

## Chapter 16

# LIBRARIAN MENTORSHIP THROUGH MUTUAL SCHOLARSHIP

*An Approach to Foster  
Higher Morale and  
Strengthen Collegiality*

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## Introduction

No library is immune from developing a dysfunctional or toxic workplace culture. Negative working conditions can trigger feelings of low morale, non-inclusivity, and burnout. For academic librarians, these experiences can be detrimental to achieving tenure and promotion. Developing a research agenda is a critical part



of career advancement, but actualizing it can be difficult in high-stress, complex psychosocial higher education environments. Of note, Kendrick's phenomenological study of low morale experiences found connections with "workplace abuse, mental and physical health impacts, systemic influences, and the long-term consequences of low morale on LIS career trajectories."<sup>1</sup> Without taking action, libraries risk losing talent and perpetuating workplace toxicity.

This chapter promotes investing in mentorship, with an emphasis on mutual scholarship, to foster higher morale and strengthen collegiality. We contend that mentoring is an underutilized strategy for cultivating well-being within work cultures. To amplify the impact of mentoring programs, we introduce a mutual scholarship model that leverages the benefits of emotional intelligence (EI). The mentor role aligns with Sands, Parson, and Duane's characterization of the "Intellectual Guide"; this type of mentor "promotes an equal relationship, collaborates with the mentee on research or publications, and provides constructive criticism and feedback."<sup>2</sup>

We discuss reconceptualizing a mentoring framework with mutualism and radical vulnerability at its core. It describes the experiences of a tenured and an untenured librarian at Stony Brook University Libraries (SBUL) assigned as mentor and mentee. The chapter begins with a description of the institution and provides background about the library for context. A review of library literature follows with a presentation of writings that have enhanced understanding of toxic work cultures, morale, the benefits and challenges of mentoring, EI, and librarians as scholars. The discussion delves into the ideation, design, and implementation of the mentoring partnership. Finally, the mentee and mentor reflect in written dialogue about their experiences.

## Institutional Context and Background

Stony Brook University (SBU) is a flagship campus of the public State University of New York system. Situated on the north shore of suburban Long Island, SBU is a Carnegie classified R1, doctoral university and member of the Association of American Universities. SBUL belongs to the Association of Research Libraries (ARL) and is the largest academic library on Long Island. The university's portfolio of academic programs is comprehensive, and it necessitates hiring and retaining librarians with diverse experiences and skill sets to meet institutional research and information needs. Librarians at SBUL have faculty status and must attain tenure and promotion for permanent appointment within six years. To

earn tenure, librarians need to demonstrate sustained achievement in these six areas: mastery of subject matter, effectiveness in teaching, scholarly ability, effectiveness of university service, continuing growth, and contributions to enriching the life of the university by correcting discrimination and encouraging diversity. Mentoring is essential not just for career advancement, but to develop a supportive network that prioritizes socio-psychological benefits of collegiality and morale. With these objectives in mind, the tenured and untenured librarian developed an avant-garde mentoring model using an EI framework that prioritizes mutualism in achieving professional goals.

