Winston A. (2020) Culturally aware mentorship: Lasting impacts of a novel intervention on academic administrators and faculty. *PLoS One*. 15(8).

# Acknowledgements



# Thank You

# Questions?

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