

RICE MILE TOOLKIT

A TOOLKIT TO INTRODUCE & INTEGRATE THE RICE MILE



RICE MISSION

As a leading research university with a distinctive commitment to undergraduate education, Rice University aspires to pathbreaking research, unsurpassed teaching, and contributions to the betterment of our world. It seeks to fulfill this mission by cultivating a diverse community of learning and discovery that produces leaders across the spectrum of human behavior.

RICE UNIVERSITY

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An Introduction

The Origin of the RICE MILE

The RICE MILE came about several years ago at a meeting of Rice's deans, vice provosts and vice presidents, where they discussed how important a highly capable staff is to the university's ability to achieve its ambitious goals and fulfill its mission of teaching, research and the betterment of the world. They talked about what they believed to be the key attributes they looked for – in candidates for Rice jobs, in their current staff and in job candidates – that would make the difference for Rice and best support our community (staff, faculty & students) in the achievement of our goals. After analyzing the suggestions from the discussion, a consensus was reached and the Rice Mile was created.

Why This Toolkit?

This toolkit is designed as a reference and guide for leaders to:

- introduce the RICE MILE to staff and how the values and attributes exemplify world-class staff;
- increase the understanding of the Rice mission and values and how each plays into one's work; and
- empower staff to own their development.

The Final Product

Visit [HERE](#) for a downloadable version of the RICE MILE.



My RICE MILE

Objective

This activity helps employees consider which aspects of the RICE MILE most resonate and are natural strengths of his/hers.

Instructions

Individually

Review the RICE MILE and the descriptions for each value/attribute. Select the 1-2 areas of the RICE MILE that are strengths and how it "shows up" at work. (E.g. *demonstrate integrity by keeping the confidence of those who confide in me*).

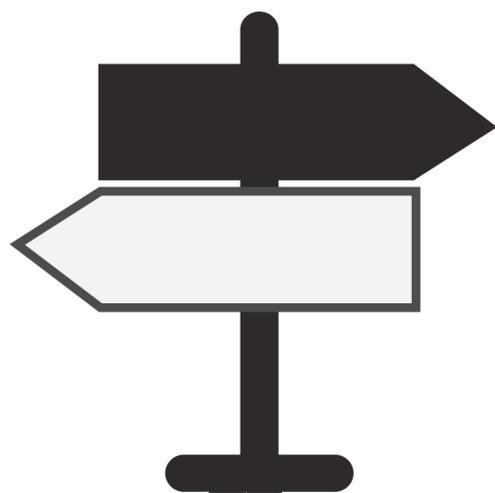
Pair & Share

Find a partner and share 2 values or attributes that each person selected and describe how each is a strength.

Next, discuss what happens if one of your values is compromised or absent in a work-related scenario.

Group Debrief

1. Did you discover similarities with your partner?
2. What happens when our values are absent or compromised at work?



Call to Action

What value will you focus on next?

What will look different if you make this a priority?

Tips

Keep the discussion going in staff meetings.

Pair each person with an accountability partner.



My Interests & Passions

Objective

This activity provides an opportunity for people to reflect upon and describe their interests and passions and connect those passions to their work at Rice.

Instructions

Facilitator

Frame the activity by saying that you would like to take a few minutes to conduct an exercise that will help the group members connect their individual work at Rice with the bigger picture.

Individually

Review the RICE MILE and the descriptions for each value/attribute. Each person should select the 1-3 values/attributes that best represent the following:

1. A current interest/passion to which they are devoting time and energy professionally (e.g. learning a new skill).
2. Something about their job or something at Rice they could be passionate about if they could find time to pursue.

Group Debrief & Reflection

Once everyone has identified a current and prospective interest, each person takes a turn sharing responses to the following:

1. What is your current professional interest/passion and WHY are you interested in this? What can be gained by devoting time to it?
2. If given the opportunity, what would you be interested in pursuing at Rice? What about this interests you and what may be keeping you from pursuing it?

Call to Action

Make it personal - in what ways can you adjust your goals and priorities based on this discussion?

Tips

Continue this discussion with a 6 month group check-in.

It's All About Impact

RICE MILE Focus: Impact & Mission Driven

Objective

This activity allows employees to experience the positive impact of increasing time and focus on discussing and reflecting on the RICE MILE attributes.

Instructions

Pre-Work

Ask each person to read the Rice **mission**.

