



Collectors Nightlights & Allies, Oh My!

Advice for Strengthening Cross-Racial Mentoring Relationships

Agenda

01

Brief Introduction

Getting to know me

02

Genesis & Purpose

What is the genesis and purpose
of the article

03

Analogy

I will discuss an analogy that
I hope will help

04

Categories

I will briefly describe the
different types of mentors.

05

Trajectories

The possible trajectories of
BIPOC mentees

06

Practical Advice

I will provide some practical
advice and we will discuss
scenarios.

The Genesis of the Article

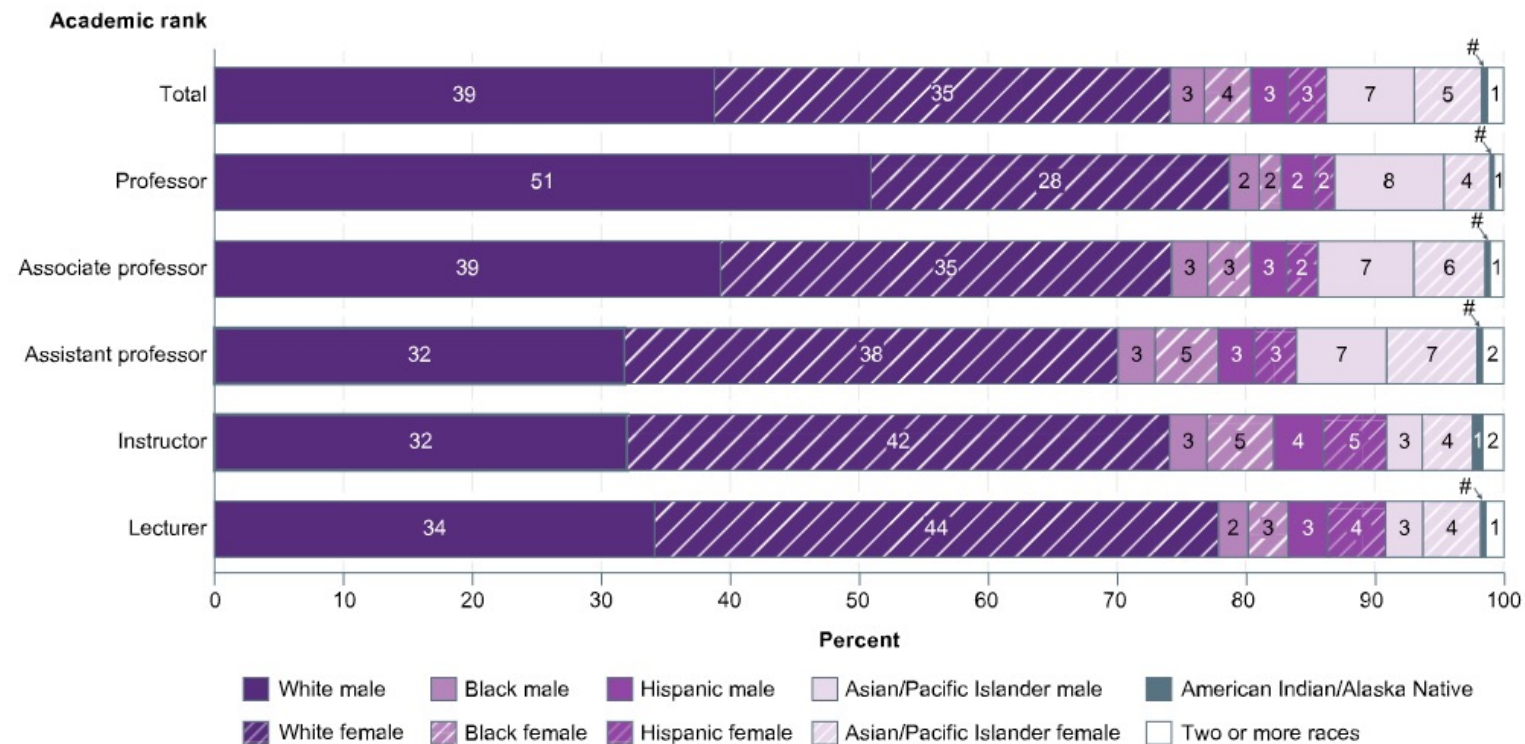


MIM  F



“What should we look for in a mentor?”

For each academic rank, percentage distribution of full-time faculty in degree-granting postsecondary institutions, by race/ethnicity and sex: Fall 2020



Rounds to zero.

SOURCE: National Center for Education Statistics. (2022). Characteristics of Postsecondary Faculty. *Condition of Education*. U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences



Gap in the Literature

Advise about
how to be a
good mentor to
BIPOC

Advice for
BIPOC how to
be good
mentees

← ?

→ *White Mentors Experience of mentoring POC*

An important
analogy
to consider...



““If you ask 10 different faculty members what mentoring is, how it works, what it looks like, and how to tell if it’s effective, you will get 10 different responses ranging from once-a-year coffee date to a quasi-parental lifelong relationship.”

