NATIONAL CENTER ON DEAF-BLINDNESS

NICE MENTORING SERIES, PART I

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>> ROBBIN BULL: This is Robbin Bull with NCDB and I want to welcome everybody coming to this webinar. I want to just get things started with a few housekeeping items, then I will hand it over to Ritu, who will be starting off today's webinar. I want to thank you for coming today. We have muted all of the phone lines to keep things from having a lot of background noise. I also want to say that the question answer session is planned for the end of the session. However, you can type your questions in the chat pod, and they will be monitored as we go along. There will be times for interaction throughout the webinar. Ritu will talk about that as she goes into the webinar here.

I do want to remind you that this webinar will be recorded and archived, and it will be posted on our website within a few days. We do want to remind you to be mindful of your comments in the chatbox and refrain from writing personal or sensitive information that you don't want to have archived. I'm going to start the recording now. And Ritu, I will hand it over to you, and you can take it from here.

>> DR. RITU CHOPRA: Thank you, Robbin. Good afternoon everybody, thank you so much for coming. I will start with introductions, I am Ritu Chopra, Leanne and Willie are with us, I will make sure that you can see Willie, too. So Willie and I are at the same location. Leanne is in Portland [sounds like] right now, so she will be joining us, too, in presenting this webinar.

We would like you to kind of introduce yourself. You can unmute by #6, or in the chatbox, if you could please share your name, your affiliation and also whether you have served or are starting to be serving as a NICE mentor. We will wait while you type that information, in order if you want to unmute yourself and share on the phone that would be great, too. Go ahead, we want to know who all are here.

>> ROBBIN BULL: This is Robbin, Ritu. I don't believe that the mute for everybody occurred. I am going to do it now so everybody will know they are on mute. If you want to come off of mute, you can use \*6 to come off of mute. I am going to put everybody on the mute this time, and if you want to come off mute, you can #6.

Ritu, you might have to do #6 to come off of mute, yourself. You want to give it a try?

>> DR. RITU CHOPRA: Can you hear me?

>> ROBBIN BULL: I can hear you. Thank you.

>> DR. RITU CHOPRA: So all lines have been muted and if you want to share the information by phone, all you need to do is to do #6 to get back on the phone. I'm sorry, confused about this how # and \*.

That's wonderful, we have NICE people who have served as NICE mentors. We have people who are from different state projects, that's wonderful. And I have met so many of you recently at the Ted conference and before that at Summit. It is nice to put the name and face together. Leanne, you probably recognize more people than we do here.

>> LEANNE COOKE: I am excited to see some of the names. I hope we get to have some interactions with you, because I know many a name on this list.

>> DR. RITU CHOPRA: Wonderful, we are very, very excited. You can continue posting your names and your information. Interrupt us if you have to, that will be fine, too. We will move on with the slides.

Starting with a little bit of a recap of what you already know about NICE, or being a NICE mentor, or if you have had in intervener who is working on your portfolio. We really want to give you a little recap because [indiscernible] repeating most of the stuff that has already been done under Module 1 and Module 2.

As you know, the first module, NICE Module 1, is focused on the process of creating the e-portfolio. It talks about the purpose of the portfolio, why we need e-portfolio, the module also addresses the Council for Exceptional Children’s intervener competency, the standards, discusses the meanings of the competencies in terms of how they relate to intervener practice. And it also talks about how to create artifacts using different forms of documentation. Tent it talks about what the mentors need to do. Just overall, it's a brief overview of what mentors do.

That is what the first module is, [indiscernible] differentiate what this particular webinar is going to do and how it fits in from what you have already done. It will be touching upon some of the stuff you have learned throughout Module 1 and Module 2, but it will be really building up on that. That's why we have requested those who attend this webinar make sure they have completed the NICE Module 1 and NICE Module 2.

The second one was all around Venture, how to use Venture, how to navigate it, how to create your profile, how to upload different documents, how to track your progress on that, how to track your intervener's progress. It was all around, really, how you can, getting to know Venture and how using it effectively [indiscernible] for your process.

We are going to do, the purpose of these webinar series, the NICE mentor webinar series, is really focusing on the important skills that are required by mentors so that they are able to facilitate the success of the intervener in the NICE project.

When I was writing the content of this particular slide, I had the words “ensuring” success, then I changed it to “facilitating,” because we definitely, yes, you are making sure that they are successful, but I think is all around how to empower them to be successful. So you become more like a facilitator and a guide who was supporting the interveners to be successful in the project.

That's the overall goal of the series, focusing on mentoring skills. There are three parts to the webinar series, as you have received all the information and you know. But today is the first webinar, The Role of the NICE Mentor. The next one is on November 20, which will be talking about Ensuring Intervener Success in NICE Part 1: Importance of Strong Narratives and Reflective Practice, the importance of those in the practice and how you can support those with your intervener. And the last one again, is Ensuring Intervener Success in NICE Part II: Deeper Understanding of Scoring in the NICE Portfolio, really looking at the process from a reviewer’s lens. You are mentoring using the reviewer’s lens, how a completed portfolio looks from the vantage point of the reviewer.

