



IWMS

INTERCULTURAL WOMEN'S
MAKER SOCIETY

Mentorship Guidelines



Mentorship Program

Mentorship is an age-old practice. It guides Mentees through important phases of transition and change, and empowers them to find confidence and independence in the next steps of their entrepreneurial and creative journey. Mentorship can take on many different forms and functions, therefore it is crucial to the success of the process that the Mentee is clear on what they want to take away from the relationship. Whether it is for the purpose of gaining experiences, information or skills, the Mentor-Mentee relationship is, at its core, a flexible exploration of learning that depends on the Mentee's specified needs. This relationship and process has the power to transform two people, Mentee and Mentor, as they both work together in meaningful exchanges to bring insight, needed knowledge, and discussions beyond what the other knows.





Goals & Values of the Program

This mentorship program is organized by the Intercultural Women’s Maker Society (IWMS), an organization that aims to support women from diverse cultural backgrounds to improve their skills, expand social networks, and gain self-confidence and independence using maker-based entrepreneurial activities. At IWMS, we employ an inclusive definition of the terms ‘woman’ and ‘female ’ and we welcome trans and cis women as well as genderqueer, and non-binary people.

The goals of the IWMS Mentorship Program are to provide an opportunity for a Mentor and Mentee to cultivate a relationship that upholds the aims stated above, the values and goals of IWMS, and the development of skills in maker-based entrepreneurial activities.

IWMS holds values of respect, openness, gratitude, professionalism, accessibility, collaboration, involvement, creative support, sense of belonging, and inclusion. It is expected that these values be upheld in all Mentor-Mentee exchanges with the understanding that they are fundamental to building a solid and trusting connection.

We acknowledge that we are blessed to live in Canada on these beautiful traditional lands and unceded territories of Indigenous Peoples.





Program Expectations

IWMS strives to find the best suitable Mentor-Mentee match based on a *Preliminary Consultation*, and with consideration to your comfort levels and preferences. We try to find someone who will align with your personality, vision, skill sets, and passions. If a match is not immediately available, the program coordinator will notify you and ask to hold your information until a suitable match presents itself.

Occasionally, Mentor-Mentee connections are not compatible. If you find yourself in such a situation, IWMS will reassess the needs of the Mentee and rematch them when an opportunity arises.

Anyone who is experiencing uncertainty or discomfort in their Mentor-Mentee match should contact the Mentorship Lead by email at iwmscanada@gmail.com.

IWMS Participant Requirements

IWMS expects that you:

- Commit to **4 meetings within** the established time frame of **8 weeks**. Each meeting should be **approximately 1 hour long**.
- Complete a *Mentorship Agreement* **together** and submit it within **7 days** of your first meeting.
- Participate in a *Final Evaluation* to review and reflect on the Mentee's progress.
- Communicate with the Mentorship Lead about any mentoring relationship changes and concerns, or about any changes to contact information.



Establishing the Relationship

The most important aspect to a successful Mentor-Mentee relationship is **TRUST**. Find areas of connection and comfort, and don't be afraid to be vulnerable. You may be surprised to see how quickly the relationship bonds when you reveal a deeper understanding of who you are and where you come from. Enter this relationship with respect to each other's time and try to connect with each other if you haven't in a while, although the motivation to keep in contact should come from the Mentee. Both Mentor and Mentee should enter this relationship with the understanding that what the Mentor offers are only suggestions to guide the process, that the Mentor is to take direction from the Mentee and follow their agenda, and that there will be a given moment in which the relationship will come to an end. For the time that you have to learn and grow together, create an environment in which the relationship can thrive!

Initial Meeting

- Consider exchanging copies of your CVs - this is a great way to start discussions around experiences and to see where you might connect or find interest in the other's path.
- Share stories to find common ground.
- Exchange expectations of the relationship.
 - Discuss what the Mentee needs (eg. information, skills, experiences).
 - Be direct about what the Mentor can realistically provide (eg. information, skills, experiences).
- Establish a vision of where the Mentee wants to be in the near and far future.
- Set appropriate boundaries (see **Boundaries** below).
- Establish **how, when and where** meetings will occur and **whether you will communicate between meetings**. Be flexible with different modes of communication so that you can work within comfort levels and schedules. These are some forms of connection you can explore:
 - In-person
 - Phone
 - Email
 - Zoom
 - WhatsApp/Signal
 - Twitter
 - Instagram
 - LinkedIn
 - Skype
 - Google Meet
 - Other: _____
- Discuss how Mentee progress can be reviewed/measured.
- Discuss how the relationship will end, how to identify if the relationship is not working, and **how you will acknowledge when it is working!!**
- Collaboratively fill out the *Mentorship Agreement*.
- Leave room for questions and concerns.



