



**MARIA WHELAN**  
**LEADERSHIP INSTITUTE**

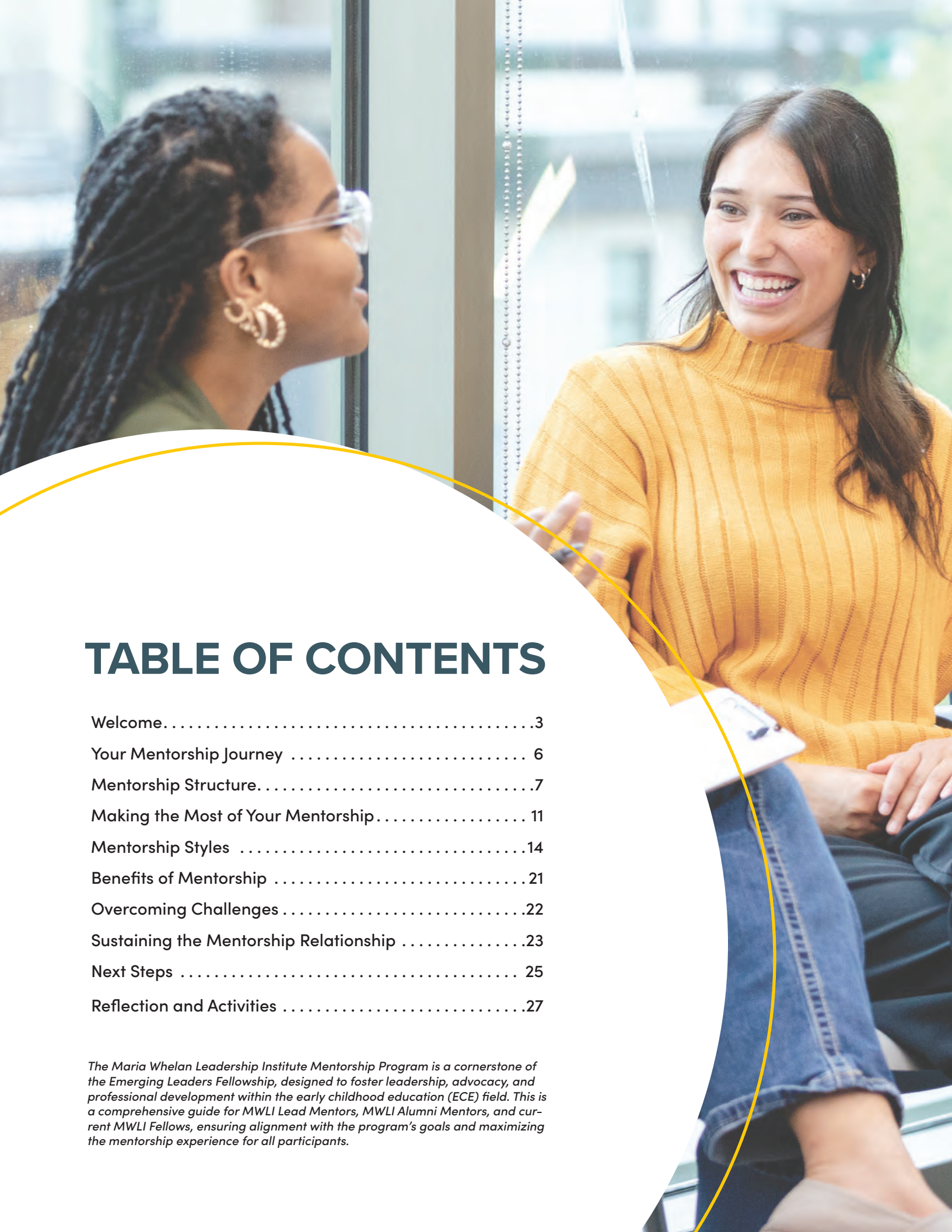
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# EMPOWERING LEADERS

## MENTORSHIP GUIDE





# WELCOME

Welcome to the Maria Whelan Leadership Institute (MWLI) Mentorship Program. Whether you are a mentee or a mentor, prepare for an exciting journey of growth, collaboration, and inspiration.

