

To view this email as a web page, go [here](#).

[View online.](#)



THE UNIVERSITY GRADUATE SCHOOL

THE GRADUATE MENTORING CENTER

Indiana University Bloomington

The GMC Newsletter

September 2020

Mentoring in These Times

Dear Graduate Mentoring Center Community,

What do pandemics and protests have to do with mentoring? A lot. We bring our re/actions to what is happening in our worlds to the mentoring relationships we have. As is the case with relationships, if we are not aware of how external forces shape internal reactions, then we are unable to provide or ask for the support needed. Furthermore, we are unable to reflect on how our responses reveal our belief systems – no matter how much we try to keep these out of our research. Yet, many of us come to our research because of personal interests and life events.

If you witnessed the reasons for or results of deaths caused by the pandemic and protests, have you had time to consider how your responses to either might impact how your mentoring relationship(s) may be changed? Have you had an opportunity to speak with colleagues, peers, students about their experiences these past six months and how they felt about them in March; How they are feeling about them now? How have these experiences impacted their ability to teach, research? How are your students experiencing the world differently based on their separate or intersected identities such as race, ethnicity, culture, gender, religion, or socio-economics? How has this impacted (or not) their performance and progress? Are you comfortable or uncomfortable having these conversations? If yes, what do you need to become comfortable? If you are unable to have these conversations, what resources (human and material) can you offer your mentees so they get the support they need from the appropriate staff and places?

No matter what stage your mentoring relationship is in (e.g., reflection, initiation, cultivation), you are having to learn new things, or re/negotiate what you thought you knew. Moreover, if you are faculty, you may find that your students are asking to be seen and heard in ways they did not before and that you are uncertain how to address them. If you are a student, perhaps you want to be and need to be seen differently than before. As is the case with relationships, neither of you may know how to make sense of your new experiences or how they will shape your research and teaching.

So, what to do? Make a commitment to talk to one another, ask questions, listen to the answers, and try to understand what is happening; seek help if needed. Often. For the rest of the month, no matter what stage of your mentoring relationship, I invite you to reflect on your current situation(s) using the guidelines below. Before doing so, take a moment to have a journal and pen available.

If you are a graduate student:

- how have you been impacted by events over the past 6 months?
- how have your research and teaching been impacted?
- if you don't have a mentor, how would having a mentor now help you?
- if you do have a mentor, how has your mentoring relationship changed?
 - what do you need / want your mentor to know about you now?
 - what are you un/comfortable with your mentor knowing?
 - what do you think are the consequences of sharing this information?
 - how do you think your mentor would react if you told them the truth?
 - how could your mentor help you best right now?

If you are a faculty or staff member:

- how have you been impacted by events over the past 6 months?
- how have your research and teaching been impacted?
- what in your experience(s) do you think would be helpful for your mentee to know?
 - how can you create / hold space for your mentee to share their experiences?
 - what are you un/comfortable sharing with or hearing from your mentee?
 - how have your mentoring relationships prepared you for the current changes in the world?

- how could *your* mentor help you the most right now?
- do you have the capacity and/or ability and/or training to respond to the needs of your mentee(s)?
- do you know what resources are available in your department or on campus to help your mentee?

Mentors and mentees, these are a few questions that you can begin to ask yourselves and each other as you prepare or continue to dialogue with one another. They are deceptively simple questions that invite you to reflect on how your recent and past experiences are shaping your mentoring relationship(s) and, in turn, how both are shaping your ability to teach, research, and communicate.

In all situations, it is important to develop a practice of deep listening. That is, to make and take the time to listen so closely that you are able to hear *what* is being said – not what you think was said, or a summary or interpretation of what was said. It is sometimes helpful to say: Thank you for sharing this information with me. What I heard you say is... This practice will let the person speaking know that you have heard them. It also gives them an opportunity to hear what they said and how it sounds. Such an exchange can allow both parties to discuss the specifics about a situation.

The GMC recognizes that how we have dialogue with one another is always changing, but that now more than ever, these dialogues are needed at multiple levels. *Not everyone* may be able to enter these dialogues. Hence, it is very important to know who and what your resources are. This year, we will offer *Let's Talk About Mentoring*, training for faculty and students who are interested in using contemplative practices to develop or deepen their mentoring programs. Please contact me directly if you are interested in learning more: maehamil@iu.edu.

Maria Hamilton Abegunde, Ph.D.
Founding Director

Having said that, we would like to offer some practical things you can do during these times. Much of what we shared in our March 29th newsletter still holds and can help. We would like to remind you of two important things to remember.

BREATHE

BEGINNING OF DAY

JUST. FOR. TODAY.