## Literature Review

### Toxic Work Cultures in Libraries

Toxic work cultures in academic libraries can be systemic yet hidden in plain sight. Examples of structural toxicity are siloed communications, hierarchical reporting, and power inequities in decision-making. An e-mail sent to a manager will remain unread. A meeting invitation may not be extended. Your opinion may not be requested or considered on an issue related to your core work or skill set. The lack of acknowledgement by peers and supervisors in the workplace can be demoralizing. To this point, Freedman and Vreven asserted, “Being ignored by colleagues and coworkers amounts to a ‘kiss of death’ experience in academe, particularly because individual competency and expertise is held in high regard.”<sup>3</sup> Some harmful behaviors can be more subtle. Gaslighting tactics such as lying and coercion are forms of manipulation that makes one question reality. In a phenomenological study of low morale among academic librarians, Kendrick outlined forms of emotional abuse and cited gaslighting in this subset. The false narratives produced from these psychologically fraught encounters can cause librarians to doubt their perceptions of organizational decisions or discussions.<sup>4</sup> These tactics can create stress that affects morale, productivity, retention, and mental well-being. Collectively, the immediate and lingering effects of these actions may impact career choices and conjure thoughts of whether remaining in the profession is worthwhile. According to Chamberlain and Hodson, a toxic work culture creates organizational problems that “include absenteeism, tardiness, turnover, low morale and motivation, communication breakdowns, impaired judgments, and workplace relations with increased animosity and distrust.”<sup>5</sup> Imposter syndrome is another experience that manifests as self-doubt. It occurs when a person questions their capabilities and feels unworthy of belonging. Andres argued that library professionals readily label feelings of doubt

or lack of validation in their everyday work as imposter syndrome, rather than interpreting them as a product of oppression and gaslighting in their workplace.<sup>6</sup>

## Morale in Academic Libraries

Morale is a subjective experience, and therefore characterizing its embodiment in a singular way may be inadequate. A commonly cited definition of morale is “the feelings of enthusiasm and loyalty that a person or group has about a task or job.”<sup>7</sup> A confluence of factors contributes to feelings of morale, and this variability presents challenges to evaluating and calibrating experiences across organizations. Library literature is replete with research discussing factors contributing to chronic low morale in libraries. As Blessinger and Hrycaj astutely pointed out, the service mission of libraries may unintentionally position the welfare of library staff as secondary to the needs of its users.<sup>8</sup> The authors surmised that respect is the common theme that links elements to experiences:

Increasing the respect for diversity in all of its manifestations, for co-workers, for the value of staff to the point that communication with them, their ideas, and their motivation and development are major concerns of leadership, these things should be on the agenda if the goal is to improve the workplace cultures of academic libraries.<sup>9</sup>

Librarians can experience low morale for several reasons, including a lack of promotion opportunities; bullying, neglect, or biased behavior from direct supervisors; and high turnover of colleagues.<sup>10</sup> When these situations persist, they create a ripple effect, incurring “direct costs, work disruptions, and losses of organizational memory and seasoned mentors associated with turnover.”<sup>11</sup> In a study aimed to identify the reasons why librarians leave academic institutions, Heady and colleagues found that turnover is linked to dissatisfaction with “aspects related to their work environment, followed by compensation and benefits, job duties, and personal factors.”<sup>12</sup> The authors continued, “Quantitative data revealed that library morale, culture, administration, and direct supervisors—albeit not in that order—were the top factors in their decisions to leave.”<sup>13</sup> Holley’s research contended that librarians can experience low morale when voluntarily quitting is not an option, and they “instead [must] find [a] way to advance, to acquire new skills, and to remain motivated within the same library.”<sup>14</sup> Without consistent institutional support to meet professional obligations, there is little incentive for librarians to invest in an unsettled work environment. For those

who stay, observing colleagues voluntarily depart has potential to cause further demoralization.

Libraries can take action to improve workplace culture and provide positive experiences for its librarians. Engaging in continuing professional growth and networking opportunities are two ways to elevate overall self-esteem and confidence. Training and upskilling can evoke the same effect. Holley argued that higher morale can be achieved by providing librarians with funding for professional development.<sup>15</sup> Weyant, Wallace, and Woodward's literature review examined writings focused on low morale and strategies to mitigate them.<sup>16</sup> Some of the thematic areas they identified were employee relationships, supervisor relationships, external factors, technology, finances, and societal and cultural impacts. Suggestions they cited for rejuvenating the workplace "range from hiring employees that contribute to morale to providing pay raises and cross-training employees."<sup>17</sup>

