



STRATEGIES FOR SUCCESS IN ACADEMIA

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Lessons Learned from the Faculty Success Program

National Center for Faculty Development and Diversity (NCFDD)
www.FacultyDiversity.org



Learn how to increase your research productivity, get control of your time, and live a full and healthy life beyond campus.

12-week virtual "bootcamp"

Scholarship for faculty who wish to participate through a competitive application process (early March deadline for summer session).



UC San Diego Center for Faculty Diversity and Inclusion
<http://facultydiversity.ucsd.edu/development/>

Structure of the Bootcamp

Weekly Training Module

- Webinar
- Homework to implement learned strategies
- “Advanced moves” if you are already using the presented strategy (or are part of the “Alumni Program”)

Small Accountability Groups

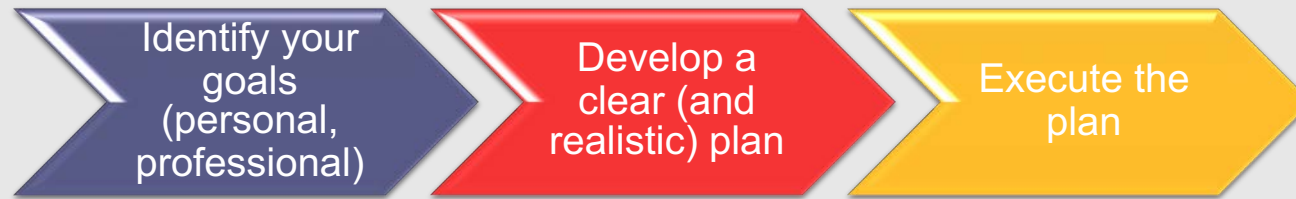
- 75 min weekly conference calls
- 4 people + senior faculty coach (current or recently retired full-time faculty)
- Coach is trained to guide you through and hold you accountable (not meant to be mentors; they may not be in your field)
- Each call includes housekeeping and then each person gets 15 min to discuss and review goals & progress

Online Community

- Hub for materials/resources
- Forums
- Writing timer (Write Now - at least 30 min per weekday)
- Daily updates
- Individual coaching is available if needed

- **Structure helps with accountability, troubleshooting career issues, making good choices, increasing productivity**
- **May challenge your beliefs about how academia works, ask you to try new behaviors that change your relationship to work**

Getting Started



Create Your Strategic Plan

Identify Goals

- What are your personal and writing/research goals?
- Focus on parts of work that have little built-in accountability
- SMART goals: Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Relevant, Time-framed

Map the Steps

- Goals are comprised of Projects
- Projects have 2 or more tasks - break it down

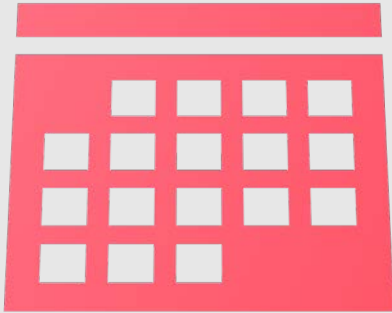
Project to Calendar

- Determine how long tasks will take - break down by weeks
- First add fixed travel & events; Then add personal goals; Then add projects.
- Most people underestimate how long tasks take, so overestimate
- You may find that you have more projects than you can fit → tough decisions about which projects take priority