Mentees, this mentorship experience is designed to empower you as a leader, an advocate, and a changemaker in the field of early childhood education. The connections you make will guide you in building lasting relationships and expanding your capacity to lead with confidence. As one MWLI alumna shared, “The mentorship program taught me about the importance of networking, supportive systems, and fellowship.”

As a participant in this program, you can expect:

- **Connection and Collaboration**  
You will build meaningful relationships within your mentorship pod, sharing insights, experiences, and strategies to tackle challenges and celebrate successes together.
- **Personal and Professional Growth**  
This program is a space for you to explore your goals, reflect on your journey, and develop the skills and confidence to reach new heights in your career and advocacy work.
- **Guidance and Support**  
Whether you’re seeking advice, offering expertise, or brainstorming solutions as a team, you’ll find a community ready to uplift and encourage you.
- **Tools for Success**  
From structured frameworks to thoughtful discussions, you’ll have access to resources that help you set actionable goals, overcome obstacles, and maximize your potential.

This is your opportunity to learn, grow, and contribute. As a mentee, lean into the wisdom and guidance offered by your mentors. As a mentor, take pride in the impact you’ll make by sharing your expertise and empowering others to lead.

We’re thrilled to have you join us on this journey. Let’s work together to shape a brighter future for the early childhood education community.

“  
The program revealed all the ways professionals can become impactful leaders...It builds critical connections between emergent early childhood leaders who might not otherwise cross paths.”  
– Natalie A., MWLI graduate

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

Welcome.....3

Your Mentorship Journey ..... 6

Mentorship Structure.....7

Making the Most of Your Mentorship..... 11

Mentorship Styles .....14

Benefits of Mentorship .....21

Overcoming Challenges .....22

Sustaining the Mentorship Relationship .....23

Next Steps ..... 25

Reflection and Activities .....27

*The Maria Whelan Leadership Institute Mentorship Program is a cornerstone of the Emerging Leaders Fellowship, designed to foster leadership, advocacy, and professional development within the early childhood education (ECE) field. This is a comprehensive guide for MWLI Lead Mentors, MWLI Alumni Mentors, and current MWLI Fellows, ensuring alignment with the program’s goals and maximizing the mentorship experience for all participants.*



# YOUR MENTORSHIP JOURNEY: WHAT IT MEANS AND WHAT YOU'LL GAIN

This mentorship program develops leaders, strengthens advocacy, and fosters growth by providing a supportive environment for addressing challenges, celebrating successes, and achieving shared goals. As one participant reflected, "I learned to put my best foot forward and chase after my dreams."



## Develop Leaders

Equip MWLI Fellows with the skills, confidence, and knowledge needed to advance as leaders and advocates.

## Strengthen Advocacy

Create a network of professionals committed to driving systemic change in early childhood education.

## Foster Growth

Provide a supportive environment where mentors and mentees collaboratively address challenges, celebrate successes, and achieve shared goals.

“

I thought I wasn't good enough to lead. But now I know I have what it takes to hold my head up and believe in my capabilities. I will be an early childhood leader for years to come.”

– Maria N., MWLI graduate

# MENTORSHIP STRUCTURE

Building strong connections within mentorship pods is fundamental to the MWLI experience. Each mentorship pod includes:

## 1 Lead Mentor

A seasoned professional with more than 10 years of experience in ECE or related fields.

- Guides mentees in setting and achieving leadership goals.
- Shares expertise and provide constructive feedback.
- Offers emotional support and celebrates mentees' successes.

## 1-2 Alumni Peer Mentors

Previous MWLI Fellows who bring firsthand program knowledge and insights.

- Provide relatable insights from their MWLI experience.
- Support fellows with program-specific guidance and encouragement.
- Function as a bridge between Lead Mentors and Fellows.

## 2-3 Current Fellows

Active participants seeking to enhance their leadership and advocacy skills.

- Engage in discussions, reflections, and mentorship activities.
- Collaborate on setting and pursuing leadership goals.
- Seek feedback and apply insights to their professional growth.

Lead Mentors foster meaningful relationships through both structured and informal activities. For example, one mentor shared, "We went out to dinner and spent hours talking about our goals and careers... We bonded!" These personal connections help mentors and mentees feel supported and valued.