## Benefits of Mentoring Programs

Mentoring can help early-career and experienced librarians fulfill their expected service requirements, meet scholarship requirements, and develop job skills.<sup>18</sup> Mentoring has potential to alleviate effects of burnout, racism, and imposter syndrome at the individual and organizational level.<sup>19</sup> Hussey and Campbell-Meier described mentorship as a dynamic, reciprocal, asymmetrical learning partnership with a senior individual or a person that is "up to date on recent technological developments, operating on the edge of what is known, and having the flexibility to learn by consulting a variety of people."<sup>20</sup> In mentoring programs for academic librarians, a tenured librarian typically provides advice and guidance to untenured librarians on issues pertaining to promotion or permanent appointment. While mentorships in academic libraries may be voluntary or required by the job, a mentor can facilitate introductions and help acclimate new hires to institutional culture.<sup>21</sup> Brown, Novara, and Williams stressed the importance of codifying mentoring processes, arguing "A formal mentoring program places accountability on the institution to ensure that its faculty librarians are operating in a system where achieving tenure is a reality."<sup>22</sup> Freedman summarized the social importance of mentoring this way: "Overall, effective mentoring programs benefit mentees, mentors, and the library organizations through connecting them in a meaningful and long-lasting way."<sup>23</sup>

## Mentoring Challenges and Concerns

The expectations of mentoring assignments for academic librarians can inadvertently create increased obligations for both the mentor and mentee. Written

guidance with clear goals, objectives, and expectations can avoid this situation. However, the library literature indicates a lack of measurable outcomes and assessment in mentoring programs. Mertz identified reasons why senior librarians express variability in the willingness to commit to a mentorship relationship, and in the relationships between a mentor and mentee.<sup>24</sup> Overcommitment and compassion fatigue can negatively impact a mentor's physical and mental health,<sup>25</sup> as well as ability to optimize their time. Spencer provided guidance on ways librarians can self-assess for signs of mentoring burnout and offers them practical solutions when they find themselves ensnared in roles and responsibilities that extend beyond core work.<sup>26</sup> Another concern found in the literature is quid pro quo or reciprocity dynamics that can emerge in mentorships. Shore, Toyokawa, and Anderson explored ethical considerations in mentorship and cautioned that reciprocity can negatively affect relationship building between mentors and protégés with disparate maturity levels.<sup>27</sup>

## EI and Mentoring

Organizational change can spark emotion and volatility in the workplace. Harnessing the principles of EI can mitigate unsettled states. Hendrix described the benefits of integrating EI in academic libraries.

Low EI workplaces can struggle more with change than workplaces where EI is an integrated part of the environment. Library leaders—who may be in positions of leadership or in entry-level jobs, where they lead by example—can and should work to develop their own EI, since low EI can derail a change process by creating alienation and disengagement.<sup>28</sup>

The addition of EI skills improves performances, enhances job success, and increases satisfaction. Salovey and Mayer defined EI as

a set of skills hypothesized to contribute to the accurate appraisal and expression of emotion in oneself and in others, the effective regulation of emotion in self and others, and the use of feelings to motivate, plan, and achieve in one's life.<sup>29</sup>

Psychologist Daniel Goleman, who developed an influential performance model for EI based on this earlier research, argued that personal success in work is predicated on the control, balance, and management of one's own and understanding of

others' emotions.<sup>30</sup> In libraries, EI can provide the needed skills to “settle disputes, effectively communicate, and develop successful and lasting relationships.”<sup>31</sup> According to Wilkinson, evaluating EI competencies is a strategy to identify library professionals best suited for specific types of work ranging from disaster response to leadership roles.<sup>32</sup> Applied in the context of mentorship, Crumpton posited, “Mentoring is making an investment into a relationship, which is why having an emotionally-intelligent mentor can be critical to the success of any mentoring program or relationship.”<sup>33</sup> According to Megginson, self-reflection is a key element of EI. “Mentors, even more than instructors and coaches need a high level of emotional intelligence in order to use their own experience wisely in the service of the mentee.”<sup>34</sup> Finally, survey research conducted by Villagran and Martin recommended that more studies emphasize solutions for improving workplace conditions and explore the relationship between EI and happiness.<sup>35</sup>