Track your writing

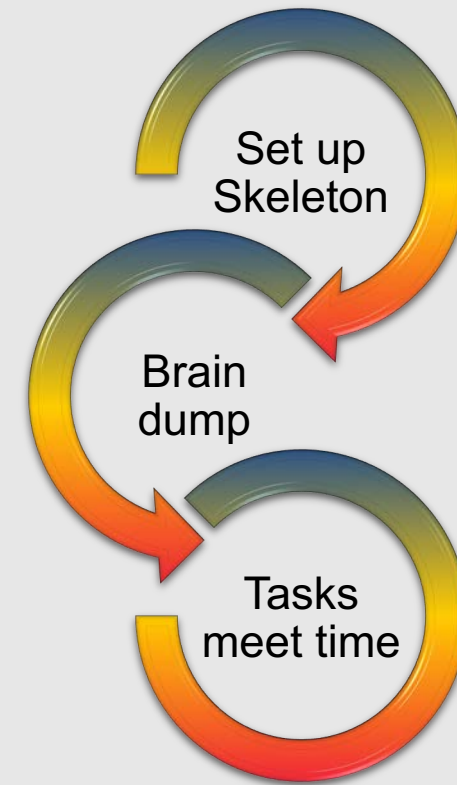


- Write at least 30 min per day
- Writing = any activity between the spark of a new idea and a completed manuscript (article, chapter, grant proposal, etc...) going out the door for review!
- Tracking your writing allows you to analyze data on your habits & react to them
 - Identify your ups and downs so you can start experimenting with strategies to maneuver around them!

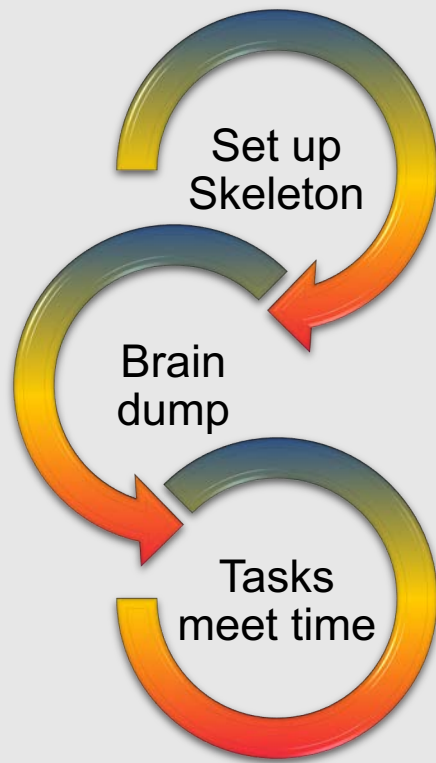


Weekly Planning Meeting

- Weekly planning meeting is a 30 min meditation on what you need to do, when you will do it, and getting creative with the work that doesn't fit.
- Accept that an academic career always involves more work than there is time to do it. **You will never feel like it is all done.**
 - Goal is to **work smarter.**
- Helps align work time with priorities.
 - Distinguish the work that is important for your success from that which takes up a lot of time but doesn't really matter.



Weekly Planning Meeting Process



1. Pull out weekly calendar. Block out all of your existing personal and professional time commitments (classes you have to teach, meetings, travel, times you need to pick up the kids, etc.)
2. Brain dump - Write down on a blank sheet of paper: Set up your main categories of responsibility (e.g. Research & Writing, Teaching, Service, Personal, Administrative, Clinical). Then write down everything you need to do this week in its appropriate category.
3. Tasks meet time: Place your tasks into your calendar (into a specific day and time).
 - **They are NOT all going to fit**, so put the most important ones in FIRST! (The ones that contribute to your long-term success.)
 - **Keep to a regular (40-50 hr) work week.**
 - Figure out what to do with the tasks that don't fit.
 - Get creative - delegate, let it go, do it at a level lower than perfection, ask for deadline extension, ask for help.
 - Block out writing time with specific tasks.
 - White spaces to give you flex time.

Why have weekly planning meetings?



You will get more done when you plan than when you don't.

You will get in touch with time in a whole new way.

- This helps you say no when you are asked to do things that you don't have time for.

Do this with a spirit of flexibility to adjust if things take longer than expected.

Break the habit of having a never-ending to-do list.

- Our weeks become a frenzy of activity on low priority tasks without ever getting to the things that matter most.
- Then we borrow from the "bank of the weekend."
- This state of working all the time and always feeling behind is a miserable way to live.
- The weekly planning meeting is where you will make the hard choices that are aligned with your long-term success.

