

Mentoring as a Tool for Professional Development and Strengthening Health Research Networks



Podcast miniseries

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PREFACE

This compendium comprises the podcast series “Mentoring as a Tool for Professional Development and Strengthening Health Research Networks,” an initiative developed by the Centro Internacional de Entrenamiento e Investigaciones Médicas – CIDEIM, operating as the Regional Training Center and Network and TDR Global Node for Latin America and the Caribbean, with support from the Special Program for Research and Training in Tropical Diseases (TDR).

The creation of this miniseries was motivated by the objective of disseminating knowledge, experiences, and practical tools to promote mentoring processes that contribute to the professional growth of individuals and transcend the institutional setting, thereby helping to strengthen research capabilities.

Over the course of six episodes, the podcast explores the fundamental principles of the mentor-mentee relationship, effective communication strategies, the value of networking, and the importance of institutionalizing mentoring in academic and scientific contexts in Latin America and the Caribbean.

This document is not merely a transcript; rather, it serves as a comprehensive learning and reference resource for researchers, educators, students, and institutional leaders who are interested in promoting support processes that foster collaboration, leadership, and the training of new generations of scientists committed to health equity.

With this Compendium, CIDEIM and TDR reaffirm their commitment to promoting collaborative learning, mentoring, and local capacity building in research as fundamental pillars for advancing toward a more inclusive, sustainable, and transformative science.

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EPISODE 1

BASIC CONCEPTS



<https://youtu.be/DUGMsY6Ont8>



Karen Linares (KL): Welcome to this podcast series developed by CIDEIM as the regional training center and TDR global node for Latin America and the Caribbean. These programs are supported by the Special Program for Research and Training in Tropical Diseases - TDR. My name is Karen Linares and I will be with you throughout this series as we explore a key tool for strengthening research capacity: **mentoring**.

Throughout this podcast series, we would like to invite you to reflect on how mentoring can influence and enrich the panorama of scientific careers in the Latin American and Caribbean region, and how to use it to make a difference in environments and countries with limited resources.

The term “Mentor” comes from the Greek epic poem ‘The Odyssey’. In the story, Mentor is a wise man and close friend of Odysseus, the king of Ithaca. When the king must leave for the Trojan War, Mentor takes charge of the training, preparation, and initiation of Telemachus as heir to the throne.

The attributes of leadership, strategy, wisdom, expertise, advice, and support have been associated with the figure of the “mentor”, defining a style of learning that has remained relevant since ancient times. “Mentor” became synonymous with a trusted advisor or teacher who helps others to develop themselves.

Mentoring improves learning and collaboration, and its application is highly beneficial in various fields such as education, science, business and personal development, and is also a very useful tool for the organizational development of a company or institution, as it seeks to promote the personal and professional growth of each individual, resulting in better business performance.

Let’s dive into this topic with our guest, Antoinette Oglethorpe, a consultant, coach, speaker, and award-winning author with 30 years of experience developing leaders for multinational organizations. Antoinette developed the Mentoring for Success workshop, which we have used as the basis for this podcast to introduce you to some of the basic concepts and tools of mentoring. Welcome Antoinette, tell us a little bit about you and your work.



Illustration for The Adventures of Telemachus, by Fénelon. Public domain.

Antoinette Oglethorpe (AO): I'm Antoinette Oglethorpe, I run a training and coaching company we specialize in career management through mentoring and we have created some tools and templates and models to help managers, employees, mentors and mentees have meaningful conversations around progression and professional development. And it's been my pleasure to work on a WHO sponsored mentoring program for TDR to help those people develop their professional careers through mentoring.



Antoinette Oglethorpe.
Personal Archive.

KL: Could you explain in simple terms what mentorship is? What is its main goal?

AO: It's a supportive relationship where an experienced individual known as the **mentor** guides and advises someone who is less experienced than them who is the **mentee**. They're not necessarily younger than the mentor, they're just less experienced in the area that they want to develop in. And the main goal is to develop the mentee, so to help the mentee grow both personally and professionally. And they do that by sharing their insights, sharing their knowledge, sharing their experiences.

It's not about telling the mentee what to do, it's about providing guidance, encouragement and constructive feedback to help the mentee make their own decisions, come to their own solutions, navigate their career and ultimately reach their full potential.

KL: So, mentoring is a relationship between two people working together to achieve a goal. One person, who has greater expertise, collaborates, guides and acts as a facilitator to help the other person develop and strengthen professional skills or find a career path. How is mentorship different from other processes like training or coaching?

AO: Mentorship differs from training and coaching in both its approach and its scope. So, training focuses on acquiring specific skills and knowledge and in that scenario, the trainer or the teacher has the skills and knowledge and tells the

person that's learning what the right approach is of what to do and that is not what mentoring is.

Coaching is on the opposite end of the spectrum; it typically involves helping the learner work towards specific goals and overcome obstacles and quite often that is about helping the individual draw on their own knowledge.

Mentorship, on the other hand, is broader and more relational. So, it's less about instruction and more about guiding and sharing wisdom, so, in that respect it's not like teaching, and coaching often has a structured time frame whereas mentorship tends to be a longer-term relationship that evolves as the mentee grows, so typically training and coaching are short-term interventions and mentoring is longer term. Not never ending, it's not like marriage! But it can be longer term, so say 12 months, for example.

KL: What are the essential qualities of a good mentor and a good mentee?

AO: Okay, well, for the mentor, it's really about their communication skills and their commitment to the mentoring. So, a good mentor should be approachable, they should have empathy and above all, they should be good listeners. They also need to be open-minded and non-judgmental and willing to share their insights and experience.

Effective mentors are also patient, reliable and capable of giving constructive feedback in a way that encourages growth, and they need to be prepared to make time for the mentee and because above all, they should be genuinely interested and care about the development of this individual and committed to helping them succeed.

So, they need to be very much not about their own ego and everything that they know and how great they are, but instead, much more focused on their mentee and how to actually get the best out of them.

But the mentee it's actually about that commitment to their personal growth and being willing to take ownership for that development, so, they need to drive this relationship, they need

to be the one that contacts the mentor, they need to be prepared for the mentoring conversations, they need to be clear on what they want to get out of the mentoring relationship, they need to also be open-minded because they might hear guidance and wisdom that is new to their thinking, and they need to be prepared to take action and follow through on what comes out of the mentoring conversations.