## Librarian Scholars as Knowledge Creators

Developing a research agenda is a critical part of career advancement for librarians working in college and university libraries. Library research literature about scholar-librarians has examined themes of mentoring, achieving tenure and promotion, cultivating a supportive workplace culture, establishing a writing practice, and assessing the broader impacts and benefits of publishing.<sup>36</sup> In higher education environments, Carpenter described how librarians with faculty status may encounter enmity from teaching faculty who devalue their expertise.<sup>37</sup> A contributing factor is the perception that librarians work in support roles as service providers. Consequently, hostility, isolation, and divisiveness can create strained relationships between library faculty and teaching faculty. More positively, librarians can enhance their scholarly pursuits in multiple ways including partaking in writing groups and writing partnerships,<sup>38</sup> and taking research leaves or sabbaticals.

## Establishing the Mentoring Partnership at SBUL

SBUL mentoring guidelines prescribe that each newly hired librarian be assigned a tenure-track librarian as a mentor in their first year of employment. The mentor's role is to familiarize the new hire with tenure policies and requirements. In the second year, two additional faculty members are added to form a mentoring committee. The initial mentor typically remains the mentee's primary resource and serves as a meeting conveyer. In the case under discussion, the tenured librarian



and untenured librarian received an e-mail communication in November 2020 informing them of their assignment. This notification coincided with the mentee's second year. Prior to this assignment, the two librarians had minimal contact in the workplace, as their core responsibilities and committee work did not intersect.

An initial step in establishing the mentoring relationship was scheduling a meeting to become acquainted with each other's work and then to delve more deeply into the mentee's workplace experiences up to that point. That conversation covered workplace issues, professional goals, and personal interests. The mentee expressed a need for a holistic mentorship, meaning one that would support their psycho-social growth and achievement of professional aims. The mentor created a plan mindful of existing mentoring practices and the mentee's goals. It centered the mentee's need for a supportive advocate in their role within the organization, particularly because the position was entirely new to the institution and transcended departmental lines. Rather than fulfilling a strictly advisory role, the mentor reimagined their partnership as a collaborative endeavor. The reimagined mentorship framework would integrate elements of Goleman's EI model in four domains: self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, and relationship management.<sup>39</sup> EI skills have been cited as predicting professional outcomes including "emotional labour, job performance, organizational citizenship behaviour, workplace deviance, leadership, life satisfaction, stress, [and] trust."<sup>40</sup> Goleman's frameworks were adapted to reflect aims and library practices for the mentoring partnership (see tables 16.1 and 16.2).

**TABLE 16.1**

Self-awareness and social awareness framework for a library mentoring partnership. Adapted from Daniel Goleman's EI model: Daniel Goleman, *Emotional Intelligence*, 10th anniversary ed. (New York: Bantam Books, 2005).

<b>RECOGNITION: Self-Awareness</b>		<b>RECOGNITION: Social Awareness</b>	
<b>Self   Personal</b>		<b>Others   Social</b>	
<b><i>Aims</i></b>	<b><i>Library Practices</i></b>	<b><i>Aims</i></b>	<b><i>Library Practices</i></b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• seek multiple mentors and trusted advisors</li> <li>• be cognizant of time management</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• be mindful of core library obligations</li> <li>• support and explore diversity in librarianship</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• understand organizational climate and culture</li> <li>• establish frameworks for mentoring</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• share subject and technical knowledge</li> <li>• understand differences in personal schedules</li> </ul>