Resistance

- Resistance = A human defense mechanism to keep us from doing anything that might be dangerous. It arises in response to anything that increases our anxiety.
- Urge to do anything but write, urge to procrastinate/avoidance behavior.
- Examples of limiting beliefs:
 - “I need huge blocks of uninterrupted time (to write)”
 - The most productive writers write regularly, in small increments.
 - “I must be inspired to write.”
 - No you don't. You show up, the inspiration comes once you get started. You don't use this excuse for other aspects of your job: meetings, teaching, etc.
 - “Writing is what I do when I'm done thinking.”
 - Writing IS thinking. First drafts are always a mess and should be.

Resistance can manifest
in different ways

Procrastination
(workcrastination)

Avoidance

Denial

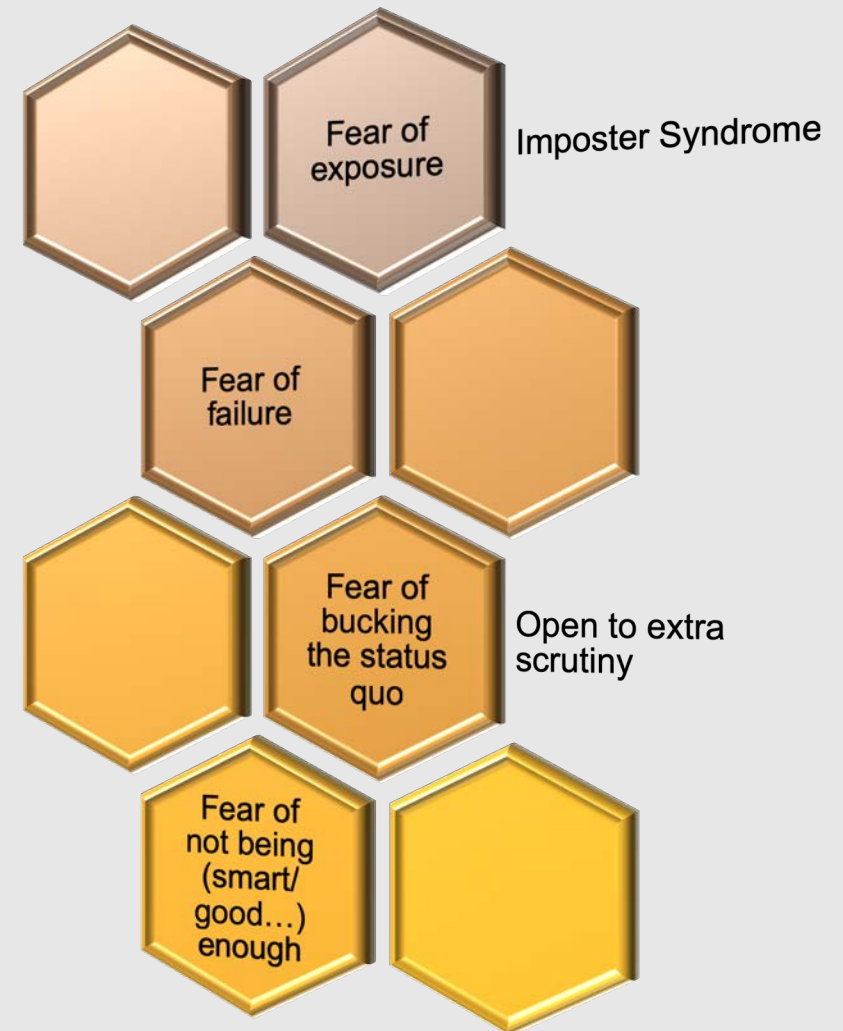
Anger

Limiting Beliefs



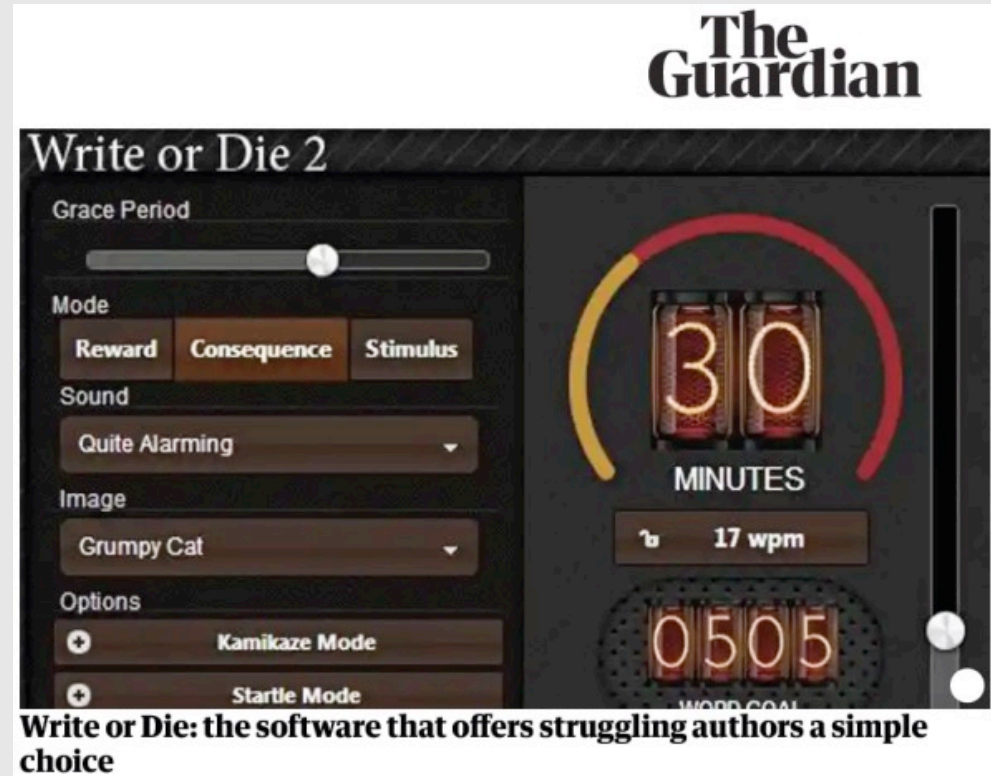
Origins of Resistance

- Resistance (like a bodyguard) is driven by FEAR
 - Where there is resistance, ask yourself what you are fearing.
 - Academic work is always criticized, which fuels fears.
- How can we counter our resistance?
 - Recognize it, realize it relates to fears, and move beyond them.
- The more you move past resistance, the more confidence you develop.



Track Your Resistance

- Resistance Tracking: during writing time, make a note of episodes of resistance (checking email, getting coffee, etc.)
- If you feel resistance - identify it. Ask yourself, how is it manifesting? How do I feel? What's going on here?
- If your resistance is a strong inner-critic, record the dialog and messages.
- External challenges are things that happen beyond your control; these are distinct from internal resistance.
- If you don't experience resistance with writing, consider other areas of your life where you DO experience resistance:
 - Getting 8 hrs of sleep per night
 - Regular exercise
 - Avoiding conflicts
 - Saying "no"
 - Delegating tasks



What's holding you back?

- Haven't set aside time to write
- Set aside the wrong time (end of the day)
- You have no idea how much time tasks take
- You don't have SMART goals
- You're disorganized
- You can't figure out what you have to do
- You don't know how to do something

Technical errors

Psychological obstacles

- Perfectionism
- Disempowerment around writing (need to have particular time, etc. before writing)
- Inner critic on steroids
- Unclear goals
- Imposter syndrome
- Fear of failure
- Fear of success

External realities

- Somebody died
- You have a baby
- Somebody got sick, you have unexpected caregiving
- You have a health issue that minimizes energy
- You or your department move
- You get sick
- You get divorced/relationship dissolves

