

Welcome to the mentor workshop! Talk through each of these peer mentoring scenarios and discuss:

- **What would you do?**
 - **Has this happened before?**
 - **What are factors you need to consider before acting?**
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Credit: Some of these scenarios came from writing center training with Kara Wittman and Jenny Thomas. Come visit the CSWIM! (Utilized by Phys009, and now CS009/ID009!)

Jenny.Thomas@pomona.edu, Assistant Director of College Writing and Language Diversity

Disclaimer: There are no right answers to this. We just want everyone to explore how they would approach and respond to these situations!

Feel free to take notes in each section!

Scenario 1 - Authority & Time

1. You are working with a student and they question your authority on the subject or on the question, your ability to offer useful or accurate feedback
 - i. Explicitly.
 - ii. Implicitly.
 - iii. And you're starting to question your own authority.
2. You are TA-ing a lab that you don't have any experience in. Students ask you a question that you don't know the answer to.
 - i. Alternatively, you are mentoring a class, but you weren't sent the problem set before a mentor session to look over, and it is a topic in which you are uncomfortable / unfamiliar with.
 - ii. Alternatively, you are mentoring or lab TAing and a student begins to get frustrated with you. They express frustration:
 - i. Verbally/explicitly
 - ii. Implicitly
3. You and your co-mentor have very different ideas about how a mentor session should be run. Your co-mentor:
 - i. Gives out answers
 - ii. Uses language that is not constructive (eg: misgendering students)

- iii. Shows favorites
- iv. Makes a mistake in an explanation

** Tell them to take phys009 :p

Scenario 2 - Authority & Time

- 4. A mentee in the class you are mentoring is also your friend. They ask you for the solutions to a problem set the night before it is due, or for you to work off the clock
 - i. A mentee in the class you are mentoring is a few grades above you / older than you / appears to have more authority (in some way) than you. They ask you for the solutions to a problem set.
- 5. A good friend has gotten into the habit of asking you to help them on their problem set outside of mentor sessions. Sometimes your next-door neighbor drops by for a few quick questions, and another friend sends you a few questions about problem sets over email. You've been willing to help and you enjoy what you do, but you are starting to get really busy and your own work and well-being are suffering.
- 5.25. A mentee is attempting to see the solutions off of your laptop.
- 5.5. The professor forgot to send you solutions for this week and you don't have them on time for the mentor session.
 - i. Alternatively, your professor stops sending them altogether for the rest of the semester.

Scenario 3 - Your relationship with the course / professor

- 6. One of your friends has been asking to see your completed problem set to check answers. The professor has explicitly discouraged students from copying answers and you are worried they may be directly copying, yet your friend is persistent. You want to help your friend, and offered to meet to check answers together, but they keep asking.
- 7. The student with whom you are working begins to deride or complain about the professor that assigned the work they've brought in, calling that professor's style, ideas, or feedback into question.
 - i. You privately feel concerned that a professor would act that way, say those things, or act unfairly.
 - ii. You suspect you're seeing evidence of bias in the experiences of particular students of marginalized identity.
- 8. Students complain about the course structure or difficulty and identify specific features that make the class unnecessarily stressful. The professor does not have frequent contact with you and you are unsure whether or how to address this.

- i. Alternatively, your professor asks for very detailed updates on how students are doing and what happens at mentor sessions every week. The students share things with you that you don't know if they should be disclosed with the professor.

Scenario 4 - Interpersonal

- 9. Although there is a problem set, and a deadline, it becomes clear that a student you're working with wants or needs to talk about adjusting to college life, their roommate, and some personal struggles that are happening.
- 10. You are working with a student who seems to be more interested in the interpersonal aspects of the session than in working on their paper or presentation, and this peer begins to make you uncomfortable.
- 11. The student you are working with at a mentor session or learning community session says they are afraid to speak in class because they suffer from imposter syndrome and feel like they don't belong in the department.

Scenario 5 - Teaching

- 12. A student used ChatGPT or looks on StackOverflow to do the entire problem set.
 - i. Alternatively, you noticed the students decided to "divide and conquer" the problem set, so most students are copying each other's code and therefore not fully doing or understanding the full problem set themselves.
- 13. A student hasn't started a problem at all.
 - i. Alternatively, the student hasn't started any problems, and came in in the last five minutes of the mentor session, and they will be taking a quiz on the problem set in class on the next day.
 - ii. During the mentor session, you notice that they keep coming up to ask you for the answer without spending much time on your own.
- 14. Students are consistently displaying that they do not understand a particular question/assignment.
- 15. You're noticing a particular student taking up a lot more space than other students, not allowing others to have a chance to answer your questions, interrupting them, etc.
- 16. Most of the students have broken off to work in small groups, however, one student is working on their own and hasn't spoken to anyone in the past hour.

^[1] The first answer to any of these is that you can always come to your co-mentor, professor, one of us, another peer mentor, or your department liaisons for help navigating the situation. These scenarios are meant to serve as starting points for conversation and do not, of course, contain the nuance, complexity, lived-experience, embodied reality, and affective charge of any real-life situation.