Facilitator

Open the activity by asking the person or group...*How easy is it to get so busy with our daily responsibilities that we do not make time to consider the bigger picture?*

Individually

Review the RICE MILE and reflect on HOW the Rice staff community (i.e. all schools, divisions, departments, etc.), as a whole, contributes to achieving the Rice University mission. What is at risk if any part of the community fails to consider the larger goals and mission of the university? How would you describe the impact that YOUR WORK/ROLE has on the bigger picture? How does it fit?

Pair & Share

Share your thoughts/responses to the questions above.

1. What was different based on your specific jobs?
2. What can we do to ensure we do not lose sight of the Rice mission and university goals?

Call to Action

Each person on the team drafts a statement reflecting his or her impact on the Rice mission.

Our Community

RICE MILE Focus: Community

Objective

This activity is designed to provide an intentional space for an open, focused discussion about **Community**.

Instructions

Facilitator

Open the activity by explaining that you would like to spend some time talking about what it feels like to be engaged in a small community (specifically our team & Rice).

ASK

In general, what does it feel like to be involved in a small community? (think about those small communities outside of work, such as a church group or book club). How were you welcomed into the group and how do you welcome others?

FRAME & ASK

Think back to when you started working at Rice. How were you welcomed into the Rice community? What was your experience? How have you welcomed other new employees?

ASK

What gets in the way of being more community-oriented at work? What is one small thing you/we could do to improve the community where you work every day?

Finally, when you review the descriptors under **Community** on the RICE MILE, which one most resonates with you and why?

Call to Action

After reading the example on pages 8-9, what ideas or thoughts does this spark for you? Share your ideas at the next team meeting.

An Example of Community

The Story of the Llama

Written by Jennifer Hunter for Carrie Toffoletto

In 2015, the ECE Department was a very different place. We all wanted something to unite us but didn't realize at the time there was something that actually did. That something was a llama lobster costume.

At a staff meeting in early spring we were talking about the Houston rodeo, most likely a discussion about hosting departmental visitors, and dates to avoid. Our chatter somehow veered to mutton busting, which is the age-old tradition of small children riding speeding sheep until they fall off. The conversation continued down a trail of ridiculous sports and traditions, which led us to the artistry that is Llama Dressing.

Llama Dressing is exactly what it sounds like: dressing a llama. There are a few rules to the competition, but the most important are:

- Your llama must be wearing a costume.
- The costume must cover as much of the llama as possible.
- Your llama must like the fact that he is in said costume.
- You must dress in a costume that is complementary to your llama's.

The first hint that a tradition was being formed came with the discovery, at the same meeting, of a picture on the internet (*see pictures on page 9*). This reduced most of us to tears, though there were plenty of skeptics among us that did not believe this was a real sport. So Carrie Toffoletto, our fearless leader, decided that the perfect team building activity would be to visit the Houston Rodeo and see the llama dressing competition in action.

Before that, though, we needed to immerse ourselves in the world of competitive llama dressing. We each received a llama of our own to dress and show at a staff meeting, before attending the rodeo. This herd of llamas was honored with a permanent installation in the departmental display cabinet. Some favorites were Obamallama, Cinderllama, the Little Merllama, Dolly Llama, Madonallama, and Lego Llama.



Continued on next page

A few weeks after that meeting, we did go to the rodeo. We saw the llama dressing. We toyed with the idea of buying and raising a llama of our own to dress and show. We decided that would be a bad idea. We came back to campus, united, with the llama as our mascot. And, as teams do, ours changed over time. Some new staff members joined us and were presented with their own llamas to dress and add to our herd. We've continued this tradition for over two years, and have a newer tradition of calling ourselves, "Team Llama."

The llama love peaked in spring of 2017, wherein staff member Cyndi Menchaca invited a real llama (Jasmine) and her alpaca friend (Rocky) to campus to surprise Chief Llama Carrie for her dedication to the team.

The llama means a lot to our team. It is the creature that we all bonded over, but the qualities of the llama have brought us a renewed sense of what we strive for in our work, in ourselves, and in our relationships: loyalty, fun, hard work, dedication, sure-footedness, and resiliency. To be recognized as one of Team Llama's herd is to be and embrace all of these things.

Long live the llama!



Leadership

RICE MILE Focus: Leadership & Excellence

Objective

This activity is designed to expose the team to another leader's views and experiences and how he or she defines **Excellence**.

