

# Conversations in Mentoring

## Communication

### Context

It's not only what you say that matters, but also how you say it!

- Choose your words carefully and keep in mind how you say them.
- Nonverbal communication (body language and tone) impacts how others view you and hear you.
- Think about what effect you want your words to have.
- What is the emotional context? For example, seeking direction/information (low level of emotional involvement), looking to prioritize a busy day's tasks (some anxiety/concern), or wanting to resolve a difficult interaction or situation (more significant emotional involvement).

### Approaches and strategies

- Assess your own emotional state to be sure you adjust your tone and language to better manage the conversation toward the outcome you prefer.
- Show that you are listening by paraphrasing the other person and checking for understanding. For example, "So what I heard you say was... Is that correct?"
- If appropriate, nod to indicate that you are hearing and understanding what is being said. For example, you might do this if someone is relating instructions or prioritizing assignments.
- If you have a clarifying question, ask it. And if you need to interrupt, just say, "Sorry to interrupt, but I just want to clarify what I think I heard..."
- In many professional situations, eye contact and a pleasant expression help lay a foundation for effective communication.

### Considerations and goals toward a more effective practice

- What is an upcoming important conversation?
- What do you want to get out of this conversation?
- How can you say what you want to so that you are heard and understood?
- What compromise(s) are acceptable?

