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Week 10 Reflection

1. From the ten characteristics of a helping relationship (listed on pages 102-104), which one seems most natural to you given your style of helping as a peer leader?

The “Helping Relationship Demonstrates Respect for Individual Self-Worth” seems most natural to me because the psychology research field can be intense. Many professors and editors are harsh critics in their areas of expertise. Therefore, I try to remind everyone that they have worth outside of their research and that their research failures should not be internalized. I think this is something that I was lacking in some of my mentor-mentee relationships when I was the mentee. I try to make sure that everyone works hard but that everyone understands they have worth outside of academia.

2. Which characteristics may be difficult for you to try?

The characteristics that are more difficult include “the helping relationship shows a clear structure” and “the helping relationship is meaningful”. These are difficult because our lab structure is kind of confusing for people. We have undergraduate student managers that report to different graduate students. I am one of these undergraduate student managers who oversees other undergraduate students and I think that some of them are unaware about the structure above me with graduate students and the professors that oversee the graduate students. I think I could do a better job of explaining the structure to students who are conducting research so they know who to go to if I’m not in the lab one day. The “helping relationship is meaningful” characteristic is difficult because sometimes research projects can seem so miniscule in comparison to larger projects. In addition, undergraduate students are often told that they can’t complete higher level analyses like graduate students. Motivating individuals to see that their work is meaningful to the overall field is difficult. In addition, some of the work involved in research such as coding or cleaning datasets can be boring and discouraging, which makes it hard for undergraduates to want to continue to engage in their projects.

3. What can you do to integrate these more difficult characteristics into your approach to helping peers/coworkers/students?

I think that having a chart of the structure of the research lab could be beneficial. This would provide a physical reference for who to go to if a student has questions and their “first line of defense” is not physically in the lab. In addition, I could sit down and explain the structure and then let them ask questions about the structure if they are still confused. At the same time, I could connect undergraduate students with graduate students individually in person if necessary.

For the meaningful relationship, I think I could engage them in-person with rewards like gift cards or coupons for high-quality work. In addition, I can make sure to ask their opinions and focus on their needs to stay motivated and to continue to put in effort. I want to make sure that the undergraduates feel valued and know that the skills and relationships they are building through research are useful and meaningful.