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1. Case Study

a. About Career Catalyst

[Career Catalyst](#) is Harvard Catalyst's strategic, one-year mentoring program for early-career researchers (mainly post-doctoral fellows and instructors). It empowers mentees by giving them strategies and tools to effectively manage their mentoring relationships, grow their networks, and take a proactive role in their own professional development. The program has run since 2017 and currently accepts about 60 participants per year.

Each mentee is placed within a small group of three-to-four peer participants. Every small group is matched with a senior faculty member who serves as a [developmental mentor](#) for the duration of the program. Each mentee group meets together twice per month, once with their assigned senior mentor, and once as a peer group without their senior mentor. In order to build a sense of community, three program-wide meetings for all mentees and mentors are hosted throughout the year. The program content is structured around monthly themes that are the focus of exercises and assignments. These assignments are organized into a comprehensive curriculum that includes learning objectives, interactive activities, and additional resources.

b. Development of the Mentee Self-Assessment

Background

We believe that mentees should be empowered to know themselves, understand the type of support that they need, and proactively seek out individuals to help guide their development. We aimed to create a self-assessment tool that could help mentees identify these personal gaps and goals, as well as demonstrate their growth throughout their participation in the Career Catalyst program.

We reviewed the mentoring literature and explored many published survey instruments. These instruments were a useful starting point, but we were unable to find any published assessments that focused specifically on mentees' progress. We decided that we needed to develop our own assessment strategy focusing on the perspective of the mentee.

Development of the Survey

To create our assessment, we began by reviewing our program-specific goals and outcomes. We then reviewed our [Characteristics and Actions that Foster Effective Mentee-Mentor Relationships](#) document, as well as five of the most commonly cited, published mentoring survey instruments. (For more information about these resources, [visit our website](#).) We highlighted the statements throughout each of these resources that aligned most closely with our expectations for Career Catalyst mentees. Then, we grouped these statements thematically and wrote a short line that summarized each of the themes. See the table below, “Documentation of the Survey Development Process,” for the specifics of this process.

We consolidated our list into a series of statements to use in our assessment. We built the survey in Qualtrics, incorporating a Likert scale with 5 options. We administer this survey to our mentees twice-per-year, once before they start the program in September and again at the conclusion of the program in June. The results of both surveys are compared to each other, reviewed by the program committee, and used to track mentee progress and growth.

c. Statements Displayed in the Mentee Self-Assessment

This self-assessment survey is made up of 14 statements that describe key characteristics and actions that foster effective mentee-mentor relationships and support career development in the clinical and translational research workforce. The self-assessment evaluates mentees’ perception of how well they demonstrate these key characteristics and actions in practice. Mentees are asked to choose how strongly they agree or disagree with each statement on a 5-point scale: strongly disagree (0), disagree (1), neither agree nor disagree (2), agree (3), strongly agree (4).

Statements Displayed in the Self-Assessment:

1. I know my personal strengths and weaknesses.
2. I know my short- and long-term goals.
3. I know what kind of mentoring support that I need.
4. I seek out new connections to build my mentoring network.
5. I seek out new connections to build my peer mentoring network.
6. I practice strategies to engage effectively with those whose personal background is different from my own (e.g., age, race, gender, class, region, culture, religion, family composition, etc.).
7. I understand metrics for success in my field.
8. I am aware of my institutional culture and landscape.
9. I am a self-advocate.
10. I know what kind of feedback I need and how to ask for it.
11. I know how to effectively manage my own time.
12. I am resilient.
13. I have a plan for my next career steps.
14. I have someone whom I can turn to for career development advice.

2. Documentation of the Survey Development Process

The table below lists each statement found in the Career Catalyst Mentee Self-Assessment, and where applicable, maps it to our [Characteristics and Actions that Foster Effective Mentee-Mentor Relationships](#) document as well as similar statements found in commonly-cited, published mentoring surveys.