Align Your Time with Your Priorities

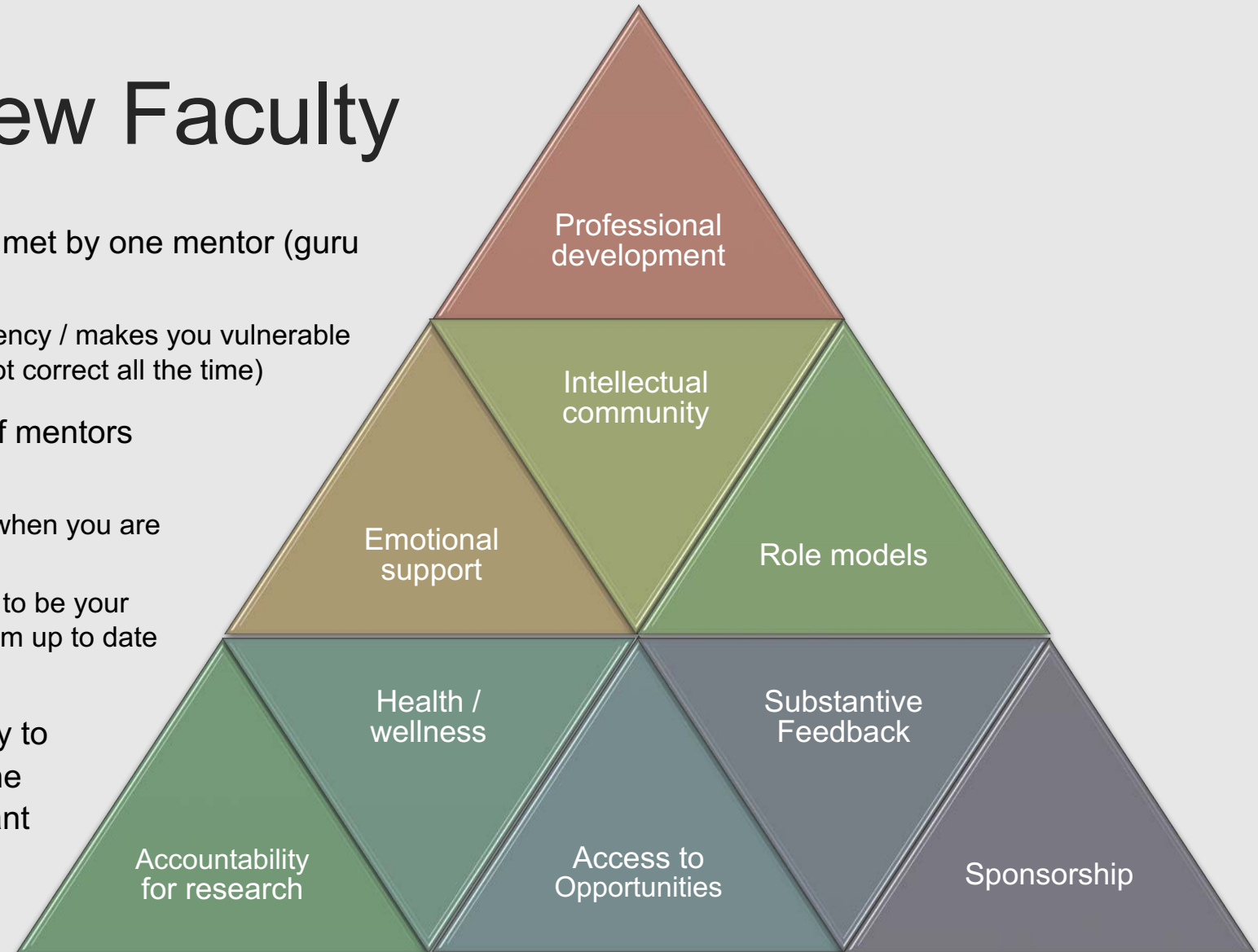


- Over the course of a work week, track the time you spend on writing, teaching, service, personal relationships, wellness, commute, internet/email, clinical work (if applicable) in 15-30 min increments.
 - At the end of the week, calculate the percentage of time you spent on these categories. **This may be shocking!**
- Does how you spend your time align with the criteria for tenure & promotion?
 - Are you spending 80% on research, 15% on teaching, 5% on service? Or is it more like 15% research, 40% teaching, 45% service?
 - **If your pie chart is different from how you will be evaluated, you need to make some changes to how you spend your time.**
- Why do this?
 - There's often a significant difference between how we THINK we spend our time and how we ACTUALLY spend our time.
 - It's difficult to make the hard choices until we know how closely (or not) our time reflects our priorities and how we will be evaluated as we try to get the next level.
 - Getting this far in touch with your time will make saying "no" much easier.
- What do I want my work to look like?
 - Spend most time in your zone of genius - activities for which you are especially talented
 - Spend less time in your zone of competence - areas where others could do the work as well or better; doesn't advance career