Instructions

Pre-Work

Invite a campus leader to a staff meeting and ask them to speak for about 10 minutes and share their views on leadership (in general and at Rice) and how they define excellence. Next, allow them to answer questions from the group.

Recommended- send a few questions to the speaker ahead of time.

Facilitator

Open the discussion by introducing the speaker and why you have asked him/her to come today. Next, tell the group that the speaker will present for about 10 minutes and then there will be time for questions.

Speaker

The speaker can provide his/her leadership story, views, and experiences. Then, the **Facilitator** can step in and begin the Q & A portion.

Facilitator

Begin with a few starter questions such as:

1. Who have been the most influential leaders in your life and why were they so influential?
2. What did you learn from them and how have they shaped your point of view and leadership style?
3. What is unique about leading at Rice? What tips or advice would you give those who aspire to be in a leadership role at Rice?
4. How do you define excellence?

After the speaker leaves, debrief with the group. **Ask** *what message most resonated with you?*

Call to Action

Have the group brainstorm about how they could thank the speaker for coming.

LEADERSHIP



The Development Wheel

Contributed by Carrie Toffoletto

RICE MILE Focus: Excellence

Objective

This activity is designed to facilitate how to use the RICE MILE for staff development.

The RICE MILE Development Wheel



As a static tool the RICE MILE describes expectations, but in motion, the RICE MILE Development Wheel provides a dynamic format for the Rice Values that is a useful tool for performance development. The values are represented in the various pieces of the pie and are connected by the spokes to the central figure: YOU.

Overview

Like a wheel, there is no starting or ending point for personal development; it is constantly in motion, resting periodically at different points for reflection along the journey. The wheel also mirrors the nature of the Performance Development cycle: a continuous developmental process with periodic review points to ensure YOU are still aligned with the cart you are moving.

This dynamic perspective, as a wheel, assumes that every Rice employee possesses each of the values in varying degrees. Some areas are natural strengths, of course, and others we may not use as frequently. But even our star performers want to continue to improve; so referencing focus areas instead of weaknesses enables us to find appropriate developmental goals for exceptional performers without labeling an area a weakness.

Instructions

Use the Development Wheel Record to recognize staff displaying the values/attributes and the associated behaviors. This form can be used as a method to remind supervisors of the importance of being intentional by looking for ways that staff exhibit the each of the values/attributes of the RICE MILE.



The Rice Mile Development Wheel Record

Name:

Title:

The **RICE MILE Development Wheel Record** is used to make notes of specific observations and hold the manager accountable for assessing and acknowledging values exhibited.

Value	Specific Examples	Date Acknowledged	Method
Responsibility			
Integrity			
Community			
Excellence			
Mission Driven			
Impact			
Leadership			
Entrepreneurial			

Change What?

RICE MILE Focus: Entrepreneurial

Objective

This activity is designed to reframe the often negative connotation associated with "change" in organizations.

Instructions

Facilitator

Open by saying that one of the descriptors for **Entrepreneurial** is *Embraces Change*.

Ask

Can you think of the last time you embraced change at work? How often have you experienced significant work-related change while at Rice?

Next, share that the team is going to watch a video and you would like everyone to take notes about things that resonate with/stand out to them. After watching we will have a discussion about the highlights and how it compares to Rice.