The program also provides funding for social activities, which create space for deeper conversations and professional growth. Another mentor noted, "I appreciate having the funding to schedule fun activities to do together—it really

helps to have a social activity and then discuss some of the more difficult topics and concerns from our professional work and worlds."

Through these shared experiences, mentorship pods cultivate trust, collaboration, and mutual support, enhancing the overall impact of the MWLI mentorship program.





# MAKING THE MOST OF YOUR MENTORSHIP: TIPS, TRICKS, AND GAME-CHANGERS

To get the most out of the mentorship experience, participant should:



## 1. Build Trust

Establish rapport and a safe environment for open communication to ensure that both mentors and mentees feel supported in sharing ideas, challenges, and goals.



## 2. Set Clear Goals

Define Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, and Time-Bound (SMART) goals.



## 3. Foster Collaboration

Actively listen, provide feedback, and encourage dialogue.



## 4. Celebrate Milestones

Recognize achievements and progress to maintain motivation.



## 5. Maintain Regular Check-Ins

Schedule consistent meetings to monitor progress and address challenges.



# MENTORSHIP STYLES

At MWLI, we embrace diverse mentoring styles to meet the unique needs of both mentors and mentees, fostering meaningful and collaborative connections. The following primary styles, enriched with practical suggestions, highlight how mentors and mentees can work together to blend and adapt approaches to create a dynamic and personalized mentorship experience.

## 1 Coaching

- **Approach:** Structured sessions focused on skill development and problem-solving.
- **Benefits:** Increased self-awareness, confidence, and critical thinking.
- **Best For:** Skill development and goal-oriented tasks.

### How Mentors Demonstrate This Style:

- Use structured agendas to guide sessions focused on specific skills like time management or communication.
- Apply practical strategies like expansive listening to help mentees uncover solutions to challenges.
- Guide mentees in identifying and reflecting on their beliefs, behaviors, and patterns of thought, fostering deeper self-awareness.
- Offer actionable feedback that encourages mentees to create and implement specific plans for improvement.
- Encourage emotional intelligence by modeling self-regulation, empathetic communication, and adaptability in challenging situations.

### How Mentees Benefit:

- Gain clarity and focus through discussions tailored to their goals and needs.
- Develop confidence in decision-making and problem-solving.
- Learn to apply structured approaches to achieve both short- and long-term objectives.
- Strengthen interpersonal skills through exposure to effective communication and feedback techniques.

### Tools and Techniques:

- **Planning Conversations:** Map out coaching conversations in advance to target specific goals.
- **Emotional Awareness Exercises:** Incorporate methods to help mentees regulate emotions and build resilience.
- **Focused Reflection:** Use guided questions to help mentees analyze past experiences and outcomes to inform future decisions.
- **Trust-Building Techniques:** Foster relational trust to enhance collaboration and feedback exchanges.
- **SMART Goal Frameworks:** Develop clear, actionable goals to track progress over time.

## 2 Sponsorship

- **Approach:** Advocacy for mentees' career advancement.
- **Benefits:** Access to networks, visibility, and career opportunities.
- **Best For:** Career advancement and leadership development.

### How Mentors Demonstrate This Style:

- Actively advocate for mentees by highlighting their accomplishments and potential in key conversations with decision-makers.
- Use the concept of sponsorship as a two-way street, where both mentor and mentee benefit. Drawing on insights from *Forget a Mentor, Find a Sponsor*<sup>1</sup>, mentors champion mentees' career growth while fostering their own network and influence.
- Facilitate mentees' access to influential networks by introducing them to high-level contacts and endorsing their involvement in key projects.
- Promote mentees for leadership roles, raises, or promotions by clearly articulating their value and readiness for the next step.
- Equip mentees with strategies for presenting themselves effectively in professional environments, such as preparing them for meetings or presentations where they can shine.



### How Mentees Benefit:

- Build critical connections with leaders and influencers in their field, opening doors to career opportunities.
- Gain visibility for their skills, work, and leadership potential through their mentor's advocacy.
- Develop a clearer understanding of professional pathways and how to position themselves for advancement.
- Learn to navigate organizational dynamics and prepare for high-profile opportunities.
- Understand the reciprocal nature of sponsorship and how they can contribute to the relationship, reinforcing mutual growth.