<b>RECOGNITION: Self-Awareness</b>		<b>RECOGNITION: Social Awareness</b>	
<b>Self   Personal</b>		<b>Others   Social</b>	
<b><i>Aims</i></b>	<b><i>Library Practices</i></b>	<b><i>Aims</i></b>	<b><i>Library Practices</i></b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• try new ideas and learn from mistakes</li> <li>• know personal limitations</li> <li>• explore unfamiliar research areas</li> <li>• embrace individuality</li> <li>• exude and support confidence</li> <li>• exhibit creativity</li> <li>• maintain self-respect</li> <li>• set aspirational goals</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• do not overcommit to library projects, teams, and committee work</li> <li>• devote time and attention to all tenure and promotion criteria</li> <li>• consider engaging in a peer mentor with technical expertise or similar background</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• form genuine collegial relationships</li> <li>• focus on complementary backgrounds</li> <li>• allow for social meetings</li> <li>• share motivational spirit</li> <li>• commit to collaboration</li> <li>• cultivate relationships</li> <li>• invest in the personal growth of others</li> <li>• support a willingness to learn</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• integrate tenure requirements in core duties including scholarship</li> <li>• schedule time for research and writing</li> <li>• actively contribute to dialogues and conversations surrounding library issues</li> </ul>

**TABLE 16.2**

Self-management and relationship management framework for a library mentoring partnership. Adapted from Daniel Goleman's EI model: Daniel Goleman, *Emotional Intelligence*, 10th anniversary ed. (New York: Bantam Books, 2005).

<b>REGULATION: Self-Management</b>		<b>REGULATION: Relationship Management</b>	
<b>Self   Personal</b>		<b>Others   Social</b>	
<b><i>Aims</i></b>	<b><i>Library Practices</i></b>	<b><i>Aims</i></b>	<b><i>Library Practices</i></b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• commit to mutual accountability</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• utilize library technologies to track research planning documents</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• be present and listen</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• alternate primary and corresponding author position</li> </ul>

<b>REGULATION: Self-Management</b>		<b>REGULATION: Relationship Management</b>	
<b>Self   Personal</b>		<b>Others   Social</b>	
<b><i>Aims</i></b>	<b><i>Library Practices</i></b>	<b><i>Aims</i></b>	<b><i>Library Practices</i></b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• encourage adaptability</li> <li>• create flexible goals and achievement benchmarks</li> <li>• research mutual interests</li> <li>• support shared scholarly goals</li> <li>• be communicative</li> <li>• adhere to timelines and deadlines</li> <li>• demonstrate proactive planning</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• communicate upcoming library deadlines that may take precedence</li> <li>• set boundaries on mutual writing time</li> <li>• compromise on writing venue priorities</li> <li>• initiate new scholarship types</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• support the other's goals</li> <li>• keep a sense of humor</li> <li>• explore diverse publication platforms</li> <li>• actively choose to continue writing</li> <li>• be constructive, not critical</li> <li>• be receptive to addressing all questions</li> <li>• develop trust</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• be encouraging and receptive to the other's research ideas</li> <li>• attain mutual subject expertise and proficiencies</li> <li>• consult and collaborate on library projects when work intersects</li> <li>• expand discussions beyond tenure</li> <li>• consider producing non-library research</li> </ul>

## Developing the Mutualistic Framework

Assumptions of power and submission between mentor and mentee underlie many librarianship mentor programs. A persistent challenge and concern in mentorship is subjectivity in implementing guidelines and in advising mentees. Further, the workplace is dynamic, and mentoring strategies need to be regularly reevaluated and revised to account for diversity of life experiences, changing strategic priorities, and shifts in workplace norms. Expressing this point more boldly, Andres asserted: “When are we going to stop signaling that fear and anxiety is normal within our profession, and instead examine how these narratives are the result of institutions deflecting the need for change?”<sup>41</sup>

In response to this call to embody change, the mentoring partnership devised a holistic program that exemplifies the EI model (see table 16.3). The reenvisioned

framework invests in regular communications and seeks to continue the partnership in perpetuity, stressing mutualism between the tenured mentor and tenure-track mentee. It works to validate individual mental, intellectual, and emotional selves and cultivate trust.