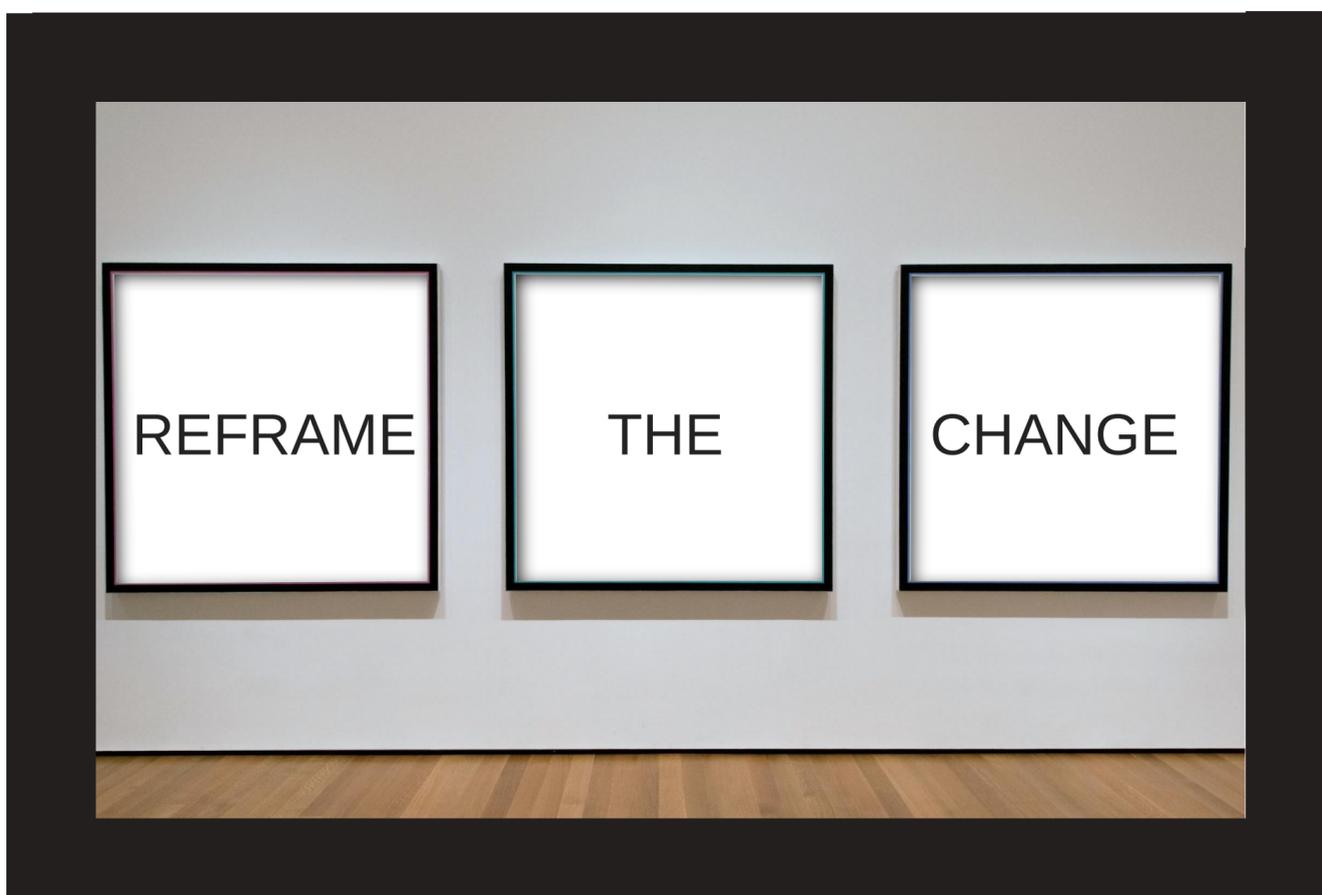
Watch video ***Ted Talk: Five Ways to Lead in an Era of Constant Change*** (13:17)

Group Debrief

Have everyone share what he or she took away from this video.

Ask

When you consider his 5 strategies, how could we (as a University) or you (as a team) move more toward embracing change?



Call to Action

Do a **self-assessment** on your change readiness for a current or upcoming change. Are you closer to resisting or embracing?

It's Not What You Say

RICE MILE Focus: Responsibility

Objective

This activity is designed to show how communication is a vital aspect of **Responsibility**, specifically being self-aware and accountable for one's behavior and actions.

Instructions

Facilitator

Open by saying that two of the descriptors for Responsibility are *Self-Awareness and Accountability*.

Ask

Have you ever encountered someone who, in your opinion, lacked self-awareness? What are the implications (at work) for not being self-aware?

Share

The team is going to watch a video and each person should take notes as to what about the message is most meaningful to him/her.

Watch the video - [*Ted Talk: Self-Awareness Can Change Your Life*](#) (14:11)

Group Debrief

Have everyone share what he or she took away from this video.

Ask

1. What are ways you can enhance self-awareness?
2. Often it is not WHAT you say but how you say it. What are the factors that can play into the "HOW"?
3. Often you may hear that one has a *blind spot*, which can be defined as an area where one lacks awareness, understanding, or impartiality. If you were to reflect for a moment about a potential blind spot, would you prefer a peer/ team member shared their observation and/or opinion if they felt you had a potential blind spot that may be preventing you from being the most effective employee?
4. How can we hold one another accountable for demonstrating the Responsibility value day to day?



Call to Action

Ask your mentor, supervisor, or a trusted team member about your blind spot(s) in order to increase your self-awareness.