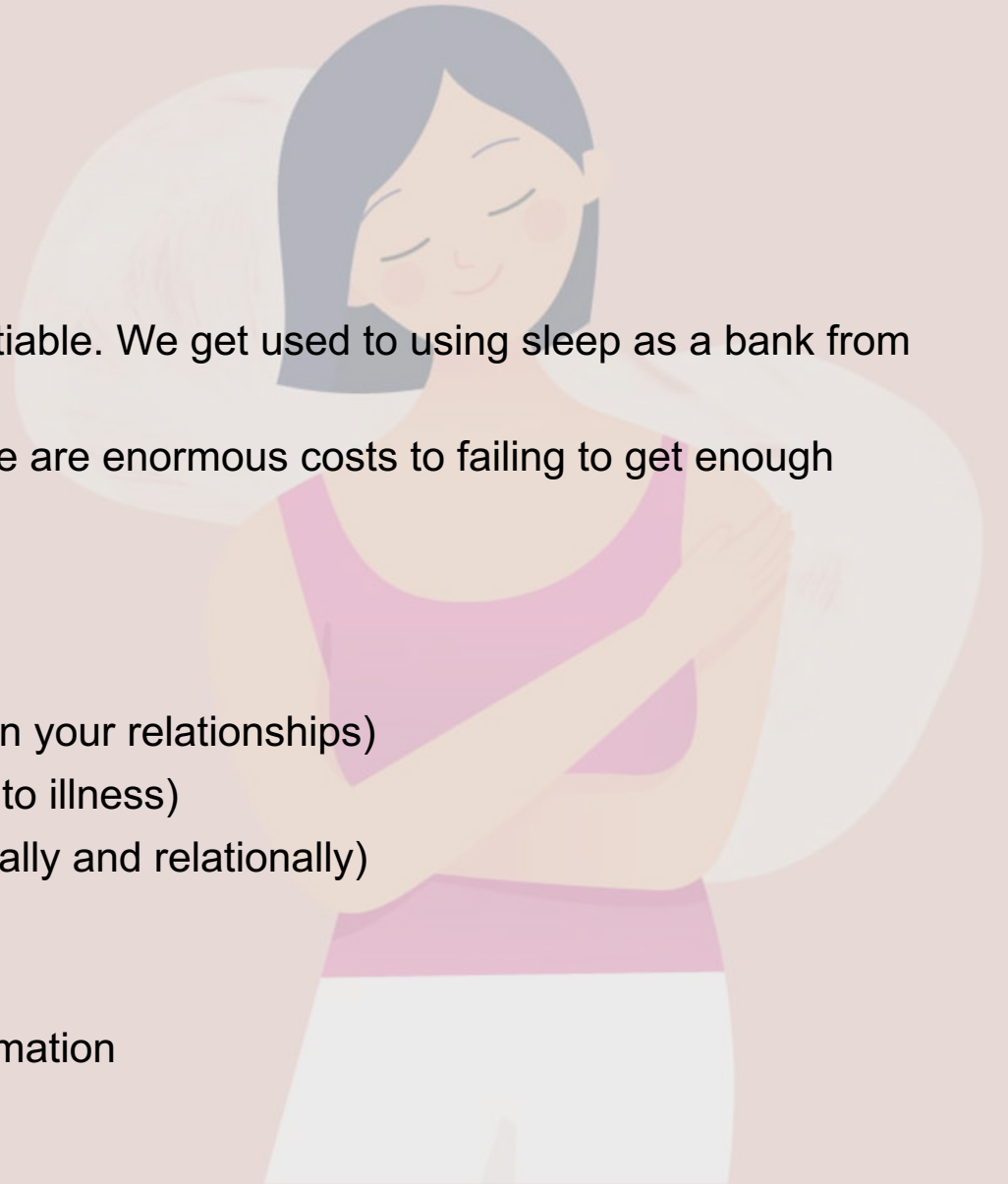
Needs of New Faculty

- All of these needs cannot be met by one mentor (guru mentor)
 - If this is the case it is dependency / makes you vulnerable (even the best mentors are not correct all the time)
- Need to develop a network of mentors and sponsors.
 - Sponsors promote you even when you are not there.
 - You can't really ask someone to be your sponsor but you can keep them up to date with what you are doing.
- What is the most efficient way to get your needs met? Go to the person who has what you want and ask for advice.



Self-Care

- Sleep 8 hrs a night!
 - Many operate under the assumption that sleep is negotiable. We get used to using sleep as a bank from which we withdraw when under pressure.
 - But sleep is correlated with cognitive function, and there are enormous costs to failing to get enough sleep.
- When you don't sleep:
 - You get cranky and irritable (and that can put a strain on your relationships)
 - You experience a sense of exhaustion (which can lead to illness)
 - You don't perform at optimal levels (emotionally, physically and relationally)
 - You don't feel alert
 - Your memory starts playing tricks on you
 - You slow down in your cognitive ability to process information



If you can't sleep 8 hours...Why?

- No bedtime or routine
- Your bedtime is too late
- Your bedtime is haphazard
- You eat or drink before going to bed
- Your sleep is disturbed by noise/noisy partner
- Your sleep is disturbed by too much light

Technical errors

Psychological obstacles

- Perfectionism
- Disempowerment
- You have a sleep story (only work well at night, etc.)
- Anxiety
- Fears
- Unresolved conflicts

External realities

- Somebody died
- You have a baby
- Somebody got sick, you have unexpected care giving
- You have a health issue that keeps you up
- You're in a life transition: menopause
- You have an undiagnosed sleep disorder (sleep apnea)

Lower Your Standards

- Perfectionism can make us and those around us miserable.
- The Perfectionist Delusion:
 - Everything is equally important and needs to be done to an extraordinarily high standard (and this is possible).