KL: Thank you, Antoinette, for sharing your knowledge with us. In summary, the dynamic created between the mentor and mentee is key. Mentors not only transfer knowledge but also provide guidance and promote leadership and critical thinking skills. On the other hand, the "mentee" stops being a "passive" learner and takes on an active and collaborative role.

We are at the end of the first episode of our podcast, where we learned some generalities about mentoring. In the next episode, Antoinette, our guest expert, will take a closer look at the roles of mentor and mentee, and we will share some useful tools to consider when starting a mentorship. Thank you for listening. See you next time!

EPISODE 2

STARTING A MENTORING PROCESS



<https://youtu.be/i5VC43XwREk>



Karen Linares (KL): Hello everyone. It's a pleasure to welcome you to this second episode of our podcast series, in which we try to explore some of the basic concepts related to mentoring as a tool to promote professional and institutional development and to strengthen research networks.

In the first episode, we talked about how mentors can inspire mentees with their experience, and foster skills such as leadership and critical thinking. This dynamic of circulating scientific-technical knowledge and soft skills allows the formation of new generations of researchers, capable of meeting the challenges of a scientific career.

Today, we will focus on some key issues to consider when starting a mentoring program. To start this episode, our guest and expert Antoinette Oglethorpe gives us some recommendations on how to get the most out of mentoring.

Antoinette Oglethorpe (AO): I think the key thing is being clear about what they want out of the mentoring relationship. Now, a lot of that will depend on whether they have chosen their mentor or whether they've been assigned a mentor, but in choosing a mentor, essentially, we're looking for somebody who has the experience that we're looking to gain.

So if, for example, my particular challenge at the moment was managing Generation Z something that's very kind of on the agenda at the moment, I might actually want to get a mentor who is Generation Z, because they have the experience of working through their dilemmas and might help me understand.

There's no point in me being mentored by another manager or leader who has even more years experience than me, because while they might be a very experienced leader or manager, they haven't got experience of managing Generation Z. So, I either want someone who has successfully managed Generation Z or who is Generation Z themselves.

And so **having identified what it is that you're looking to gain, that's how you can be clear with your mentor that this is what you want to focus on.** You want to get better in this contest, you want to develop your confidence in public speaking, you want to build your network so that you raise your profile in your industry, whatever your specific development area is, I think it's about being really clear about that, and then being proactive about when they come to meetings being prepared to share what progress they've made since they've last met, what specific questions they have for this mentoring conversation, what feedback they would like to get from the mentor and what experience they'd like to hear about, so, really being prepared.

KL: Taking into account what Antoinette has said, we see that mentoring is based on assertive communication and collaborative work. Remember that the mentor is not necessarily a boss, but rather an associate, a partner, a colleague with experience in the area we want to strengthen.

Therefore, it is very important that both parties are on the same page before the start of a mentoring relationship, so:

- **Set clear goals from the beginning**
- **Define each other's roles and expectations**
- **Encourage ongoing feedback and,**
- **Evaluate the effectiveness of the mentor-mentee relationship on a regular basis**

KL: Now, we will learn about two tools that Antoinette recommends in her Mentoring for Success workshop, to empower and guide mentees when they face problems that arise in their career development. When we need to address a problem, we can do so with a problem-focused approach or with a solution-focused approach. But what's the difference?

With a problem-focused approach our attention is focused on the obstacles and limitations that cause it. We try to understand its complexity before looking for a solution. This approach is useful and widely used in scientific and analytical scenarios, where a rigorous understanding of the problem is necessary before implementing actions to achieve results.

On the other hand, when we focus on finding solutions, we're trying to create or develop a strategy to solve a problem. This requires us to project ourselves onto what we want to



accomplish, and to seek a quick and effective way of getting it done. At this point, it is important to emphasize that neither approach is better or more correct than the other, but that their application occurs in different scenarios. *The Mentoring for Success* guide states: “For ‘linear’ problems, such as fixing a puncture on a bicycle, a broken leg or even an aeroplane, the problem focused approach works really well. Find the cause of the problem, fix that cause, and the problem goes away. But when working with people, teams or organizations, the problem focused approach is less effective. For example, when two people are having an argument, they’re both really sure where the cause of the problem lies – it’s with the other person! But, as we’ve seen time and time again, that doesn’t help – it just makes the argument worse. In a complex, stuck situation, involving multiple interactions, the Solutions Focused approach opens up more possibilities – and can be a whole lot more fun!”

This approach offers greater advantages for mentoring and career development, since these are processes in which the human factor plays a fundamental role. Its application will lead to a change in the mentee’s mindset, making them active and dynamic in the search for solutions that will allow them to progress. This search involves changing habits that may be limiting, considering alternatives, and exploring new paths.

If you are a mentor, be sure to ask questions and observe, taking into account the mentee’s strengths, skills, and positive attributes; this will increase the mentee’s confidence in his or her abilities, and he or she will be able to make greater use of them.

A second concept for working with mentees is called the *Circle of Influence*. Think of problems as a big circle and you are in the middle, inside the circle of influence. It represents the things we can control and solve with our skills and knowledge. We can expand our *circle of influence* by focusing our efforts on actions that contribute and have a positive impact.

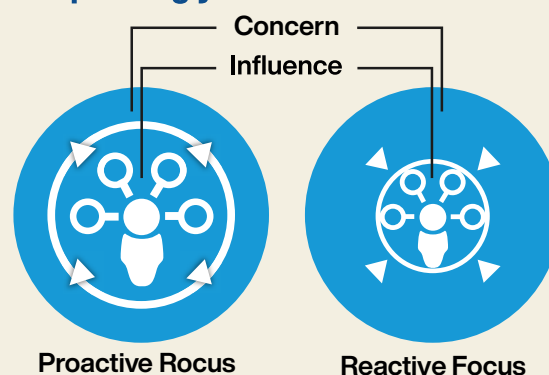
If you are a mentee, before you worry, ask yourself “What depends on me?” Remember that focusing our attention on problems limits us, causes frustration, and makes it harder to move forward in our careers. Antoinette, in your experience as a mentor, what are some of the most common challenges you have faced in mentoring? And how do you best overcome them?