Integrating the RICE MILE

The RICE MILE intended to be a practical tool to support hiring, onboarding, providing feedback and recognizing staff. Specific examples for using the RICE MILE as a tool may include sharing with prospective employees to communicate expectations for working at Rice, and discussing it during onboarding by restating expectations for being a staff member.



Make it Personal

Recognizing Staff

Whether it is directed towards an individual or the entire team, recognition plays a significant role in employee engagement and motivation. It is important to know *how* employees like to be recognized so it will be meaningful to each person. HR has curated resources around recognition, which you can access [HERE](#).

The **RICE MILE Award** is a new staff award (2018) that recognizes staff who generally exhibit the qualities in the RICE MILE (responsibility, integrity, community, excellence, mission-driven, impact, leadership, and entrepreneurial).

Eligibility

To be considered, the staff member must be in a benefits-eligible position for at least one year as of January 1, 2018, and be in good standing with no current disciplinary or performance concerns. The award may be given to individual staff as well as groups of staff, as long as they meet the award criteria.

Award Criteria

Staff should demonstrate a commitment to making their departments, division or school, and Rice better through their work and through their embodiment of two or more of the RICE MILE values/attributes

Nomination Process

All levels of staff are eligible for consideration and can be nominated by peers, colleagues, coworkers, or supervisors. Nominations must be submitted through the RICE MILE award online [nomination form](#). Because this is a university award, nominations require approval from senior leadership in the school/division. Recipients of the RICE MILE award will receive an engraved lucite frame and be featured on the HR website and in the RiceNews.

An Example of Making it Personal

Contributed by Pam On

RICE MILE PERIODIC TABLE
Creating Chemistry's Community

Group	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18
Period 1	H																	He
Period 2	Li	Be											B	C	N	O	F	Ne
Period 3	Na	Mg											Al	Si	P	S	Cl	Ar
Period 4	K	Ca	Sc	Ti	V	Cr	Mn	Fe	Co	Ni	Cu	Zn	Ga	Ge	As	Se	Br	Kr
Period 5	Rb	Sr	Y	Zr	Nb	Mo	Tc	Ru	Rh	Pd	Ag	Cd	In	Sn	Sb	Te	I	Xe
Period 6	Cs	Ba		Hf	Ta	W	Re	Os	Ir	Pt	Au	Hg	Tl	Pb	Bi	Po	At	Rn
Period 7	Fr	Ra		Rf	Db	Sg	Bh	Hs	Mt	Ds	Rg	Cn	Uut	Fi	Uup	Lv	Uus	Uuo
Lanthanides																		
Actinides																		

Introducing the RICE MILE to the Staff & Faculty in Chemistry.

The Rice Mile is a great way to unite the community around the shared values and other attributes that reflect the qualities of our staff. For the Chemistry Department, it made sense to try a format that made sense to everyone in that department...of course, it is a periodic table!

The Chemistry Department is going to share their version at New Staff Orientation.



Are They World Class?

Using the RICE MILE in the **Hiring Process**

In order to identify candidates who may exhibit the values and attributes of the RICE MILE, hiring managers can use behavioral interview questions. Below are examples of questions for each attribute.

Responsibility - Describe a time when you sought feedback about your own performance. How did you feel when you received the feedback? What did you do with the feedback?

Integrity - Integrity and trust often involve admitting shortcomings and mistakes. Share a situation in which you did this.

Community - Tell me about a time when you demonstrated your ability to collaborate with others by alternating between leading and following.

Excellence - Share an example of some of your highest-quality work. What motivated you to perform at that level?

Mission Driven - one aspect of this attribute is being motivated to make Rice a better place. Share an example of when you have done this in a job.

Impact - Tell me how you determine objectives, set priorities, and delegate assignments to achieve the greatest efficiency for your organization, department, or team.

Leadership - Tell me about a key management or leadership accomplishment. Choose an experience that demonstrates the breadth of your leadership capabilities, including your ability to lead a team.

Entrepreneurial - Tell me about a time when you weren't satisfied with the status quo and pushed yourself or others to explore new solutions.

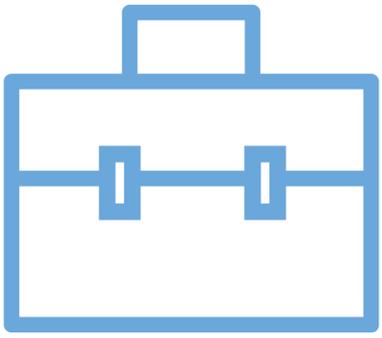


All Aboard!