—Kerry Ann Rockquemore



- Least likely to encounter
- Meaningful connections without asserting equality
- Actions speak louder than words
- Can take criticism/feedback and recover quickly
- Build trust with consistency and humility
- Push mentees beyond their best

- Understand the inherent challenges at HWIs or PWS
- Help BIPOC mentees navigate the unknown and unforeseeable curves and twists
- Provide light in dark, unfamiliar spaces
- Use their privilege, social, and cultural capital
- Help make the invisible visible; translators

- “Collect” BIPOC mentees
- Mentees feel on display
- Ask mentee to serve on “diversity committees”
- Representation of their commitment to inclusion
- *Unintentional*

Feel Seen

Graduate School

Masters/JD

- Million hoops, very little progress
- Smaller numbers equal bigger diversity responsibility

Undergraduate

- Differences become Painfully clear
- Work/Study Student
- Send \$\$ home
- Being first gen goes from being an honor to a label
- Beginning to assert their identity

K-12

- School is their life
- Most, if not all, their teachers are White
- First time they realize they are different
- First in their family

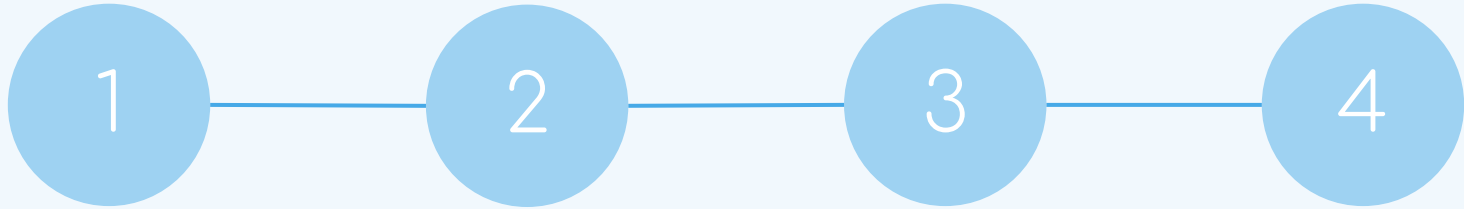
What we've been taught...

- “Work twice as hard to get half as much.”
- “They will accept mediocrity from their own but not from you. You have to be excellent always!”
- “Always look ready...don't give them something to say about you.”
- “Fix your face.”
- ”Don't swear.”
- “Before you ask the question, find the answer first. Don't bother busy people.”
- “Ask them about themselves because it is their favorite topic.”
- “NEVER make them cry.”
- “If they ask a question, be careful what you say (give a measured response).”
- Don't say, “Just tell your family you want to....”
- “You don't just represent yourself...you represent your family.”

Collectors

- Understand that when you take us places, one of the first things we do is count;
- Asking, “What can I do is not enough?” Let us know what you can do;
- If you ask us to do something, know that we may need to ask you for something eventually;
- You get the performance, not the person.

Nightlight Tips



Be ready for the
taco moments

Ask the
question
nobody thought
to ask.

Intervene
when they are
tokenized

Take a moment to
read their work and
drop a quick note.

Allies/Accomplices

- Share from your own life and ask them about theirs
- Talk about how pedigree does not equal quality
- Respect your mentee, their time, and their work
- Don't just tell a mentee what to do; model it, practice it, etc...
- Takes time
- Be honest with your own limitations and admit your mistakes
- "Real deal Holyfield"
- Increase your own interactions and their interactions with BIPOC researchers

Scenarios

A mentor encourages their BIPOC mentee to apply for a grant not related to diversity or inclusion.

A mentor encourages their BIPOC mentee to apply for a grant not related to diversity or inclusion and then reviews it with them before submission.

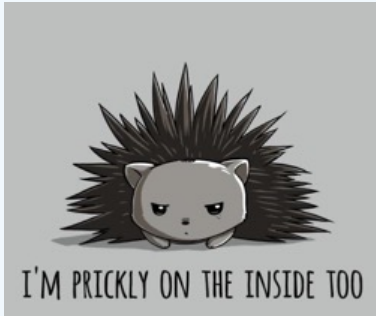
A mentor tells a mentee whose family is from Mexico, “I LOVED my vacation in Mexico. The people were so warm and kind.”

A mentor asks a student, “How do I pronounce your name? I want to make sure I get it right.”

A mentor says, “I grew up poor, so I know exactly what you are going through.”

A mentor says, “A lot of what you are sharing resonates with me. It’s not the same thing, but I grew up poor and never felt like I fit in especially with the rich kids around my school.”

What to remember about some of us...



We are so worth it!



Final Thoughts

- These are not static categories with clear lines
- One person's Ally may be another's Nightlight
- All Allies are also Nightlights, but not all Nightlights are necessarily Allies
- A Collector is never an Ally, but they often believe they are an Ally



Questions &
Discussion