### Tools and Techniques:

- **Advocacy Frameworks:** Use structured approaches to articulate the mentee's value in professional settings.
- **Preparation Guides:** Offer actionable steps for mentees to excel in high-stakes situations, such as presentations or interviews.
- **Networking Plans:** Design strategies for mentees to expand their network effectively.
- **Feedback Loops:** Create systems for mentees to share updates on their progress and achievements, ensuring sponsors have up-to-date information to advocate effectively.

### 3 Role Modeling

- **Approach:** Demonstrating behaviors, values, and skills that mentees can emulate to achieve success.
- **Benefits:** Inspires confidence, provides clear examples of leadership, and fosters aspirational growth.
- **Best For:** Mentees seeking practical guidance and inspiration.

#### How Mentors Demonstrate This Style:

- Show consistent, ethical decision-making and leadership qualities by aligning actions with professional values and standards.
- Use real-life examples to illustrate approaches to overcoming challenges and achieving success, based on principles outlined in *The Mentor Leader*<sup>2</sup>.
- Set an example by consistently displaying key leadership traits such as active listening, accountability, and resilience.
- Offer explicit steps for mentees to adapt these observed behaviors into their own practices, as detailed in *Mentoring 101*<sup>3</sup>.
- Establish a clear process for reflection and ongoing dialogue to support growth, leveraging strategies from *The Mentoring Manual*<sup>4</sup>.

#### How Mentees Benefit:

- Gain a tangible understanding of professional behaviors and strategies by observing mentors in action.
- Build confidence by witnessing real-world applications of effective leadership.
- Strengthen personal and professional development by aligning modeled values with their own aspirations.
- Develop a framework for analyzing and applying lessons learned from role models in various contexts.
- Engage in constructive conversations that connect personal experiences to broader leadership goals.

#### Tools and Techniques:

- **Observation Exercises:** Create opportunities for mentees to observe specific mentor-led activities or strategies in real time.
- **Scenario Role-Playing:** Practice applying modeled behaviors to common professional challenges.
- **Reflection Journals:** Have mentees document examples of observed leadership behaviors and how they can implement these practices.
- **Feedback Cycles:** Provide structured time to discuss what mentees learned and how they are incorporating these observations.
- **Ethics Checklists:** Guide mentees in evaluating their actions and decisions against modeled standards.

### 4 Laissez-Faire

- **Approach:** Delegating leadership responsibilities while providing minimal direct oversight, allowing mentees the autonomy to make decisions and solve problems independently.
- **Benefits:** Encourages innovation, personal growth, and independent decision-making.
- **Best For:** Mentees with high levels of expertise, motivation, and self-direction.

#### How Mentors Demonstrate This Style:

- Set clear expectations and provide the resources or training needed at the outset of a task or project.
- Remain available for consultation or support but avoid micromanaging.
- Use questions from *The Coaching Habit*<sup>5</sup> (e.g., The Kickstart Question or The Strategic Question) to guide mentees in clarifying their goals and approaches without imposing solutions.
- Encourage mentees to take ownership of their work by establishing their own deadlines and problem-solving strategies, as highlighted in *The Ultimate Guide to Great Mentorship*<sup>6</sup>.
- Provide consistent, constructive feedback to support continuous improvement.

#### How Mentees Benefit:

- Develop confidence in their ability to work independently and make sound decisions.
- Gain practical experience managing tasks and projects without close oversight.
- Foster creativity and innovation by exploring solutions and strategies autonomously.
- Learn accountability through ownership of their roles and responsibilities.
- Strengthen leadership skills by navigating challenges and opportunities with minimal intervention.

#### Tools and Techniques:

- **Progress Check-Ins:** Schedule periodic updates to track mentees' progress without becoming overbearing.
- **Guided Reflection Questions:** Use prompts to help mentees evaluate their successes and areas for improvement.
- **Role Clarity Frameworks:** Ensure mentees understand their roles and responsibilities at the start of a project.
- **Feedback Sessions:** Provide actionable insights on completed tasks to encourage learning and growth.
- **Motivation Boosters:** Recognize and celebrate milestones to maintain engagement and enthusiasm.