These are the three webinars in the series, today is on The Role of the NICE Mentor.

We're going to talk very briefly about mentor roles in general, then we are really going to go deeper into the expectations of a NICE mentor, as a mentor to intervener who is submitting e-portfolio, what that looks like. We really want to help in whatever way you can help in the knowledge of mentors. We also [indiscernible] expectations, again. Then we want to give you an opportunity to perfect upon your own mentoring skills, what you know about yourself as a mentor and what your strengths are and what are the areas where you may struggle.

All of us here in [indiscernible] team as well as all of you who are attending this webinar, all of us have had great mentors. We have been mentors ourselves, and we have been mentored. We have an idea what good mentoring looks like, based on our own experiences. But I think this would be an opportunity to talk about, share some of your experiences and talk about those.

One of the major learning goals for today is really looking at the mentoring process. It's an ongoing process. It doesn't seem like it ends [sounds like]. We’ll go through the four steps that are part of the process. That is the goal of today's webinar. I will let Willie take over from here.

>> WILLIE HEPWORTH: We're going to have a quick exercise here. We’ve all had somebody take us under their wing to bring us along, whether in a formal or informal mentor relationship. What I want to do here, I want you to reflect back on that person or persons, who is that mentor for you, and think about what the term "mentor" means. If you feel uncomfortable using the chat pod, you can unmute your phone by using #6.

One thing I want to say, we might not all be friends right now, but by the time this webinar is over, I'm very confident we're all going to be friends. But we do have one huge thing in common and I know this -- we're all here because we are all committed to delivering to students and clients with deaf-blindness the best services and education that we can. With that in mind, let's get by this reluctance or little shyness to speak or use the chatbox. Interact with us. We need to know what you think.

>> DR. RITU CHOPRA: It’s a safe place to share, and I see some of you have already written. A mentor is someone who comes alongside, offers support, guides, shares knowledge and encourages and expands understanding. Yes. That expansion, building upon what you know and expanding back up, that's very important.

Someone to learn from who may have similar experiences. Yes, that is correct, too.

Somebody who is supportive, shares experiences, kind. Yes.

Is not dictatorial, somebody who guides you. Yes. Wonderful.

These are great insights. Keep sharing. There are still people typing, so we will wait. You have touched on some important points.

Experiences, along with great listening skills. Very important. It's not about what I have to say to you, it's about I want to hear what you have to say.

A mentor is someone who supports growth toward your goals in many different ways.

>> WILLIE HEPWORTH: Ira has a good point, your mentor wants the best for you, but sometimes that means you have to give constructive feedback. That's a big part of it. Yes. Thanks, Ira.

>> DR. RITU CHOPRA: Leanne is typing. A nonjudgmental but constructive guide. Yes. Somebody who is invested in your success. That is why, they give constructive feedback, they are nonjudgmental, they want you to grow. They want you to get better at what you do.

Great insights, thanks, you guys. We will be saving the information in the chat pod, we will be emailing that to ourselves, to read and definitely use it to inform our future presentations, too. Moving onto the next slide, Willie?

>> WILLIE HEPWORTH: Here’s a couple dictionary definitions of mentoring. An experienced and trusted advisor, such as came out in the chatbox. Advisor, guide, confident, counselor.

A lot of this is similar to what you have come up with in the chatbox. Anybody can keep on typing if you want. The verb is to advise or train.

Mentoring versus coaches, there are some aspects that are different. Similar concept. While basically, they are similar concepts, one difference between mentoring and coaching is mentoring is a long-term process. One of my most influential mentors, our relationship has developed into a pretty strong friendship. After 30 years, I still call up and ask for guidance and counseling when I need it. So mentoring is more of a long-term process, generally speaking.

Coaching is usually for a shorter time. [indiscernible], it doesn't necessarily mean it's a real short period of time. If you have some outcomes, goals you want to work on, coach could be there for a longer time, too.

Mentoring is a relationship that's built on human connection. From the human connection, that's where your trust and respect between the mentor and a mentee develops.

The differences between mentor and coaching, it's more than just po-*tate*-oh and po-*tot*-oh.

One differential is coaches are more instructors or trainers for a specific goal, while I mentor provides more counsel and guidance. A coach will give you explicit instructions telling you what needs to be done, what you need to do and how to do it, whereas a mentor offers feedback, both positive and constructive. And mentor answers your questions, while the coach spends a lot of times asking questions. Part of the coaching conversation is asking questions. Coaching is more asking questions, where mentoring relationship is the mentee asking questions of the mentor.