AO: So, I think one of the main challenges is about a mismatch of expectations. Sometimes mentees can think that they’re going to their mentors, and their mentors are going to have all the answers and tell them what to do, and as we’ve just discussed, that isn’t the way it is. So, mentees need to have a clear understanding of what mentoring is and that it’s about putting them in the driving seat of their own development and making the decisions and taking action based on their own thoughts and ideas, but also the wisdom and experience that the mentor shares.

I think the other challenge that happens is to do with time, so mentoring is rarely on anybody’s primary agenda, it is a development initiative and that means that it’s over and above people’s performance objectives and that means that both, the mentor and the mentee, need to be committed to making time for this because otherwise it just won’t happen, and if either of those parties isn’t committed then it will fall down.

And then I think the third area is around communication and obviously mentoring is all about the relationship and the communication and that means adapting to different communication

Expanding your Circle of Influence



Circle of Influence. Illustration from “Mentoring for Success” Workshop by Antoinette Oglethorpe.

styles so a mentee might prefer a style that is a little gentler and a little more supportive. Some other mentees might like something a little bit more challenging and the mentor has to adapt their communication style based on what will get the best from that mentee and if that mismatch happens, then that can cause some tensions in that relationship.

KL: As we come to the end of this episode, we thank Antoinette for joining us and sharing her experience as a mentor. Before we say goodbye, a last message:

- **For mentoring to be successful, the mentee needs to be a ‘customer for change’. In other words, they must Want something to be different and be prepared to do something about it.**
- **Look at strengths and build on them.**
- **Focus on what is going well (expand your circle of influence).**
- **Build on success. When you find something that works, do more of it!**

In the next episode, we will go a little deeper into professional development using a solution-focused approach. Don’t miss it, we look forward to seeing you.

EPISODE 3

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT WITH A SOLUTIONS-FOCUS APPROACH



https://youtu.be/f_Bg-hD7IUE



Karen Linares (KL): We are pleased to welcome you again to a new chapter in this podcast series, in which we seek to promote **mentoring** as an ideal tool that contributes significantly to career development in the complex field of research.

The material we share with you is based on the *Mentoring for Success* workshop, by expert coach Antoinette Oglethorpe, who joins us as a guest throughout the series.

In the previous episode, we highlighted some of the issues that mentors and mentees should consider when starting a mentoring relationship, and the importance of a solutions-focused approach to addressing any challenges that may arise along the way.

[For more information on how to distinguish between a problem focus and a solution focus, see the end of the transcription of this episode.]

This method was developed by Drs. Mark McKergow and Paul Z. Jackson to help people achieve their objectives, through goal-oriented techniques. It is described in the book *"The Solutions Focus, transforming change for coaches, leaders and consultants"*, which was published for the first time in 2002.

We also pointed out that solutions-focus seeks to create a change in mentality in the mentees, leading them to be active and dynamic in the search for solutions, that will allow them to move forward with greater confidence in their goals. Today, we will delve deeper into this approach and provide practical tools to facilitate its application in the context of career development.

It is important for mentees to be aware that the helm of their careers is always in their hands, not the mentor's, so they must be willing to change and look for alternatives that will get them closer to their goals.

But what does this have to do with Solutions-Focus? Think of the solutions-focused approach as an internal inventory of the resources we have and the skills we didn't know we had. Recognizing our strengths is necessary to build on them and achieve our goals, this enables us to move forward even in the face of the most difficult obstacles that may seem impossible to overcome, by EMPOWERING, and this is the essential question of the solutions approach: **how can we progress?**



One of the great benefits of this approach is that it leads us to develop the leadership skills necessary to take control of our professional growth. However, in a scenario as complex as career development where we find many variables to resolve, we can feel lost, or perhaps we are shy and insecure and prefer to wait for someone to tell us what to do. So, we asked Antoinette: How can we strengthen these leadership skills through mentoring?

Antoinette Oglethorpe (AO): Well, I think a skilled mentor can really get to know the person and see strengths that the individual might overlook themselves so within that shyness they will see that you are still a leader in your own right and you will also have recognized that we use a lot of solution focused approaches in our mentoring and part of a solutions focused approach to mentoring is about identifying what is already there, what already works and do more of it.

So, a skilled mentor might, for example, ask you, Karen, if you were their mentee, when do you organize people? When are you the person that people look to? So, it may be that in your social circle you actually demonstrate a lot of leadership, you're the social butterfly, or you're the organizer, or you're the person that people look to for council when they're upset, and those are all demonstrations of leadership and the role a mentor can play in that is to actually help you identify that you already have these skills. It's actually about bringing those to a new context and how you can do that in a way that is authentic for you, because leadership has to be authentic.

So, leadership is one of those big scary words that everybody thinks is something impossible and something you have to go on lots of big training courses for, and **leadership is actually about having a clear vision of what it is that you want to achieve and then getting people to support you in achieving that vision.** Now, whether that be organizing a family party, or whether that be delivering a community strategy

it's the same concept, so, I think one of the things the mentor can do is help people develop their self-awareness, their self-insight and their appreciation of their own strengths and then help them apply those in new contexts.

KL: So, how do you apply a solutions-focus approach to professional development and foster leadership? In the *Mentoring for Success* workshop, Antoinette recommends four tools we can rely on to do this: **Career Platform, Future Success, Career Kitbag, and Small Steps.** Here's a brief description of each:

"Career Platform" asks us to make an overall assessment of where we are in our career journey. This allows us to have clarity about what is going well, what we want to keep, and what we want to be different. Some guiding questions for this evaluation are:

- **What is going well in your current role?**
- **What would you not want to change?**
- **What would you like to be different (that you are prepared to take action to improve)?**
- **What would be the benefit of that?**
- **Who else would that affect?**



The second tool “**Future Success**” suggests that you look beyond your goals to imagine what your professional life will be like once you have achieved them. You can do this by imagining that you have a magic wand and by waving it you can create the career you want. Now that you have achieved the success you always wanted, ask yourself:

- What would you be doing day to day?
- Where would you be working?
- What kind of people would you be working with and for?
- What would you be delivering or producing and who for?
- Why is that important to you?



We continue with “**Career Kitbag**”. We all have skills, qualities, experiences and knowledge that we can use to advance our careers, but we often do not recognize all the capabilities that are within us. Identify and focus on the resources that will help you advance. You can ask yourself:



- What resources do you have?
- What useful experiences have helped you get to where you are today?
- What valuable skills have you developed?
- What positive qualities and talents will help you progress?
- What contributions do you make to your work team, organization or institution that set you apart from others?