## 5 Facilitator

- **Approach:** Guiding mentees to discover insights and solutions collaboratively, fostering independent problem-solving and group effectiveness.
- **Benefits:** Enhances collaboration, creates a safe environment for dialogue, and strengthens group and individual outcomes.
- **Best For:** Teams or individuals seeking to refine problem-solving and decision-making skills.

### How Mentors Demonstrate This Style:

- Establish a psychologically safe environment for open communication, as emphasized in *The Skilled Facilitator*<sup>7</sup>. Use clear communication and active listening to ensure all voices are heard.
- Encourage group members to diagnose challenges collaboratively and explore multiple solutions using systematic approaches.
- Guide mentees to clarify their goals and motivations by employing techniques from *Holding Change*<sup>8</sup> that emphasize self-awareness and collective reflection.
- Balance providing direction with allowing mentees the space to develop their strategies, ensuring that their solutions are sustainable and self-driven.
- Facilitate virtual or in-person group sessions using tools to manage diverse viewpoints and ensure productive outcomes.



### How Mentees Benefit:

- Learn to approach challenges collaboratively, building stronger interpersonal and professional relationships.
- Develop critical thinking and decision-making skills by working through facilitated problem-solving exercises.
- Gain confidence in their ability to contribute meaningfully to group dynamics and discussions.
- Foster a deeper understanding of their own and others' strengths through facilitated interactions.

### Tools and Techniques:

- **Mutual Learning Models:** Use structured frameworks to create alignment and shared understanding within groups.
- **Role Clarification Exercises:** Help mentees define their roles and contributions within the group.
- **Feedback Loops:** Provide real-time feedback during group interactions to enhance learning.
- **Facilitation Checklists:** Use pre-defined steps to structure and guide group discussions effectively.
- **Reflection Prompts:** Encourage mentees to journal about their experiences during facilitation to reinforce learning and growth.

## 6 Technical

- **Approach:** Offering in-depth guidance, expertise, and practical skills tailored to technical or specialized fields.
- **Benefits:** Strengthens technical competence, builds critical thinking skills, and increases confidence in professional abilities.
- **Best For:** Mentees in fields requiring specific technical knowledge or those looking to master particular competencies.

### How Mentors Demonstrate This Style:

- Provide mentees with clear, actionable steps to solve technical challenges by breaking problems into manageable parts. Use insights from *The Mentor's Toolkit for Career Conversations*<sup>9</sup> to structure conversations effectively.
- Offer real-world scenarios to help mentees apply technical knowledge in practical ways, fostering deeper understanding and skill refinement.
- Build trust and engagement by integrating technical mentoring with career development discussions, as highlighted in *Power Mentoring*<sup>10</sup>.
- Create opportunities for mentees to practice skills through hands-on projects or simulations, providing guidance when necessary but allowing them to take ownership.
- Tailor feedback to both immediate technical tasks and broader career aspirations, helping mentees see the relevance of their skills in various contexts.

### How Mentees Benefit:

- Gain firsthand experience and develop confidence in addressing technical challenges.
- Build an understanding of how technical skills apply to broader professional settings, bridging the gap between theory and practice.
- Strengthen critical thinking and problem-solving abilities by working through structured tasks with mentor support.
- Learn how to prioritize tasks and make decisions in high-pressure technical environments.
- Receive actionable feedback that enhances both technical expertise and overall career readiness.

### Tools and Techniques:

- **Step-by-Step Frameworks:** Break down complex tasks into smaller, achievable steps for mentees to follow.
- **Real-World Applications:** Use case studies or real-world examples to demonstrate technical concepts and approaches.
- **Skill-Building Exercises:** Design exercises that challenge mentees to apply their skills in new or complex ways.
- **Reflective Questions:** Encourage mentees to analyze their approach to tasks and identify areas for improvement.
- **Career Conversations:** Blend technical guidance with broader discussions on career paths and opportunities, helping mentees see the bigger picture.



## MENTORSHIP STYLES *CONTINUED*

### 7 Holistic

- **Approach:** Emphasizing a comprehensive perspective that considers the mentee’s personal, professional, and cultural context.
- **Benefits:** Builds well-rounded leaders, fosters self-awareness, and supports sustainable personal and professional growth.
- **Best For:** Mentees seeking development that integrates personal values, cultural identity, and professional goals.