Boundaries

It is important to recognize that mentoring is not training. The point of Mentorship is to empower those involved and for it to be a mutual 2-way exchange. With this in mind, maintain a high standard of personal and professional conduct with each other and prioritize confidentiality in order to nourish a safe and trusting mentoring environment. Refrain from using offensive language including but not limited to profanity, verbal abuse, sexually suggestive comments, derogatory remarks based on sex, religion, race, colour, ethnicity, country of origin, age, or sexual orientation/sexual identity when communicating in-person, verbally or in written form.

The Mentor will respect the limits of the relationship and boundaries that are imposed by the Mentee. It is reasonable to leave room for small scale failure, giving the Mentee an opportunity to learn from their own experiences. In such an instance, the Mentor should reveal blindspots while using encouraging language that engages the Mentee's reflective power. It is inappropriate for the Mentor to use any ideas, products or materials that the Mentee has, or may develop, to further business or financial interest.

If there are any direct concerns, please contact the Mentorship Lead at iwmscanada@gmail.com.

Ending the Relationship

The ending of the mentorship relationship is essential to the Mentee moving forward in their independence, a value that IWMS upholds and strives to foster. It is a good idea to acknowledge a defined end, and what it might mean, during your first meeting.

In preparation for this eventuality, find time to briefly attend to these suggested chats:

- Brainstorm some of the challenges you foresee in ending the relationship.
- Reflect on your mutual growth and learning.
- Celebrate recognized successes.
- Mutually develop personal milestones that build toward a bigger goal.
- Encourage the Mentee to consider what further supports they may need once mentorship ends.
- Agree **how**, **when** and **if** you will keep in touch.

The direction of the relationship, after the mentorship program is completed, is ultimately decided on by the Mentor and the Mentee. Studies show that complete separation for a period of time offers more potential to the Mentee, but that a future reunification, spontaneous or planned, can benefit both the Mentee and Mentor in the long run as their connection takes on a new meaning and is redefined.



Benefits for Mentors

The most obvious benefit for Mentors is the feeling that comes with giving back in a way that strengthens the successes of the next generation and with ones own legacy and hard earned wisdom embedded in it.

Some other benefits to consider are:

- To be part of an exchange of ideas.
- To expand your networks amongst emerging creative practitioners.
- To expose yourself to new and different styles, knowledge and perspectives.
- To become aware of issues, methods and new technologies in your field.
- To exercise your guidance, teaching, constructive feedback and creative skills.
- Improvement in your own practice and rejuvenation of your own career development and path.
- To support the development of IWMS as an important organizational culture.
- To heighten a sense of awareness and reflection on effective communication.
- To feel recognized and celebrated, by yourself and the community, for your mentorship contributions.

Benefits for Mentees

The benefits to Mentees are too numerous to count! The most broad is the opportunity to engage a new source of entrepreneurial and creative support that will provide you with knowledge and wisdom to help you step into your future vision. Creating a relationship that supports your career development is beneficial to not only your professional growth, but to your own personal growth as well.

Some other benefits to consider are:

- To gain confidence and independence in your practice and entrepreneurship.
- To experience your practice and ideas from a different angle.
- To learn from Mentor stories and experiences.
- To exchange knowledge on issues, methods and new technologies in your field.
- To learn and apply new skills and techniques within your creative field.
- To gain an understanding of how to market and present your work, find career and educational opportunities and develop communication and networking skills.
- To build a more robust network.
- To develop skills and knowledge to become a future mentor and leader.



Defining What a Mentor Is and Does

An effective Mentor is a guide, resource, confidant, listener, supporter, advocate, advisor, sounding-board, networker, role model who is honest, savvy, accessible, reliable, empathic, generous, open minded, consistent, shows integrity and is ethical, patient, motivational, and inspiring.