Finally, it is very important to remember that “**Small Steps**” can lead to great progress. Commit to doable actions that will help you move forward, no matter how small they are. At this point, you can evaluate:

- What actions will you take in the next three months to progress towards your short-term milestones?
- What are the first small steps towards that?
- What support do you need?
- Who can help you? and
- What else needs to happen?



If you want to strengthen your leadership skills, you need to think of yourself as an expert in your own life and career, because you really are. Look for the skills, strengths, talents, and experiences that will help you grow; evaluate the information and resources provided by the people around you; and make the most of them. **“Change happens all the time. Our job (as owners of our own careers) is to notice the USEFUL changes and amplify them”.**

That concludes this episode. We hope that the tools we have provided today will be very useful to you in advancing your careers and promoting mentoring processes in your institutions. We thank Antoinette Oglethorpe, our guest expert, for kindly sharing this valuable knowledge with us. In the next episode, we will continue to explore more resources for strengthening and nurturing leadership and building strong mentoring relationships. Until next time!

Additional Information: Problem-focus vs. Solutions-focus

You may find it difficult to distinguish between problem focus and solution focus. Here is a parallel with examples to help you see the differences between the two approaches:

Problem-focused” questions	“Solutions-focused” questions
What is the problem?	What do you want to accomplish?
How long has it been a problem?	What would happen if things were perfect?
When was the problem at its worst?	What do you already do well?
What are the main causes of the problem?	What is the best thing you have ever done? and What went well that time?
Whose fault is it?	What small step could you take to build on this success?
What are the impediments to success?	How would others know things were getting better
How do you plan to solve the problem?	

EPISODE 4

COMMUNICATING EFFECTIVELY TO BUILD A POWERFUL MENTORSHIP



<https://youtu.be/qwKZL6rMz7k>



Karen Linares (KL): Hello everyone, it is a pleasure to welcome you to the 4th episode of our podcast: *"Mentoring as a tool for professional development and strengthening of health research networks"*, developed by CIDEIM as the Regional Training Center and TDR Global Node for Latin America and the Caribbean. The thematic content of this podcast is based on the "TDR Mentoring Program" conducted by coach Antoinette Oglethorpe and supported by the Special Program for Research and Training in Tropical Diseases – TDR.

In this episode we will talk about communication, a key factor in effective and sustainable mentoring. We will also provide some tools to guide mentor-mentee conversations and adapt different communication styles to work effectively.

Effective communication is not just about conveying information, it is about creating a dialogue that enables mutual understanding, the development of ideas and the resolution of challenges. Without it, mentoring can be confusing, unproductive, or frustrating for both parties.

A good mentor listens actively, shows genuine interest in the mentee's concerns and aspirations, and speaks clearly to avoid misunderstandings. For example, if mentees are having difficulty defining their research area instead of giving direct instructions, the mentor asks questions such as: "What problem in your field would you like to solve?" or "What projects have you enjoyed the most?". This helps mentees find their own direction and ensures that the conversation is two-way.

When discussing a health issue, the mentor might ask, "If you were to design a study to address this issue, how would you do it?" and then provide feedback on the mentee's proposal. By opening the dialogue, mentees gain the confidence to share their ideas.

Now, our guest and expert mentoring coach, Antoinette Oglethorpe, joins us to talk about how to build a strong and effective mentor-mentee relationship and how it benefits both parties.



Antoinette Oglethorpe (AO): Well, as you say, a lot of it is about building trust. So, I think the most important thing initially is just getting to know each other and being as open as possible about who you are, what your background is, what your experience is, what challenges you're facing, sharing any insights into your own self-awareness. I think the more that both mentor and mentee can do that, the more that it will build trust between the two parties.

I think then also addressing some of those things that we just talked about in terms of getting to know the person's communication style, discussing the expectations of the mentoring and agreeing to those, and discussing things like how often you're going to meet, how long you're going to meet for, what format you're going to contact each other in. Is it okay for the mentee to WhatsApp the mentor outside of work hours or any day of the week? or, will the mentor like that more contained and viceversa.

So, I think a lot of it is about and setting expectations upfront and agreeing what you're trying to achieve, but also getting to know each other, building trust just in building a human relationship.

So, the mentee can benefit from gaining insights so self-awareness and self-insights as we've just talked about, they can also gain insights from someone with more experience, so, we often talk about the benefit of learning from mistakes and learning from experience; but those mistakes and experience don't have to be our own, we can learn from other people's experience and mistakes. They can develop new skills because through discussing with their mentor, they will then go and try new things, which then develop their skills, and It can be very powerful in helping people expand their network, so the mentor can introduce the mentee to people that they don't necessarily know and ultimately, it gives them a safe space to discuss challenges and opportunities and that means that helps them come to decisions. We all know the benefit of talking things out without always do it, and this platform allows that.

But it's not just mentees that benefit. Mentors also benefit because firstly, they have the satisfaction of helping others, which is very important. But also, in supporting a mentee they're reflecting on their own experiences and they're learning about from that. Reflection is something that we don't do enough, and it is through reflection that we really learn. So by reflecting on their own experiences, they learn more about themselves as well as developing new insights about how to approach situations, and they also learn new perspectives from their mentees and whether that be that the mentees, you know, from a different walk of life, a different country, a different generation, a different background, those differing perspectives can be really valuable.

KL: What strategies can we use to foster trust and open communication with our mentees? Today, we will introduce you to two tools that can help you have effective mentoring conversations: the **OSKAR model** and the **DISC** model.

The **OSKAR** model is designed to facilitate effective conversations between mentors and mentees using the Solutions-focus Approach. The acronym OSKAR represents five tools:

1. **Outcome**
2. **Scaling**
3. **Know-how**
4. **Affirm & Action and**
5. **Review**



Let's define them briefly:



The **Outcome Tool** helps mentees clearly define the goals they want to achieve in their professional or academic development. We can begin a mentoring session by asking the mentee, "What do you want to get out of this meeting?" and imagine what their "*future perfect*" would look like.



The **Scaling Tool** asks us to rate current progress on a scale of 0 to 10, where 0 is the worst it has ever been and 10 is the outcome or "*future perfect*". Remember, we are using a solutions-focus approach, so the goal is not to look for reasons why the mentee has not achieved this "*future perfect*" but to recognize the progress that has been made: where would you put things today? How is it that you are at this point on the scale and not at a lower level? What helped you get to where you are now?