### TABLE 16.3

Elements transformed in the library mentoring partnership within an EI framework.

Historical Mentoring Practices	Reimagined Mentoring Practices
Transactional	Symbiotic
Prescriptive	Progressive
Checklists	EI framework and competencies
Scheduled meeting times	Ad hoc discussions; nonlinear approach; negotiable as needed
Independent research and scholarship focused on library literature	Shared research and scholarship on diverse subjects
Individualism	Mutualism
Mentor led	Decentered leadership
End date	No firm end

This aspirational framework can be replicated and adapted by academic libraries desiring to refresh or think in new ways about the intention and purposes of mentoring programs. A practical starting point is to review existing mentoring documents that outline general principles, aims and goals, and the assignment continuum. A next step might be to identify and consult tools to aid new processes, such as readings in mentoring models and EI competencies. It is important to acknowledge that assessment of mentoring programs is an iterative and continuous process.

## Developing Mutual Scholarship and a Writing Practice

Academic writing partnerships can strengthen relationship bonds and nurture scholarly identities.<sup>42</sup> Montelongo and colleagues summarized the benefits accrued by librarians from engaging in scholarship as follows:

Conducting research, publishing in the subject disciplines, and becoming professionally involved in the scholarly activities of their subject disciplines not only benefits a subject specialist's own library, but also enhances the status, roles, and personal job satisfaction of individual librarians, the prestige of the particular library, and librarianship as a whole.<sup>43</sup>

At the start of the mentoring relationship, the librarians intentionally decided to concentrate on the mentee's scholarly output. For promotion and permanent appointment at SBUL, librarians must demonstrate scholarly ability by authoring a minimum of three peer-reviewed publications. In academic libraries, including SBUL, issues surrounding protected time for research endeavors have historically been at the forefront of library faculty concerns. Black and Leysen have addressed this issue, arguing "Librarians often have difficulty meeting scholarship expectations because of the structure of their work environment and the way in which the institution and librarians themselves perceive scholarship."<sup>44</sup> Further, Fox's research found that "many full-time librarians may be putting in 45–55 hours or more per week on their combined professional activities on a regular basis" and "in written comments to the scholarship survey, many participants still spoke of their contributions to scholarship as being conducted on their 'own personal time' beyond the 'normal work week.'"<sup>45</sup>

Central to the mentoring partnership's process is mapping the EI personal and social competencies to a mutualistic research and writing praxis (see tables 16.4 and 16.5). An objective is aiding growth in multiple professional areas including core responsibilities, technical knowledge, and contributions to diversity initiatives. The collaborative writing elements combine periods of individual research with real-time drafting and revising.<sup>46</sup> During scheduled meeting times, the mentoring partnership discusses research ideas, opportunities to create new projects, and forums to disseminate their scholarship. A shared spreadsheet is used to record and organize the status of joint work on writings, presentations, and other projects such as producing open educational resources (e.g., research guides). To date, outcomes from the mentoring partnership's intellectual partnership are more than a dozen peer-reviewed articles and book chapters, several invited professional lectures (e.g., International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions, American Library Association) and refereed presentations. This collaboration has affirmed trust in mentorship, elevated scholarly confidence, fostered productivity, and improved career satisfaction for both.

**TABLE 16.4**

Personal competence framework for library mentoring and writing partnerships. Adapted from Daniel Goleman's emotional competence framework. Daniel Goleman, *Emotional Intelligence*, 10th anniversary ed. (New York: Bantam Books, 2005).