- Commit to doing what you need to do today (self, family, class, work, meetings).
- Keep a schedule to help you not lose track of the days and what needs to be done.
 - If you have not already, create a fall plan using the [semester plan](#).
 - If you cannot do this, create a weekly or monthly plan.
- Decide what you *must* do today: If you do not do it, what are the consequences?
- Share with your accountability partner.
 - If you do not have such a partner, think about who you can ask to be one for you.

DURING THE DAY

JUST. FOR. TODAY.

BREATHE

- Drink fluids.
- Eat regularly.
- Rest (nap or be still).
- Go outside (even if it rains).
- **Call** (instead of Zoom) a friend / colleague and chat for 15 minutes.
 - If you can, gather in an open space and follow the physical distancing protocols.
- Agree to a specified amount of time that you will talk about what is distressing you.
- If you can, articulate if you are speaking to be listened to only, or if you are speaking to receive advice and/or assistance.
- Engage in dialogue accordingly, again, allotting a specific amount of time for each of you.
- Then, talk about what has brought you joy and energy and love in the past 48 hours.

END OF DAY.

JUST. FOR. TODAY.

BREATHE

- Review your day.
 - Acknowledge what went well.
 - Can you / do you want to share your good news with others?
 - If not, that's okay.
 - Acknowledge what did not work well.
 - What might have made it better?
 - Is this something you can change?
 - If not, is it something with which you can get assistance.
 - If not, that's okay, too.
 - Can you / do you want to share what did not work well with your accountability partner?
 - Review the next day.
 - What must you do?
 - What can you do?
 - Do you need help to begin, continue, get through, end the day?
 - [CAPS](#)
 - [The GMC](#)
 - A mentor
 - A friend
 - How will you begin your next day, the future time?
 - What are your morning / daily / evening rituals (: e.g., exercise, yoga, a walk, dinner, attending to children, attending to yourself...)
 - Planning now helps you wake up to the day with a plan.
 - Have a backup. Adaptability will lessen frustration and help you still have a plan.
 - Do nothing at sunset.
 - [BREATHE](#).
 - Journal (consider sharing your experiences with the [IU Archives](#)). Your life – our lives – this moment in time are important and we are living, creating, and making history.
 - Prepare to sleep with [relaxing music](#).
 - Give gratitude for all you were able to complete today.
 - If you cannot, that's okay.
 - If you did nothing at all but breathe and stay alive.
 - That is especially okay, and we want you to do it again tomorrow.
 - Know that we are on this journey together.
 - [BREATHE](#).
-

FALL PROGRAMS AT THE GMC

Register for The Academy as a Contemplative Practice [here](#)

How do we create an IU that is bold, intentional, dynamic, adaptive, interdependent, and transformative? (from Adrienne Marie Brown, 2017, *Emergent Strategy: Shaping Change, Changing Worlds*). Is it possible for "...a group of people to theorize to develop a set of agreements to guide a transformational change" within the university, one that is predicated on wholeness? (from Laura Rendon, 2009, *Sentipensante (sensing/thinking) pedagogy: educating for wholeness, social justice, and liberation*). Join The Graduate Mentoring Center and special guests (September 23, October 28, and November 4) to explore Rendon's core question: "What is the experience of creating a teaching and learning dream (pedagogic vision) based on wholeness and consonance, respecting the harmonious rhythm between the outer experience of intellectualism and rational insight, emotion, and awareness? (2)" We invite you to read *Sentipensante* with us (October 8 and 22, November 5 and 19) in preparation for Dr. Rendon's visit and for a longer conversation about how to transform higher education. IU faculty, staff, and students, you may access the book at [ebook central](#) through IU libraries. A limited number of books will be available for students or others who need a hard copy. ***This program is made possible through sponsorship from the IU Office of the Bicentennial and the Institute for Advanced Study(IAS) at Indiana University***

Register for our other September and October programs [here](#)

During the months of September and October, join us for dialogues on the stages of mentoring and difficult topics. If you are interested in learning more about The GMC's five tenets, join us for the fall retreat. And, don't forget our recurring programs *Drop In, Write On* for those who want to develop an intentional writing community and *Sitting for Peace* for those who would like to learn different contemplative practices or join others for meditation.

CELEBRATING **200** YEARS

Share • Unsubscribe • Submit News

The Graduate Mentoring Center
E546 Wells Library - 1320 E 10th Street
Bloomington, IN 47405

This message is intended for The Graduate Mentoring Center (gmcsaops@iu.edu). Learn why we're including this:

go.iu.edu/emailsafety.

To update communication preferences, visit the [Profile Center](#).

View [online](#).



This email was sent to: gmcsaops@iu.edu.

The Graduate Mentoring Center
E546 Wells Library - 1320 E 10th Street
Bloomington, IN, 47405, United States



We respect your right to privacy - [view IU policies](#).

[Manage Subscriptions](#) | [Update Profile](#) | [One-Click Unsubscribe](#)