#### *How Mentors Demonstrate This Style:*

- Guide mentees to reflect deeply on their personal and professional journeys, leveraging strategies inspired by *Holistic Career Development Coaching and Mentorship Perspective!*<sup>11</sup> For example, mentors can use reflective exercises to help mentees identify key milestones, values, and cultural influences that shape their leadership styles.
- Create a supportive environment that recognizes the mentee as a “child of the village,” fostering a community-centered approach to mentorship that draws on collective wisdom and shared responsibility.
- Utilize structured tools to address diverse needs holistically, as highlighted in [Mentoring with Research-Based Tools—A Holistic Approach](#). For instance, mentors can incorporate role-playing exercises to help mentees navigate challenging scenarios. In these exercises, mentees can act out specific situations they may face in their professional roles, such as handling difficult conversations with parents or advocating for resources. This direct approach allows mentees to practice and receive immediate feedback in a supportive environment.

- Encourage mentees to explore their professional roles through multiple lenses—cultural, social, and economic—helping them align their values with their career aspirations.
- Promote practices like journaling or guided conversations that integrate personal stories with professional insights, reinforcing a well-rounded development approach.

#### *How Mentees Benefit:*

- Gain a deeper understanding of their identity, values, and cultural background, empowering them to lead authentically.
- Learn to approach challenges with a holistic perspective, balancing personal and professional goals.
- Build resilience by exploring and integrating past experiences into their growth journey.
- Strengthen their ability to connect with diverse stakeholders by understanding and articulating their own narrative.
- Develop a sustainable growth mindset that supports long-term success and well-being.

#### *Tools and Techniques:*

- **Reflective Storytelling:** Encourage mentees to share personal narratives and link them to professional goals.
- **Cultural Identity Mapping:** Use visual tools to help mentees explore and articulate their cultural influences and values.
- **Simulation Exercises:** Present realistic scenarios to build decision-making skills and self-awareness.
- **Video-Based Reflection:** Record and analyze key moments to highlight strengths and growth areas.
- **Community Engagement Activities:** Encourage mentees to connect with their communities to gain insights and build leadership skills.

### Benefits of a Multi-Style Approach

- **Inclusivity:** Embracing a range of styles ensures all mentees feel supported.
- **Engagement:** Tailored approaches create more meaningful relationships.
- **Growth:** Both mentors and mentees experience broader professional and personal development.

<sup>1</sup> *Forget a Mentor, Find a Sponsor: The New Way to Fast-Track Your Career* by Sylvia Ann Hewlett

<sup>2</sup> *The Mentor Leader* by Tony Dungy

<sup>3</sup> *Mentoring 101: What Every Leader Needs to Know* by John C. Maxwell

<sup>4</sup> *The Mentoring Manual: Your Step-by-Step Guide to Being a Better Mentor* by Julie Starr

<sup>5</sup> *The Coaching Habit: Say Less, Ask More & Change the Way You Lead Forever* by Michael Bungay Stanier

<sup>6</sup> *The Ultimate Guide to Great Mentorship: 13 Rules to Making a True Impact* by Scott Jeffrey Miller

<sup>7</sup> *The Skilled Facilitator: A Comprehensive Resource for Consultants, Facilitators, Coaches, and Trainers* by Roger M. Schwarz

<sup>8</sup> *Holding Change: The Way of Emergent Strategy Facilitation and Mediation* by Adrienne Maree Brown

<sup>9</sup> *The Mentor’s Toolkit for Career Conversations: A Comprehensive Guide to Leading Conversations About Career Planning* by Ann Rolfe

<sup>10</sup> *How Successful Mentors and Proteges Get the Most Out of Their Relationships* by Ellen A. Ensher and Susan E. Murphy

<sup>11</sup> *Holistic Career Development Coaching and Mentorship Perspective!: The Insights from my Personal and Professional Mentorship Journey!* by Sam Tsima





# BENEFITS OF MENTORSHIP

## For Mentees:

For mentees, the mentorship program fosters leadership growth, expands professional networks, and builds confidence in their abilities and potential.

- **Leadership Growth:** Development of advocacy and professional skills.
- **Expanded Networks:** Access to influential professionals in the field.
- **Increased Confidence:** Strengthened belief in their abilities and potential.