 - Perfectionists try to be overfunctioning in all areas but end up doing things in a substandard way, then feel bad about their performance/feel like a failure.
 - Sometimes unreasonably high standards come from a desperate need to prove ourselves, and they can become a straight-jacket.
- How to lower your standards:
 - Make a conscious decision every day to lower your standards in one area of life.
 - The only rule is that you cannot lower standards in: Research and writing, & personal care and wellness.
 - Everything else is fair game! Course prep, meeting prep, meeting attendance, email responsiveness, clean house, etc.



Lower Your Standards

Unspoken standard:

I should say "yes" to all requests

I must be available 24-7 via email

I must have my office door open at all times

My brain must be a fully functioning thesaurus

I am an accountant fluent in US tax code

Lowered standard:

Saying "no" to non-essential requests

Not checking work emails in the evenings or on weekends

Closing my office door during my writing time

Using the thesaurus function when I get stuck

Paying someone to do my taxes



Success Secret: VARY Your Standards

- Successful faculty identify what is most important and what is least, and lower the standards for what is least important.
 - This leads to more success, higher satisfaction.
 - Because everything is not equally important in academic life!
- There are some things for which done is good enough and other things that have to be done to a high standard.
 - Choose where you spend your energy wisely.

Finding Your Peace

- Plan for what you want.
 - If you don't have a plan, you become part of everyone else's plan.
 - Figure out what kind of support and accountability that you need.
- Experiment with best practices
 - Analyze your changes - behavior is the data, track it to give you something objective to analyze.
- Challenge your limiting beliefs.
- Establish a support network.

Questions?

- My email: mlewinski@ucsd.edu
- National Center for Faculty Development and Diversity (NCFDD):
www.FacultyDiversity.org
- UC San Diego Center for Faculty Diversity and Inclusion:
<http://facultydiversity.ucsd.edu/development/>