The **Know-How Tool** consists of identifying the skills and resources the mentee already possesses that will contribute to achieving his or her goals, as well as considering what the mentor and others can contribute. It is important to share your and others' thoughts, ideas and experiences so that the mentee can consider their relevance and accept or reject them.



The **Affirm and Act Tool** invites the mentor to recognize the mentee's successes with affirmations, which are genuine and positive comments about the mentee's strengths, attributes, skills, abilities, accomplishments, and qualities that will help them progress.

On the other hand, actions are the small steps that allow mentees to make progress toward their goals. It is important to plan the steps to be taken, keeping in mind:

- Doing more of what works, and
- Stopping doing what doesn't work and doing something different



Finally, **the Review Tool** challenges us to regularly assess progress and adjust strategies as needed to ensure continuous improvement in the mentoring process.

Implementing the OSKAR model in mentoring conversations promotes a structured, positive, solutions-focused approach to career development.

Now let's talk about the **DISC model**. This is a psychometric assessment tool developed by psychologist William Moulton Marston, to identify the behavioral and personality styles of individuals in different environments.

The acronym DISC stands for four behavioral styles: Dominance, Influence, Steadiness and Conscientiousness.



DISC Model. Source:
"Mentoring for Success"
Workshop.
Antoinette Oglethorpe,
2024.

Dominance describes how a person approaches problems and challenges. People with high dominance tend to be direct, decisive, and results oriented.

Influence reflects how a person interacts with others and persuades them. People with high influence tend to be outgoing, enthusiastic and persuasive.

Steadiness reflects how a person responds to the environment and changes. People high in Steadiness tend to be patient, consistent, cooperative, and loyal.

Conscientiousness measures how a person relates to established rules and procedures. People with high conscientiousness tend to be meticulous, analytical, and quality oriented.

The 4 styles are present in all people, and this test helps us to identify which is predominant in each person. It is important to note that a person's predominant DISC style does not necessarily manifest itself in the same way in all contexts.

For example, a person may be more dominant or persuasive in a work environment, but more stable or reserved in his or her personal life. DISC styles are not fixed or immutable traits but tendencies that can vary depending on the role we play, the environment we are in, and the social or professional expectations that surround us.

It is very important to point this out:

- **There are no "good" or "bad" styles**
- **There is no "best" style**
- **All styles have strengths and limitations**
- **All styles can be more or less effective**
- **People are a blend of all four styles**

The DISC model is designed to increase awareness of our behavioral preferences and how they can impact our relationships and interactions, either positively or negatively. By understanding the four styles, we can adapt to work with others and establish more effective communication, which will improve collaboration and efficiency in mentoring.

That concludes this episode on communication styles. We thank Coach Antoinette Oglethorpe for providing us with all the tools we share with you. In the transcript document, we expand on each tool of the OSKAR model with guiding questions and leave you with two links to take the DISC test for free. [Take a look at the end of this episode]

To all our listeners and readers, thank you for following our podcast. We look forward to seeing you in the next episode where we will talk about strategic and collaborative networks.

Best of luck with your projects and mentoring!

Additional Information: OSKAR Model

Below, you will find a series of guiding questions to help you use the OSKAR model tools in mentoring conversations.

The **Outcome Tool** provides you with a set of questions to help your mentee define the "Future Perfect", a full, detailed and multi-perspective view of life after the change has already taken place.

- What do you want to focus on in this conversation?
- Suppose you could wave a magic wand and things went perfectly ...what would tell you that you've made better progress than you could possibly have imagined?

- What signs would you notice that things were going better?
- What are you most proud of or pleased about?
- Who else would notice that things were going better? What would they notice?
- What impresses them about you and the progress you've made?

The **Scaling Tool** uses a scale of 1 to 10 to evaluate your current progress. Ten is the highest score, representing "*Future Perfect*." The following questions will guide your scaling:

- Where are you now?
- How come you're there and not lower?
- What helped you get to where you are today?
- What positive steps have you already taken to make progress?
- What's the highest you've ever been on this scale? When was that? What was different then?

The **Know-How Tool** helps us identify the mentee's skills and resources that can contribute to achieving his or her objectives. Use the following questions:

- What helps you to perform at N on the scale, rather than lower?
- What's working already?
- When do parts of the "*Future Perfect*" happen already?
- What helped you achieve similar things?
- How have other people achieved this?

It is also key:

- Recognize the strengths and knowledge of the mentee, mentor, and others who can contribute to the process.
- Identify available resources (time, money, etc.).
- Highlight the mentee's technical and professional skills, as well as their personal qualities and traits, such as patience, energy, and persistence.
- Share your own experiences and those of others, which can serve as examples or points of reference. This reflection is helpful for finding alternative solutions and expanding the Circle of Influence.

The **Affirm and Action Tool** helps you acknowledge your mentee's past successes and outline the next steps.

Things to affirm:

- What's already going well?
- What attributes, skills and resources does the mentee have?

The following questions are useful for planning concrete actions and achieving established goals:

- What is the most obvious next step to take now?
- What step can you take that will be the most likely to succeed?
- What is the easiest action you can take?
- What is the most enjoyable action you can take?
- What would you do if you were guaranteed success?

The **Review Tool** is used to regularly evaluate progress and adjust strategies as needed. Some guiding questions for this stage include:

- What's better?
- What did you do that helped make the change happen?
- What did others do?
- What effect did the change have?
- What are the next steps?

Review is the final tool in OSKAR, and yet it's also the first tool you're likely to use in a subsequent discussion. Source: Oglethorpe A., Mentoring for Success Workbook, 2024.

Links to take the DISC test for free:

- En inglés:
- <https://www.personality-quizzes.com/disc>
 - <https://discpersonalitytesting.com/free-disc-test/>

EPISODE 5

STRATEGIC NETWORKS AND RELATIONSHIPS TO FOSTER PROFESSIONAL GROWTH



<https://youtu.be/yNGFrKgxV8s>



Karen Linares (KL): Welcome to a new episode of our podcast, *"Mentoring as a Tool for Professional Development and Strengthening Health Research Networks"*. Today, we will discuss collaborative networks and strategic relationships, as well as their impact on professional growth. We will emphasize the role of mentoring in expanding these networks and boosting career development in scientific research.