## For Mentors:

Mentors also experience significant benefits from participating in the program. Many mentors report personal growth, as the process enhances their communication and leadership skills. One mentor shared, “I’m tailoring the monthly meetings based on the mentees’ interests. I’m pushing them a bit more this year. I know the policy discussion pushed them in new ways.”

The mentorship program also fosters professional development by positioning mentors as industry leaders and exposing them to new perspectives. Another mentor reflected, “I’d love to know what others are doing—I just started creating workshops that have a more ‘instructional’ side on top of the mentoring.”

Perhaps most rewarding is the sense of fulfillment that mentors gain from supporting emerging leaders and fostering positive change. By participating in the mentorship program, mentors not only guide others but also enrich their own personal and professional journeys, creating a legacy of leadership and growth.

- **Personal Growth:** Enhanced communication and leadership skills.
- **Professional Development:** Recognition as industry leaders and exposure to new perspectives.
- **Satisfaction:** Fulfillment from supporting emerging leaders and fostering positive change.

“

I am exploring the idea of starting a nonprofit organization to create a safe space for teachers to focus on themselves and their personal well-being. The Fellowship opened my eyes to so many possibilities.”

– Diamond H., MWLI graduate

# OVERCOMING CHALLENGES

Mentorship is a rewarding yet complex process that may present challenges. Here are actionable strategies to address common hurdles:

## 1 Communication Barriers

- **Identify the Root Cause**  
Determine whether barriers stem from misaligned expectations, cultural differences, or unclear messaging.
- **Set Communication Norms**  
Establish agreed-upon norms for frequency, tone, and preferred methods of communication (e.g., email, virtual meetings, and in-person discussions).
- **Encourage Open Dialogue**  
Create an environment where everyone feels safe expressing concerns or misunderstandings.
- **Leverage Tools**  
Use shared documents or project management platforms to centralize updates and minimize misunderstandings.

## 2 Differing Expectations

- **Initiate Alignment Early**  
Conduct an initial meeting to clarify goals, roles, and expectations for everyone.
- **Document Agreements**  
Create a mentorship agreement outlining the scope of the relationship, shared objectives, and key deliverables.
- **Revisit and Adjust**  
Periodically revisit expectations to ensure alignment as goals evolve.

## 3 Time Constraints

- **Plan Strategically**  
Use structured meeting agendas to focus discussions and maximize productivity. As one mentor shared, “It was very difficult to get the

group to answer emails, use Google tools, and connect regularly electronically. It took several tries before we got going.”

- **Prioritize Key Topics**  
Focus on high-impact areas that align with the fellow’s primary goals and challenges.
- **Leverage Asynchronous Methods**  
Use emails or recorded messages to provide feedback when live meetings are not feasible.
- **Schedule Consistently**  
Agree on a recurring meeting schedule to create a predictable rhythm.

## 4 Dynamics

- **Acknowledge Differences**  
Recognize and discuss potential imbalances in experience or authority.
- **Foster Mutual Respect**  
Emphasize the value of collaboration and shared learning.
- **Empower the Mentee**  
Encourage mentees to take initiative in setting meeting agendas and driving discussions.

## 5 Sustaining Motivation

- **Celebrate Wins**  
Recognize small achievements to maintain momentum.
- **Revisit the “Why”**  
Reflect on the broader purpose of mentorship and its potential impact.
- **Set Short-Term Goals**  
Break long-term objectives into smaller, achievable milestones.
- **Incorporate Variety**  
Introduce new topics or activities to keep engagement fresh and stimulating.

By addressing these challenges proactively, mentorship relationships can remain productive, positive, and growth oriented.



# SUSTAINING THE MENTORSHIP RELATIONSHIP



**1. Maintain Engagement**  
Schedule regular updates and reflect on progress.

**2. Transition to Informal Mentorship**  
Continue the relationship beyond the program’s formal structure. As one alumna stated, “I want to mentor and assist new fellows,” reflecting the enthusiasm and commitment to giving back and fostering the next generation of leaders.

**3. Celebrate Legacy**  
Acknowledge the impact of the mentorship on professional and personal growth.





# 4 “S” INTERVIEW ACTIVITY

**Objective:** MWLI mentor pods will start to build trusting relationships and validate important aspects of each other’s lives using the 4 “S” interview framework: Sparks, Strengths, Struggles, and Supports.