- Do** be present, listen, share, challenge, clarify, affirm and awaken.
 - Do** listen to underlying meanings and feelings, and pinpoint motivators, drivers, and beliefs.
 - Do** echo back Mentee's language and draw out emotional content to reflect on.
 - Do** make Mentee's interests and needs the priority.
 - Do** adjust your communication style to meet the needs of the Mentee.
 - Do** help Mentee prioritize and focus on a few goals and recommend developmental activities.
 - Do** engage Mentee's imagination with regards to their practice and their dreams and help them hone in on tangible goals.
 - Do** ask about and encourage accomplishments, and support successes and recognition.
 - Do** be generous with your knowledge and wisdom, and share stories.
 - Do** support networking efforts by sharing your sphere of influence and contacts, and integrate professional support with faith, family, community and culture.
 - Do** be a resource, and direct Mentee toward a variety of resources (ex. books, web resources, articles, visual resources, etc.)
 - Do** offer assistance with CV, applications, personal and business statements and long-term career guidance.
 - Do** provide moral and ethical guidance.
 - Do** assist in navigating professional settings, institutions, structures and politics.
 - Do** challenge Mentee's decisions and provide alternative perspectives. Ask challenging questions with good intent and identify ineffective patterns or blocks.
 - Do** encourage self-directed reflection, analysis, problem-solving and reflect on learning.
 - Do** share valuable insight into how to thrive and overcome barriers and talk about work-life balance and transitions in career paths.
 - Do** ask if you can make suggestions or offer impressions, feedback and constructive advice.
 - Do** foster independence and encourage self-reliance and leadership.
 - Do** create space for Mentee's self-inquiry and help them develop their professional identity.
 - Do** provide acceptance, encouragement and moral support, as well as nourishment, caring and protection.
 - Do** share techniques and skills within your mutual creative practice.
 - Do** use only positive or neutral comments about your Mentee to others.
 - Do** prioritize personal safety. Meet only in public places and use social platforms that make you feel comfortable.
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- Don't** be afraid to bring your Mentee to their learning edge, which may be uncomfortable, but critical to transformational mentoring.
 - Don't** approach problem solving until Mentee is ready.
 - Don't** tell the Mentee what to do or set goals for them.
 - Don't** make assumptions about Mentee's needs.
 - Don't** just provide solutions, but guide the Mentee to make their own decisions.
 - Don't** offer personal counselling or life coaching that is not related to the Mentee's development as a creative entrepreneur.
 - Don't** assume responsibility for the Mentee's success.
 - Don't** neglect agreed commitments without an explanation.



Defining the Role of the Mentee

First and foremost, it is imperative that the Mentee take initiative throughout this process and be proactive in connecting and scheduling meetings with one's Mentor. The Mentee should be prepared and organized and be ready to take on challenge in order to invite transformative steps toward their vision. Ultimately, the Mentee assumes all responsibility for their decisions.

- Do** be open-minded and committed to learning and exploring new ideas, opportunities, and experiences .
- Do** take guidance as purely educational.
- Do** engage the Mentor's imagination in your creative practice and your professional dreams.
- Do** question and reflect regularly on the process, your goals and your actions.
- Do** express your goals positively. Keep a journal to reflect on the process and to maintain ideas and goals.
- Do** develop personal milestones that lead toward the big goal.
- Do** accept constructive criticism and learn from it.
- Do** prioritize personal safety. Meet only in public places and use social platforms that make you feel comfortable.

Don't have unrealistic expectations regarding job offers, work experience, etc.

Don't neglect agreed commitments without an explanation.

Role of the Mentorship Lead

The Mentorship Lead matches the Mentor and Mentee after reviewing each of their *Applications* and conducting a *Preliminary Consultation* with the Mentee. The Mentorship Lead communicates with potential applicants and participants to provide introductions and to finalize *Mentorship Agreements*. The Mentorship Lead also gathers feedback from Mentees and Mentors and arranges for *Final Evaluations*. The Mentorship Lead will respond to any mentoring relationship changes and concerns. **Please contact the Mentorship Lead with your concerns or questions first. If there is a need, the Mentorship Lead will connect you with the appropriate Board Member or Staff Member to further discuss your concerns or queries.**

Acknowledgements & Gratitude

IWMS is thrilled to offer this program in support of women who are courageously moving their creative and entrepreneurial pursuits forward in new directions. The mentorship experience can be a pivotal and transformative moment for both Mentees and Mentors. We appreciate the time, dedication and creativity you bring to this experience, and to the successes of all the parties involved.

We thank you for your participation in the IWMS Mentorship Program and for embarking on this journey of learning and connection!!



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Notes

"Mystery is at the heart of creativity. That, and surprise." ~ Julia Cameron

"A mind that is stretched by new experience can never go back to its old dimensions." ~ Oliver Wendell Holmes, Jr.

"I can tell you, without diversity, creativity remains stagnant." ~ Edward Enniful

"If you fall in love with the imagination, you understand that it is a free spirit. It will go anywhere, and it can do anything."
~ Alice Walker