As we mentioned in previous episodes, mentoring is based on effective communication and collaborative work. A mentee benefits by learning new skills and interacting with others. In scientific research, especially in health, major advances are often the result of collaboration between institutions, disciplines, and even countries. Knowledge is acquired and built collectively.

Strong collaborative networks offer greater access to international funding opportunities and shared resources such as databases, laboratories, technology, and specialized equipment. Also, it is important to share and learn from different experiences, approaches, and methods because they make the research process better. Taking a multi-angle approach to a problem generates more complete and applicable solutions.

Another benefit is the increase in scientific visibility. This is because working with researchers at different levels of experience and trajectory can open doors to new audiences and higher impact publications.

A mentor can help a mentee gain access to scientific networks through their experience, background, and contacts. However, **it is the mentee's responsibility to build, nurture, and maintain these strategic connections.** Antoinette Oglethorpe, our guest expert, talks about how we can foster valuable strategic relationships that contribute to professional development.



Antoinette Ogleshorpe (AO): Yeah, so network is another of those words that people get scared by and networking is another one, so they imagine it's all about cocktail parties and giving out business cards and actually it's not, it's about building strategic relationships. And actually, most people like building relationships but it's about building relationships outside of the ones you have in your current work circle, because **career development is all about influencing other people and getting and taking opportunities.**

So, to develop your career you need to not just take advantage of everything that is available to you in your work circle, but also outside of your work circle. Where else can you know has the opportunities you're looking for? Where else can you connect with somebody that you can learn from?

In our work we talk about the concept of the **Personal Boardroom**, and this is like having a group of mentors, having a group of people that all play different roles for you. Some people might be the champions of the people you serve so you can learn from them, you know, what it is that you should be offering to the community that you serve.

Some people might be challengers who are going to question you and push back against you. Others are going to be door openers, they're going to be people that say: "oh, right, you know, I know a project that's going on and they need somebody that's really passionate about this and really skilled in that area, Karen, you'd be great, let me introduce you to this person..." and so that's how people get their professional development, but also their opportunities.

So, actually thinking of it as building those relationships is more important than thinking that you're just kind of adding numbers to your LinkedIn connections. **It's about quality, not quantity**, and that quality being quite strategic so, you know, if you know or somebody knows that they want to get an opportunity I don't know... well, if I wanted to get an opportunity

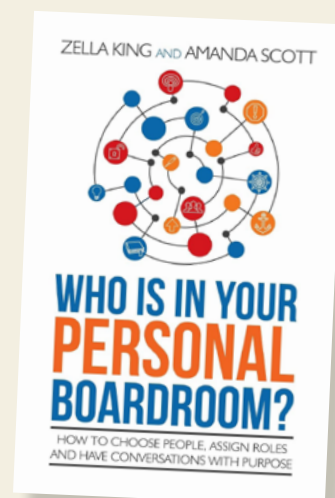
in South America, for example, then you know all the people I work with here in the UK they're not going to be much help, they can't guide me on what it's like to work in South America, they can't introduce me to anyone that's going to give me opportunities, but I might go, oh, hey, I know Karen. And I know Alejandra and I know Andres, and well, maybe they can guide me a little bit.

KL: Why are networks important for managing your career? Here are three reasons:

- High performers cultivate high-quality relationships that span physical boundaries and hierarchical levels.
- It is the composition and quality of a set of relationships that account for long-term career outcomes.
- High performers benefit from a constellation of high-quality relationships.

Antoinette recommends the use of **Personal Boardroom**, a tool created by Zella King and Amanda Scott that helps people get the maximum impact from their personal collaboration network.

In the transcript of this episode, you will find two links to access the digital version of the book "*Who Is in Your Personal Boardroom?: How to choose people, assign roles and have conversations with purpose*".



Book: Who's in Your Personal Boardroom? by Zella King and Amanda Scott (2014).

Imagine you are standing in front of a boardroom door, and the discussions inside are about developing your career. Before walking through the door and taking concrete action, reflect on the following points:

1. What is the purpose of your “Personal Boardroom”? Consider what you want its members to help you accomplish.

2. Who should or could be part of your boardroom? Make a general list, and then carefully select six to twelve members in total.

3. Assign a role to each member. According to the “Personal Boardroom” tool, there are three types of roles:

a. Information Roles: People who provide new knowledge, insights and ideas.

b. Power Roles: People who have access to resources and decision-making authority beyond your reach and help you get things done.

c. Development roles: People who provide constructive feedback, new challenges, and the courage to face them, as well as help you balance your professional life with other aspects of your life.

4. Conduct conversations that are focused on achieving your specific objective or goal, while considering the individual roles of each person in your boardroom. Roles determine who you talk to and how.

5. Offer to help others. This adds value to your collaborative network. Plus, the best way to repay someone for their help is to support them!

Mentoring is a powerful tool that opens doors, strengthens professional networks, and builds strategic relationships. Before we conclude, here are some strategies for fostering networking within mentoring:

- Establish networking as part of the mentoring objectives.
- Identify common interests between the mentee and the mentor’s network.
- Involve the mentee in meetings, symposiums, and other networking opportunities.

- Train the mentee in developing skills such as preparing an elevator pitch, writing presentation emails, and managing professional digital platforms such as LinkedIn, Academia, or ResearchGate.
- Evaluate strategic collaboration opportunities aligned with the mentee's interests and goals.

We would like to express our gratitude to all our listeners and readers. We hope that the material shared will be of significant benefit to you in your professional pursuits and contribute to the promotion of mentoring in our Latin American and Caribbean region. Please consult the additional resources at the end of the transcription document. We have added academic articles exploring the impact of networking on the development of scientific or academic careers in health.

Don't miss the next episode, in which we will explore the Health Research Mentorship in Low- and Middle-Income Countries (HERMES) Guide! Developed by TDR, this guide is intended for institutional leaders, funders, and others interested in institutionalizing research mentoring in settings with limited resources. We look forward to seeing you!

