Questioning and Listening Skills
Training and Development

- Onboarding
- Orientation checklist
- Mandatory “core” live webinars (attend these first):
  - The Role of the Peer Mentor
  - Peer Mentoring Do’s and Don’ts
  - Professional Ethics for Peer Mentors
  - Establishing Rapport and Motivating Mentees
  - Questioning and Listening Skills
- Elective live webinars
- The full schedule of trainings (including the link to use to attend) is available each quarter is located on the Training and Development tab of the Tutor Excellence Guide (http://guides.rasmussen.edu/tutorexcellence)
Learning Objectives

By the end of this training, you will be able to ...

• Identify common verbal and non-verbal cues in mentoring interactions
• Utilize active listening skills in response to mentoring interactions
• Narrow down an articulated need by using clarifying questions and reflecting
• Understand how to provide appropriate support
Agenda

1. Mission Connection
2. Verbal and Non-Verbal Cues
3. Active Listening Skills: Observe, Acknowledge, Actively Listen, Ask Clarifying Questions/Reflect, Provide Support
4. Role Play Scenarios
5. Support Resources
Connecting to our Mission

How do active listening skills connect to our mission? Why are they important?

The Mission of Rasmussen College Library and Learning Services
The Rasmussen College Library and Learning Services team is rooted in a tradition of student support and driven by a desire for academic excellence. We are passionate about empowering the college community through programmatic collaboration with faculty and staff.

Through curiosity, innovation, and continuous improvement, we cultivate life-long learners who are prepared to thrive in a diverse and digital society.
How Can I Tell What a Student Needs?

• **Verbal cues**: What is the student saying?
  - “I just don’t even care” = Not Motivated
  - “It’s all just too hard” = Overwhelmed
  - “No one lets me study” = Distractions
  - “I don’t have enough time to do all this” = Time Management

• **Non-verbal cues**: How is the student acting?
  - Sighing
  - Folding arms, wringing hands
  - Disengaging (lack of eye contact, not responding fully)
  - On Chat: Using all CAPS, excess punctuation, emoji’s

  Cues student is stressed, overwhelmed, frustrated, emotional
How Do I Respond?

Observe → Acknowledge → Actively listen → Reflect and ask clarifying questions

THEN provide support
Observe

- **Observe** verbal and nonverbal cues
- Note: Student may be frustrated and may direct it at you, but do NOT take it personally—it’s never about you!
- **Avoid judging** (student is lazy, trying to get you to do the work, etc.)
- Try to understand the student’s **feelings** and **needs** in the situation
- **Reflect** (in your head, not aloud) on the situation **objectively**
  
  Example: “Jane seems frustrated. She’s really behind in her coursework and may not pass. She has scheduled a mentoring session in hopes that it will help her get caught up. She may need help with her organizational/time management skills.”

**Taking time to complete these steps will help you maintain your calm**
Acknowledge

- Acknowledge student’s feelings **without** feeding into negativity
  - ESPECIALLY if you agree with the student (about a challenging instructor, for example), do NOT feed into negativity

- **Sample ways to acknowledge:**
  - “I’m hearing you are feeling frustrated and overwhelmed right now.”
  - “I can understand why you would feel overwhelmed.”
  - “It sounds like you have a lot on your plate. I can understand why that would be challenging.”

**Ensure you complete but do not dwell on this step – venting can easily become a complaint session!**
Actively Listen

How can you tell if someone is actively listening to you?

- What is your body language?
- What are you NOT doing?

Words of wisdom:

“There are people who listen, and there are people who wait for their chance to speak.”

Really listening means not interrupting to make connections about your own experience—this may seem like you’re connecting, but as you’re in your head, you’re thinking about you instead of listening to your mentee.
Reflect and Clarify

- After listening (without interrupting), **reflect back** what you hear the student saying/how you see the student is acting
- Ask the student **to verify** you heard everything accurately

**Example:** “It sounds like you’re stressed because you emailed your instructor with a question and his response did not fully address what you asked. You’re worried that if you ask more questions, you’ll run out of time to complete the assignment, and you are afraid of losing points. Is that accurate?”

- Ask **clarifying questions** to help understand the situation
- If the student has many issues, you may ask questions to help identify priorities

**Example:** “What is causing you the most frustration right now?” or “It sounds like you have a lot going on. What would be the most helpful for us to focus on today?”
Provide Support

- Complete all of the active-listening steps **before** offering a solution – this develops trust and rapport and helps ensure you’re on the right track
- Based on the student’s needs, use the **Peer Mentor Resource Chart** and other resources to help identify what will best help the student
- Maintain **professional boundaries**
- Ensure the student is doing his/her part—as with tutoring, the mentor is doing his/her job when the student develops **independence** and no longer needs sessions

**Remember:** You may not always have the answer and may need to refer a student to an instructor and/or advisor. **This is OK!**
Role Play-Scenario 1

A student you’re working with comes to you complaining about his instructor. He says the instructor isn’t responding to his emails. He insists the instructor is against him because of his email—as proof, he shows you he unfairly got docked 5 points on his last assignment.

• Let’s review our process:
  – Observe, acknowledge, actively listen, reflect and ask clarifying questions, and then provide support

• Discuss your solutions!
Role Play-Scenario 2

A student says she is stressed with all her schoolwork and doesn’t understand any of it. When you ask her what she doesn’t understand, she says she already told you and starts crying*. She says it’s too much to handle and doesn’t even care anymore.

• Let’s review our process:
  – Observe, acknowledge, actively listen, reflect and ask clarifying questions, and then provide support

• Discuss your solutions!

*Remember your resources for emotional students
Role Play-Scenario 3

A student says he really wants to do well in his courses, but he is already 2 weeks behind and with his work schedule and taking care of his children, he doesn’t think he can get caught up and be successful. There are just not enough hours in the day.

- Let’s review our process:
  - Observe, acknowledge, actively listen, reflect and ask clarifying questions, and then provide support

- Discuss your solutions!
Not sure what to do?

Resources available to you:

- Your Learning Services Coordinator (supervisor)
- Librarian team
- LLC@Rasmussen.edu
- Jon.Mladic@Rasmussen.edu
- http://guides.rasmussen.edu/tutorexcellence
- http://rasmussen.libanswers.com
- Your programmatic and/or course Guide
- Advisors
- Career Services

Jon Mladic, Dean of Library and Learning Services
BethMarie Gooding, Associate Dean of Library
Cassandra Feidt (LSC) & Katherine Bessey, School of Business
Anna Phan (LSC) & Emily Gilbert (LIB), School of Health Sciences,
Bethany Marson (LSC) and Suzanne Schriefer (LIB), School of Justice Studies
Kristie Keuntjes (LSC) and Ashley Guy (LIB), School of Nursing
Bonnie Ostrand (LSC) and Jan McCartney (LIB), Schools of Technology and Design
Tammy Hopps (LSC) and Cassandra Sampson (LIB), Schools of Education and General Education
Questions?
Assessment

Don’t forget to ...

1. Complete the assessment for this training
   Assessments should be turned into your supervisor and can be found on Peer Mentor tab of the Tutor Excellence Guide: http://guides.rasmussen.edu/tutorexcellence/peermentor

2. Keep track of the trainings/assessments you complete
   Your Peer Mentor Supervisor will also track this but it will help keep you on track towards certification