

Tips for Neurodiverse Mentoring and Education

Wednesday, October 26, 3:00–4:30pm via Zoom – Registration required

Target Audience: University faculty members in STEM

Faculty of other disciplines, administrators, and students are welcome

In academia, there is a lack of accessibility and inclusivity for disabled individuals, which needs to be addressed. It is imperative that education be accessible and inclusive to all, including individuals who are part of the neurodiverse and/or disabled community. Neurodiversity is a term used in the disability community to encompass individuals who are either neurotypical or neurodivergent. In this talk we provide definitions and clarify appropriate language to aid in building and adapting inclusive mentoring strategies for our neurodiverse community. We provide personal experiences from a disabled individual and have discussions on accessible and inclusive mentioning. This talk also addresses adaptive mentoring strategies that we have integrated into our programs. Additionally, we will provide clear examples of how those strategies have worked inside the classroom and towards formal mentoring. This presentation is meant to be a starting point for conversation about neurodiversity and inclusive mentoring. Strategies discussed are currently being investigated through IRB approved surveys. The commentary is from our lived experiences, and we encourage all to have open discussions with their communities about inclusivity and accessible for neurodivergent/disabled individuals. This presentation presents participants a better understanding of neurodivergent individuals, and walk away with four key tips on engagement and mentoring: (1) Direct Communication, (2) Conscious Use of Language, (3) Formal Mentor Training, and (4) Adaptive Mentoring Strategies.



Jeffrey M. Halpern is an Associate Professor in the Department of Chemical Engineering at the University of New Hampshire. He earned his B.S.E. and Ph.D. in Chemical Engineering at Case Western Reserve University. He has mentored over twenty undergraduates in the past six years, and he was awarded the Educator's Award from LEAP for Education in 2019. He integrates inclusive mentoring into a rigorous undergraduate research experience to optimize the success of everyone.

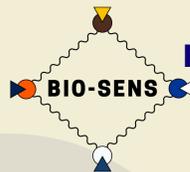
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Mariah L. Arral is a 5th year Ph.D. Candidate in the Department of Chemical Engineering at Carnegie Mellon University. Her Ph.D. advisor is Dr. Kathryn Whitehead, and her thesis is on mRNA lipid nanoparticle delivery. Before joining Dr. Whitehead's lab, Mariah was one of the first researchers in Dr. Halpern's Lab at the University of New Hampshire. During her undergraduate with Dr. Halpern, Mariah developed interest in studying Neurodiversity and mentorship. Mariah has received national and international awards for her research and academic work, including the NSF GRFP. Additionally, Mariah is an openly Autistic and dyslexic researcher.

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