Additional resources

- *E-Book: Who is in Your Personal Boardroom?: How to choose people, assign roles and have conversations with purpose.*
 - Amazon Kindle (Libro completo gratis): <https://www.amazon.co.uk/Who-your-Personal-Boardroom-conversations-ebook/dp/B000QHNOP6>
 - Google Books (Vista previa): <https://books.google.com.co/s?id=EYQQDwAAQBAJ&lpg=PP1&hl=es&pg=PP1#v=onepage&q&f=falsebooks?id=EYQQDwAAQBAJ&lpg=PP1&hl=es&pg=PP1#v=onepage&q&f=false>

- ***TDR Global Community: Connecting members in the continued sharing of knowledge***



TDR Global is a worldwide community of passionate scientists and experts who have been working with TDR on research on infectious diseases of poverty. Each individual brings unique knowledge, and together they make up a vibrant scientific community, called TDR Global.

TDR Global is committed to driving and encouraging mentoring of young scientists and fostering research collaborations.

Looking for an expert? Need a multidisciplinary team? Want to share your knowledge with the next generation? Requiring some additional exposure for your work?

Visit the [TDR Global Discovery Platform](#), a public database of people who have received funding, served as experts on committees, and who have been involved in TDR partnerships over the last 40 years

For more information, please visit: <https://tdr.who.int/activities/tdr-global>

**Don't miss out on opportunities
for collaborating and mentoring.**

**Let's grow this community together
and continue
fostering valuable connections!**

Academic articles on networking and mentoring

- Intellectual synthesis in mentorship determines success in academic careers <https://www.nature.com/articles/s41467-018-07034-y>
- Connecting for Success: The Role of Networking in Medical Education <https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC11682727/>
- The power of networking in science and academia <https://doi.org/10.1111/imcb.12832>
- Mentoring Networks in Academic Medicine: A Longitudinal Exploration <https://doi.org/10.62935/fz1866>
- Community voices: the importance of diverse networks in academic mentoring <https://www.nature.com/articles/s41467-022-28667-0>

EPISODE 6

MENTORSHIP INSTITUTIONALIZATION



<https://youtu.be/4bp-nyXoHSo>



Karen Linares (KL): Hello, and welcome to the latest episode of our podcast, “Mentoring as a Tool for *Professional Development and Strengthening Health Research Networks*.” Today, we will talk about **institutionalizing research mentorship** and the different models that can be used to facilitate this process and ensure its long-term sustainability.

Before we begin, we would like to introduce our guest, Alejandra Chamorro. She is the Course Portfolio Coordinator at CIDEIM and the leader of the TDR Global Node for Latin America and the Caribbean. She will explain why institutionalizing mentoring is important, and we will discuss existing models for doing so, such as the **HERMES guide**, developed by the Special Program for Research and Training in Tropical Diseases (TDR), and the **MENTOR Model**, developed by Antoinette Oglethorpe.

Alejandra, welcome! It’s a pleasure to have you on our podcast. Please tell us a little about yourself and your work.

Alejandra Chamorro (AC): Thank you, Karen. I am a systems engineer with a master’s degree in IT and telecommunications management. I have worked at CIDEIM since 2006, and as you mentioned, I currently coordinate the course portfolio and lead the TDR Global node for Latin America and the Caribbean. As part of my work with TDR Global, I have participated in initiatives that promote mentoring. This has included contributing to the development of the HERMES practical guide. HERMES stands for “*Health Research Mentorship in Low- and Middle-Income Countries*.” I also participated in the TDR Mentorship Programme, which was led by Antoinette Oglethorpe and supported by TDR, and I contributed to the development of the HERMES 2.0 guide. We have led various training activities from the TDR global node and the Regional Training Center for Latin America and the Caribbean to disseminate these materials and tools learned through TDR-supported programs.



Alejandra Chamorro.
CIDEIM archive.

KL: Before diving into the topic of institutionalization, it is important to review what mentoring is since it is often confused with consulting, teaching, or training. How is mentoring different from these processes?

AC: As Antoinette told us in the first episode of this podcast, mentoring involves a broader, more relational dynamic. It's not just about imparting technical knowledge; it's also **about guiding, accompanying, and sharing experiences over time.**

Courses and training programs have very defined beginnings and ends, but mentoring evolves alongside the individual, helping them overcome obstacles and make better use of their own resources.

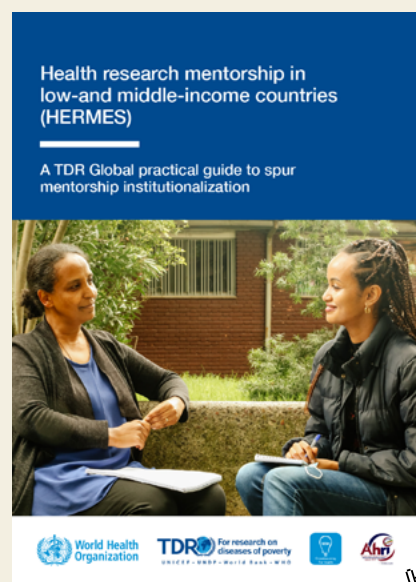
KL: What exactly do we mean when we talk about institutionalizing mentoring?

AC: The goal is to formally add a mentorship program to an institution so that it is not only based on individual efforts. Institutionalizing mentoring ensures that it is systematic, sustainable, and aligned with institutional objectives.

Research mentorship is a powerful tool. It has the capacity to shape generations of researchers by positively influencing their career development and **fostering a culture of learning through research, knowledge generation, and communication of findings.**

KL: Now, let's talk about the models that facilitate the formal integration of a mentoring program into an institution. At the beginning of this episode, we mentioned the HERMES guide. Alejandra, could you explain what the HERMES guide proposes and why it is relevant?

AC: The HERMES guide was developed and published in 2022 by TDR, the Special Program for Training and Research in Tropical Diseases. It offers a practical framework for promoting the institutionalization of research mentorship.



The guide defines the institutionalization of research mentorship as **building research capacity within organizations to improve research effectiveness and health equity.** It does not explain how to be a good mentor or mentee because other resources address these topics.

One highlighted aspect is promoting a “**pay-it-forward**” culture, as this approach creates a virtuous circle in which goodwill is transferred through networks. When people receive help, they develop a sense of social obligation and gratitude, making them more willing to help others. A “pay-it-forward” or reciprocity culture increases team solidarity and reduces financial barriers. When you're working with limited resources, this principle is helpful because it optimizes those resources.



illustration taken from:
Health research mentorship
in low and middle-income
countries (HERMES): a TDR
Global practical guide to spur
mentorship institutionalization.
Geneva: World Health
Organization; 2022. Licence:
CC BY-NC-SA 3.0 IGO.