| Career Catalyst Mentee Self-Assessment | Statements that Inspired the Assessment |
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| 1. I know my personal strengths and weaknesses. | <p>Key:</p> <p>Blue Text/Square Bullets: statement found in our <i>Characteristics and Actions that Foster Effective Mentee-Mentor Relationships</i> document</p> <p>Black Text/Circular Bullets: statements found in published mentoring surveys</p> <p>Empowered mentees:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Craft their personal definition of success. ■ Identify their personal strengths and weaknesses. ■ Describe how they work best. ■ Describe their professional interests. ■ Describe their core values. |
| 2. I know my short and long term goals. | <p>Empowered mentees:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Establish short and long-term goals. ■ Understand metrics for achieving specific goals. ■ Align goals with their core values. ■ Share their personal strengths and weaknesses and definition of success with their mentor. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● “Working with you to set research goals”¹ ● “Helping you develop strategies to meet goals”¹ ● “Helping you set career goals”¹ ● “My mentor helps me to formulate clear goals.”² |
| 3. I know what kind of mentoring support that I need. | <p>Empowered mentees:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Determine the areas in which they need mentorship (e.g., scientific/ technical, grant or manuscript writing, navigating institutional culture, career advancement, etc.) and seek out mentors who fulfill these needs and skills. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● “My mentor demonstrates professional expertise.”² |

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| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● “My mentor demonstrated content expertise in my area of need.”³ |
| <p>4. I seek out new connections to build my mentoring network.</p> <p>5. I seek out new connections to build my peer mentoring network.</p> | <p>Empowered mentees:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Evaluate their current mentoring network and identify gaps. ■ Seek out new mentors who can fill these gaps. ■ Understand the value of peer mentorship and dedicate time to connecting with and learning from peers. ■ Build their network by seeking out new connections. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● “Helping you network effectively”¹ ● “My mentor facilitates building my professional network.”² ● “Helps me be more visible”⁴ ● “Creates opportunities for me to impress important people”⁴ ● “Brings my accomplishments to the attention of important people”⁴ |
| <p>6. I practice strategies to engage effectively with those whose personal background is different from my own (e.g., age, race, gender, class, region, culture, religion, family composition, etc.).</p> | <p>Empowered mentees:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Recognize/address unconscious biases and prejudices they bring to the mentor/mentee relationship. ■ Practice strategies to engage effectively with mentors whose personal background is different from their own (e.g., age, race, gender, class, region, culture, religion, family composition, etc.). ■ Foster a sense of belonging by using inclusive language that respects differences. ■ Practice anti-racism and allyship. ■ Recognize and address issues of equity and inclusion in the mentoring relationship, and if challenges arise, know how and where to leverage resources for support. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● “Considering how personal and professional differences may impact expectations.”¹ ● “Taking into account the biases and prejudices s/he brings to your mentor/mentee relationship”¹ ● “Working effectively with mentees whose personal background is different from his/her |

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| | own (age, race, gender, class, region, culture, religion, family composition etc.)” ¹ |
| 7. I understand metrics for success in my field. | <p>Empowered mentees:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Understand how to prepare for professional advancement (e.g., promotions). |
| 8. I am aware of my institutional culture and landscape. | <p>Empowered mentees:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Identify professional societies and conferences in their field (or the field that they would like to enter) and familiarize themselves with them. ■ Recognize scientific journals and their respective impact factors that are relevant to their work. <p>● “Helps me learn about other parts of the organization”⁴</p> |
| 9. I am a self-advocate. | <p>Empowered mentees:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Self-advocate (e.g., negotiate for opportunities, resources, training, credit). ■ Discuss ways to use their network to foster recognition. ■ Assess what new skills and knowledge they need to gain. |
| 10. I know what kind of feedback I need and how to ask for it. | <p>Empowered mentees:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Recognize the type of feedback that they need and know how to ask for it. ■ Are responsive and willing to discuss feedback that they receive. <p>● “Providing you constructive feedback”¹</p> |
| 11. I know how to effectively manage my own time. | <p>Empowered mentees:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Identify and reflect upon their current time-management strategies and challenges. ■ Identify which activities are most consistent with their professional goals and use this information to discuss where they should prioritize spending time to maximize the likelihood of professional success. ■ Factor personal interests and responsibilities into their time management strategies. |

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| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● “Helping you balance work with your personal life”¹ ● “My mentor is supportive of work-life balance.”² |
| <p>12. I am resilient.</p> | <p>Empowered mentees:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Identify strategies to increase personal resilience in the face of professional challenges. ■ Know where to turn for support when challenges arise. |
| <p>13. I have a plan for my next career steps.</p> <p>14. I have someone whom I can turn to for career development advice.</p> | <p>Empowered mentees:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Seek feedback and input from mentors as they prepare for the next phase of their career. ■ Identify development opportunities and leverage connections and resources to learn new skills. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● “My mentor is helpful in providing direction and guidance on professional issues.”² ● “Suggests strategies for achieving career aspirations”⁴ ● “My mentor provides direction and guidance regarding my course of study, doctoral thesis or career management.”⁵ |

3. References

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