Competency	Type	Mutual Writing Crosswalk
Self-awareness	Emotional awareness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reframe and prioritize writing as a contribution to knowledge.</li> </ul>
Self-awareness	Accurate self-assessment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Choose topics reflective of professional identity and goals.</li> </ul>
Self-awareness	Self-confident	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Do not confine or limit research interests.</li> </ul>
Self-regulation	Self-control	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Create a writing timeline for milestones.</li> <li>• Alternate lead author and who selects topics.</li> </ul>
Self-regulation	Trustworthiness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Communicate.</li> <li>• Keep one's word.</li> <li>• Maintain confidentiality.</li> </ul>
Self-regulation	Conscientiousness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Respect each other's time.</li> </ul>
Self-regulation	Adaptability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop shared professional goals.</li> </ul>
Self-regulation	Innovation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Study a topic no one has yet examined.</li> </ul>
Motivation	Achievement drive	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Set realistic and aspirational goals.</li> <li>• Record statistics about output.</li> </ul>
Motivation	Commitment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Emphasize quality over quantity.</li> <li>• Be flexible.</li> </ul>
Motivation	Initiative	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Investigate, select, and target journals together.</li> </ul>
Motivation	Optimism	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Be encouraging and supportive.</li> <li>• Keep a sense of humor.</li> </ul>

**TABLE 16.5**

Social competence framework for EI mentoring and library writing partnerships. Adapted from Daniel Goleman's emotional competence framework. Daniel Goleman, *Emotional Intelligence*, 10th anniversary ed. (New York: Bantam Books, 2005).

<b>Competency</b>	<b>Type</b>	<b>Mutual Writing Crosswalk</b>
Empathy	Understanding others	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Observe, listen, and read social cues.</li> <li>• Expand discussions beyond tenure requirements.</li> </ul>
Empathy	Developing others	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Support the other's goals.</li> <li>• Encourage curiosity.</li> <li>• Impart knowledge and share experiences.</li> </ul>
Empathy	Service orientation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Actively participate in mentoring program.</li> <li>• Invest in other's personal growth.</li> </ul>
Empathy	Leveraging diversity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Create an environment for BIPOCa new librarians to thrive.</li> <li>• Be sensitive to power dynamics.</li> </ul>
Empathy	Political awareness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Be mindful of organizational climate and culture.</li> <li>• Be constructive not critical.</li> <li>• Alternate primary author/presenter position.</li> </ul>
Social Skills	Influence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cultivate relationships.</li> <li>• Use persuasion or charisma to promote positivity.</li> </ul>
Social Skills	Communication	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Share information.</li> <li>• Be timely in responding to questions and feedback.</li> </ul>
Social Skills	Conflict management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Embody mutual respect.</li> <li>• Encourage debate and different viewpoints.</li> <li>• Manage emotions if disagreement or conflict arises.</li> </ul>
Social Skills	Leadership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Guide and be a point of contact.</li> <li>• Lead by example.</li> </ul>

Competency	Type	Mutual Writing Crosswalk
Social Skills	Change catalyst	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Establish new frameworks for mentor and mentee assignments.</li> <li>• Be encouraging and receptive to the other's research ideas.</li> </ul>
Social Skills	Building bonds	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Form genuine mentoring relationship.</li> <li>• Allow for social meetings.</li> <li>• Celebrate successes.</li> </ul>
Social Skills	Collaboration and cooperation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Commit to collaboration.</li> <li>• Set mutual deadlines.</li> </ul>
Social Skills	Team capabilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Focus on complementary backgrounds.</li> <li>• Align subject expertise opportunities with writing.</li> </ul>
a. BIPOC Project home page, accessed January 25, 2022, <a href="https://www.thebipocproject.org">https://www.thebipocproject.org</a> .		

## Dialogue

Now, more than four years into the mentoring partnership, the mentor and mentee reflected on their experiences in a written dialogue. In recognition of the ethos of mutual respect, the questions and responses express their individual perspectives and assessment of the approach thus far.

## Mentoring Programs

What are your impressions of traditional mentoring programs? In what ways do historical approaches not align with your needs? What are the benefits of using an EI framework?

*Mentee:* A traditional mentoring model does not usually consider the subject expertise of the mentee. A traditional program does not align with my values of reciprocity and genuine and authentic relationship building. An EI framework scrutinizes the goals and outcomes of mentoring and encourages intentionality in discussion and growth. Rather than relying on one predetermined path to success, EI gives space to multiple possibilities for measuring success.