Therefore, when establishing a research mentorship program, the guide recommends applying the following basic principles:

- Consider a holistic approach, taking a genuine interest in people's overall well-being and going beyond professional development.
- Recognize research mentorship as an institutional responsibility.
- Adapt to the particular context because there is no single model for institutionalizing research mentorship. So, it's a good idea to adapt the guide to fit the needs of the institution.
- Balance digital with in-person contact.
- Build an institutional culture of mentoring.
- Promote collaboration and integration. One way to do this is through a collaboration system that allows for reverse mentoring, which encourages less experienced or younger colleagues to serve as mentors. This develops leadership skills and self-confidence.
- Promote a pay-it-forward culture.

KL: Now, let's put this into practice. What steps should an institution take to implement a mentorship program?

AC: HERMES proposes four stages, which I will briefly explain, but which are developed in more detail in the guide.



Exploration: Explore existing programs, habits, practices, resources, and possible mentorship initiatives. At this stage, for example, potential mentors and interested mentees are identified.



Preparation: Plan the launch of the mentorship program and define its purpose and goals. Adapt or adopt existing programs within the institution. Then, assign a responsible office and establish a database of mentors.



Implementation: Match mentees with mentors and hold mentorship meetings and training sessions. Monitor and evaluate progress.



Sustainability: Identify areas for improvement and ensure ongoing organizational support. Encourage mentees to become mentors and promote a pay-it-forward culture.

KL: Now, let's talk about the MENTOR model. How did you learn about it, and what does it suggest for the implementation of a mentoring program?

AC: We learned about the MENTOR model developed by Antoinette Oglethorpe during the *TDR Mentorship Programme* we participated in in 2024. The model outlines six clear steps for launching and implementing an effective mentoring program. It is a practical framework that helps to turn intentions into concrete actions:



MENTOR Model. Taken from:
TDR Mentoring Programme,
Train the Trainer masterclass.
Antoinette Oglethorpe.

M – Matching Strategy: Designing the process by which mentors and mentees are paired based on criteria, manual algorithms, and supervision to ensure affinity and institutional value.

E – Engagement: Disseminating information and attracting participants (informative sessions, launch) so people understand the benefits and roles.

N – Nominations: the registration/nomination process (self-nomination or nomination by units) that allows useful data to be gathered for matching.

T – Training: Train mentors and mentees. Evidence shows that programs with initial training are more successful. Here, practical content is designed for mentoring conversations, goals, and boundaries.

O – Ongoing Support: Cultivate communities, facilitate follow-up sessions, and establish support networks to maintain the program's momentum.

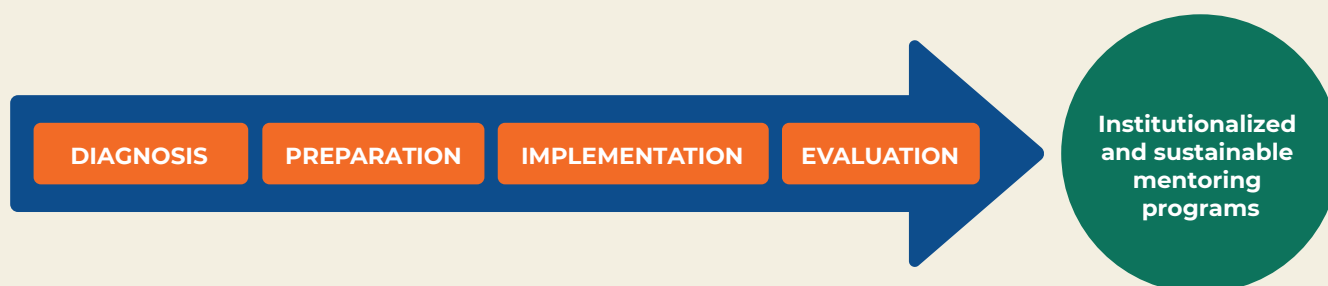
R – Review: this refers to monitoring, evaluating, and celebrating in order to learn, adjust, and highlight achievements.

KL: Could you please elaborate on the relationship between the HERMES guide and the MENTOR model?

AC: Both approaches complement each other. **HERMES provides a general framework** of principles and stages for institutionalizing research mentorship, ensuring it becomes part of an institution's strategy.

On the other hand, the **MENTOR model is more practical and operational**; it tells us how to turn ideas into concrete actions within those stages. In the end, it's interesting that, despite their different names and approaches, the models follow universal stages:

Institutionalization
of mentoring:
Models follow
universal stages.



- **Diagnosis:** Understanding the context and needs.
- **Preparation:** Defining goals, responsibilities, and resources.
- **Implementation:** Launching the program, matching, training, and providing accompaniment.
- **Evaluation:** Reviewing, adjusting, and ensuring sustainability.

The combination of HERMES's strategic aspects and MENTOR's operational aspects leads to the creation of more institutionalized and sustainable mentorship programs.

KL: Monitoring or tracking the mentoring program is essential for ensuring its sustainability and integration into the institutional culture. Alejandra, could you share some recommendations for measuring and evaluating research mentorship programs?

AC: The HERMES guide recommends the following:

- Adapt monitoring and evaluation according to the stage of the mentorship program.
- Use quantitative and qualitative methods. Since there are no standardized scales for measuring mentoring programs, it is necessary to adopt a multi-indicator approach and develop our own tools to measure the institutionalization of research mentorship.

- Celebrate achievements within research groups and teams, not just at the individual level.
- Conduct ongoing monitoring and documentation of mentoring activities at different levels (e.g., mentor-mentee, institutional).

KL: Thank you very much for joining us, Alejandra, and for sharing these valuable resources. Before we conclude, what would you say is the most significant impact of institutionalized research mentorship?

AC: Institutionalizing research mentorship has the power to transform both individual careers and institutional capacities. That's why we're encouraging more institutions to take this step.

KL: Thank you to everyone who has followed us throughout this podcast series dedicated to mentoring. We hope the resources we shared help you integrate and formalize mentoring processes individually and within your research institutions. This complete series, with transcripts in English and Spanish, is available on our [YouTube channel](#). You can also access the series on our website: www.cideim.org.co/cideim.

Until next time!