**Instructions:**

- 1) Starting with “Sparks” questions, read the questions and give pod members a minute to think and reflect.
- 2) Go around the pod and take 1-2 minutes to share on each question (*may need to adapt the amount of questions based on time*).
- 3) After each section, reflect and discuss as a group if there are any commonalities or anything else that stood out as a group.

<b>Sparks Questions</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. What is something you really enjoy doing – that gives you pleasure and that could cause you to lose track of time when you do it?</li> <li>2. Who or what in your life brings you the most joy?</li> </ol>
<b>Strengths Questions</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>3. What are some of the best things about you?</li> <li>4. What are you skilled at doing?</li> <li>5. Are there any values or rules that you try to live by? What do you think is important in life?</li> </ol>
<b>Struggles Questions</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>6. What are some of your areas for growth?</li> <li>7. Are there things that you worry about or that you are afraid of?</li> <li>8. Are there places you don’t like to go or people you don’t like to be around?</li> </ol>
<b>Supports Questions</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>9. Who supports you when you are experiencing a challenge?</li> <li>10. Are there programs/activities you participate in or places you go to help you get through a tough moment?</li> </ol>



# MWLI FELLOWSHIP MENTORSHIP

## GOAL SETTING + PLANNING TEMPLATE

**Fellow/alumni objectives:** MWLI fellows and alumni will create one or more goal(s) related to their professional and/or civic leadership, and co-create a plan with their mentor pods to achieve the goal(s).

**Mentor Objectives:** Mentors will reflect on their strengths and challenge areas for supporting their pod and identify ways to support the fellow(s). Mentors welcome to complete the goal template as well.

### Instructions:

- 1) Mentor reviews Part 1 of template with the pod members
- 2) Fellows and alumni take 10 minutes to jot down ideas on the template. Mentors are welcome to complete a template, too.
- 3) Mentors invite pod members to share about their goals with the pod.
  - Pod members may ask probing questions to ensure goals are measurable, impactful, and attainable.
- 4) Discussion: After everyone shares, discuss how mentors, alumni, and fellows can support each other in achieving the goals.
  - Ideas include: create a connection to someone, suggest a professional development opportunity, provide a project plan template, become an accountability buddy or thought partner to follow through on strategic activities, etc.
- 5) After the Part 1 conversation, pod members reflect on part 2 of the template and share reflections with pod.
- 6) Decide on a date to follow up on goals post-fellowship. (Mark your calendars!)

The following is a template adapted from Elena Aguilar's *The Art of Coaching*. More resources can be found [online](#). Mentors can feel free to modify or use another template as they see fit.

<b>Fellow:</b>	
<b>Mentor:</b>	
<b>Peer Mentor:</b>	

**Part 1: Goal-Setting with Mentor Pods** (Note: Each member of the pod should make a copy of the template to use and save).

<b>Type of goal(s) Fellow would like to set:</b> Civic leadership or professional leadership or both	
<b>Fellow's goal(s):</b>  <i>Civic Examples: Lead on local policy as a school board member in the next election or join a Coalition to advance funding equity for ECE.</i>  <i>Professional Example: Get promoted to a lead teacher by 2025. Start a new ECE center by 2028.</i>	<b>Goal 1:</b>
	<b>Goal 2:</b>
<b>Strategic activities that can help advance goals:</b>	1)
	2)
	3)
	4)
<b>In what ways do I need support from my pod to help me accomplish my goal(s)?</b> (Discuss with mentor, alumni and other fellows in group)	

### Part 2: Reflection and Support for Mentor Pod

<b>What about me—my professional background, experiences, race/ethnicity, gender, age, or other—might be an asset to supporting my pod?</b>	
<b>What about me—my professional background, experiences, race/ethnicity, gender, age, or other—might present a challenge to supporting my pod?</b>	
<b>Who in my network, or what opportunities can I identify to create connections and help members of my pod advance their goals?</b>	



**MARIA WHELAN**  
LEADERSHIP INSTITUTE

powered by **illinois action** for children

“ I don't think about my leadership style. What I am is a people person. I love to talk with people. I love to tell stories. I love to listen to people's stories. And then, sort of, the work gets done.”

– Maria Whelan