*Mentor:* Traditional mentoring programs in academic libraries tend to emphasize the role of a mentor as an overseer—as someone to keep a mentee on task for tenure and promotion. Advice and activities are often mapped to prescribed



outcomes. Consequently, achievement is sometimes framed as a to-do list, and discussions can be limited. An EI framework elevates the significance of personal and social awareness in career growth. It values and embeds empathy, well-being, and trust. A holistic mentoring model with EI elements affirms mutual respect in mentorship assignments.

## Toxicity

How do you cope with toxic experiences at work? What advice would you give to a librarian having toxic experiences?

*Mentee:* Nobody has the right to make you feel like you are not enough. Prioritize yourself. The best choice may be to no longer engage with people committed to misunderstanding you.

*Mentor:* You can make adjustments and choices in how you respond to and cope with toxic experiences. Prioritize your well-being.

## Morale

What strategies and techniques do you use to improve personal morale in the workplace? How can EI improve morale?

*Mentee:* A simple acknowledgment of someone's presence goes a long way: for example, saying "Good morning" or "Hello." It creates a sense of kindness and openness. EI helps balance the thoughts of our personal needs and the needs of others. Toxicity is perpetuated when we focus only on ourselves. EI recenters our thinking on the workplace community we belong to.

*Mentor:* As a supervisor and mentor, I find that active listening, communicating optimism, giving personalized attention, and being accessible are key to developing strong relationships. Being heard and understood improves morale. Respect of others and self-respect are woven in EI competencies. Giving someone your full attention and time embodies respect.

## Mutual Scholarship

What elements are needed for a successful writing partnership? How can mutual scholarship counter toxicity? Why should librarians participate in and contribute to scholarship?

*Mentee:* A writing partner needs confidence, drive, and tact to know when to be impulsive and thoughtful in the draft writing process. A writing partner helps nourish your individual and partnership confidence, which in turn grows

your determination and resilience to toxic experiences. I like the reliability of a colleague who I know I can run ideas by without fear of judgment.

*Mentor:* A successful writing partnership requires self-assurance, clarity in goals, trust, and commitment. It is essential to collaborate on ideas, but also to maintain your own point of view. Mutual scholarship is rewarding because you experience the writing continuum together from concept to publication. When your work is published, you can share in this public form validation.

## Mentoring Partnership

Why do you give time and energy to the mentoring partnership? Why was it important to develop a mentoring partnership? What do you like most about the mentoring partnership?

*Mentee:* I am in love with one of the first lessons Kristen taught me: that you can solve problems through writing. I am so proud of the partnership! We have accomplished so many diverse scholarly endeavors because of our creativity and mutual desire to see each other grow. I like that we truly embody our EI values.

*Mentor:* I think that if you are in a position to help someone in their professional and personal growth, you should. The mentoring partnership is evidence that broadening the emphasis and scope of mentoring to include EI, reciprocity, and shared goals can be effective and mutually rewarding. This mentoring experience has enriched and enhanced my work. Together, we have transformed concepts of mentorship, and my hope is that others can benefit from our example.

## Conclusion

Librarians across the career continuum can be impacted by a toxic workplace culture. Libraries can prompt a positive culture shift through investment in their greatest information resource: their librarians. Mentoring is a strategy to propel this change. The traditional mentoring model can be reinvigorated with EI and by integrating elements of self-awareness, self-regulation, motivation, empathy, and social skills. By committing to a responsive mentoring program, organizations show that they prioritize staff well-being and growing collegial relationships. The mentoring partnership's success is attributed to receptiveness to trying new ideas, a shared time investment, and willingness to learn from each other. Higher morale and stronger collegial relationships are motivating and positively influence feelings of career success. Mentoring through mutual scholarship has proven to be an approach that transcends the workplace.

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