On-Boarding with the RICE MILE

The RICE MILE is a great tool to use with new employees within their first few days of employment. Whether you send it (for review) before the employee's actual start date or discuss as a part of the orientation to Rice, it is a great tool to reinforce the values and behavior that are important to all employees of Rice University.

Another option would be to ask a peer or co-worker to discuss the RICE MILE with a new employee. This approach would also allow both the new and current employee the opportunity to interact in an intentional manner. A vital aspect of the on-boarding process is providing time for new employees to socialize with those on their team and/or department.



Coaching & Cultivating with the MILE

As covered in the article *[The Key to Effective Coaching](#)*, providing staff with consistent, timely feedback and coaching is a great way to reinforce expectations and use the time for developmental discussion. The RICE MILE can easily be incorporated into such coaching sessions, such as choosing one value per coaching conversation. Additionally, something similar can also be done at each staff meeting, such as allowing staff to share how they have demonstrated the value(s) in their daily work.

For coaching resources review the Coaching Toolkit [HERE](#).

Additional Resources

- Visit CareersAtRice [HERE](#) where you can find additional resources related to Developing World Class Staff.
- Also, the [Competency-Focused Development](#) page of the website provides a range of templates and resources.



Additional Activities

Activity 1: The RICE MILE Development Wheel: What is your Focus Area?

Contributed by Carrie Toffoletto

This activity is most appropriate after you have introduced The RICE MILE to your team or unit and have established the concept of Focus Areas as separate from Strengths and Weaknesses.

Pre-meeting assignment for participants

1. Have each person identify 2 personal strengths, 2 personal weaknesses, and 1 focus area. Let them know that the focus area will be shared with the group.
2. Identify WHY that focus area is important for his/her professional growth.

Meeting activity

1. Before the meeting, create a model of the RICE MILE Wheel in the meeting space. You can arrange chairs in a circle and designate the values with pre-printed signs. This actually works best with participants sitting on the ground in a circle with the values arranged in the middle of the group.
2. Review the RICE MILE values and the concept of focus areas as places that may be individual strengths, weaknesses, or areas of interest.
3. Ask the team to reposition themselves so they are sitting near their next focus area. There may be several people in the same area, which is ok. Just sit as close to your chosen area as you can.
4. Ask the team to reflect on their choice and think about why they think they are in this area – is it a specific project, just a feeling, some specific feedback received, a comfort zone you need for the moment? What is your specific goal for this area right now? What has your experience been in this area in the past? How do you want this visit to be the same or different?
5. Invite team members to share their thoughts. Since this is rather personal, no one should be forced to share.

As a manager, you should note where individuals are sitting, though. It's a great basis for conversation at your next 1:1. This activity can help both the manager and other team members understand where a colleague is focusing their efforts. Sharing is a great way to hold yourself accountable to your commitment.

The activity can also be modified to facilitate a team conversation to establish group focus areas.

Extension of Activity 1:

Understanding your place in the team

While in the circle, ask members to talk about the projects/tasks they are currently working on. Give the starting member a ball of string and ask them to hold the end. Someone who can connect with that team member's activity should go next. The ball of string should pass to that person, creating the beginnings of a connection web. Set your own rules by allowing all team members who can connect to jump in and collect a piece of the web with or without speaking next.

The visual should identify the connections among the various positions, those who are hubs for particular activities, and those who have more individual activities. There is lots of information available on this web!



Activity 2: Getting a Coach or Mentor (link)

This activity is designed as a self-directed exercise, though it can be used in one-on-one coaching as well.

Identifying a Coach or Mentor

Coach- more task-oriented and issues/problem-focused

Mentor- more long term and shares advice over a period of time

- Write below the area of your professional development you would like insight on (a goal, decision or problem)?

.....

- Who is the successful, wise person from whom you could learn from - and gain valuable insights?

.....

- Now, take a few moments and imagine if you were to meet with that person for half an hour, what questions would you ask around the issue?

.....

.....

.....

- Who else can you think of that could give you valuable insights? Imagine being each mentor and what they would do or say if they were in your position.

Additional Coaches or Mentors

Advice or Expertise

1.

2.

3.

Outline your actions for contacting:

(Examples- Send email or call by (date))

1st Action

By when

2nd Action

By when

Related Links

[Training & Professional Development](#)

[Leadership & Supervisor Development](#)

[Organizational Development](#)