>> LEANNE COOKE: One of the things that really helped me understand mentoring and coaching is -- I am also a TVI -- I think about a lot of times in a classroom, all the service providers that are coming and going a lot of times are providing coaching. How do we implement these things? How do you do this? In working on these specific skills that someone may need. Then there are people in your room every day who have more constant contact, you see those relationships become more mentoring. In the classroom, I think there is a little bit of blurring, but the way I see it is in the consistency. I am in the classroom, you can really see the difference. I am also a TVI, Teacher of the Visually Impaired. I am always thinking about things through that teacher lens. All the different providers that are coming and going may be providing that coaching, and mentoring can sometimes happen you're in a place for a longer period of time. [indiscernible] more on the mentoring side where service providers may be on the more coaching side of things. I think that's a more practical way to look at it.

>> DR. RITU CHOPRA: It is the depth of relationship that I think, which really differentiates the two. One is really aimed at the long-term kind of impact. It's not that you have got the skill and it's over. It's going beyond that. That's why I think it's a long-term, as well as it’s relationship-centered. I think we kind of covered --

>> WILLIE HEPWORTH: One thing to bring up, we also consider coaching is more performance driven where mentoring is more development driven. That's another way to differentiate.

>> DR. RITU CHOPRA: Coaching is more structured, as we said. This question often comes up, we do mentoring training in schools also with teachers and paraprofessionals. They use, many times they use interchangeably the terms, but there is a subtle difference. That's why we spent some time on this particular slide.

If you have [indiscernible] feel free to unmute yourself and share your views as we go along.

We talk about now going from the mentoring role in general to talk about specifically [sounds like] what mentoring means.

>> WILLIE HEPWORTH: In general, a mentor is usually more experienced person who is sharing their experience, their insight and knowledge with the mentee. The APA has a list of characteristics of effective mentoring listed there. Again, a lot of that is what has come up through the chatbox. This is general mentoring.

While this is general mentoring, there is a specific role to being a NICE mentor, which we are going to get into now.

>> DR. RITU CHOPRA: The rules, even for a NICE mentor, listening, serving as a sounding board and being invested in mentee's growth and professional development. But in addition to all this, there are functions that the NICE mentor performs. Those are, as you said, for mentoring in NICE is everything that we have talked about so far, plus, I think the first and most important function of this particular role is to help the interveners understand expectations of the NICE project. What are CEC competencies and how they go to the portfolio. It's coming up with that shared vision, action plan, realistic times, when are we going to start, what is that timeline for completing the artifact?

And we will share some tools that will help you do that. You may have already created some tools, too, but it's basically really coming up with, having an action plan in front of you which is collaboratively developed. It's not that you develop something and handed it over to the mentee. It's something you do together.

The biggest thing that we encourage in this process is to improve the intervener's skills around self-reflection and self-assessment. And we'll be talking about this, the next intervener is self-reflective practice. Those of you who have already been mentoring, you know how important it is, the explanation part or the artifact is all around self-reflection.

So not only improving their reflective practice just for completing the portfolio, it goes beyond. Self-reflection is lifelong, something you need in every part of your life. So it's very, very important that mentors themselves self-reflect as they improve the skills of the intervener's to self-reflect.

Also, like any other mentor, really important that you help interveners build their confidence. Our goal is to have a positive outcome for the students [indiscernible]. Sometimes it will be nudging, to keep empowering. Giving constructive feedback is an important aspect of NICE mentoring, where as they develop a portfolio, their portfolio, it could be feedback, it could be in general how they're doing and specifically, for each artifact they're developing and how that is going, give them feedback. One of the things, we have a whole slide on it, it’s really important that teaching and role modeling, the ethical behaviors which we all as academic professionals and all of us working with schools in the areas of disabilities, the many ethical practices that we all must exercise. We will go into detail in the next slide what those practices are.

Again, the last bullet point on this slide really highlights the mentoring doesn't end with interveners submitting their portfolios. It goes beyond that, beyond the successful completion. It is using NICE results. Some of them are really helpful, very constructive feedback, we have amazing reviewers who do a really good job at giving constructive feedback for future growth beyond NICE. Taking a NICE mentor role, sharing that with the intervener, discussing that with the intervener and helping them grow further as professionals. Anybody would like to add to that? We have so many NICE mentors here, something else you would like to add?

So we're going to move on to the next slide, this is only NICE mentor ethical behavior. As mentors, we should be teaching and role modeling the basic ethical behaviors that all professionals demonstrate. I think, again, one of the most important things, mentors’ ethical behavior is really having an understanding of their own skills [sounds like]. If it feels there are certain parts of my role I don't know how to do it, making sure that you, yourself, [indiscernible] it could be related to not just mentoring, I'm not good at giving feedback. What do I do, what do I need to do to become better at it? Any other area that you feel this is the skill which intervener must demonstrate, and do I have it? Do I mentor this? Am I having a skill as where it should be to be able to support the interveners? So self-examination, and we talk more about it. Really seeking knowledge where one feels confident in improving one's own skills to become a mentor.

Regular communication is extremely important. I had some mentors in my doctoral program, they were a group of people I looked up to for advice. Some would check on me, because I was hesitant to ask for help. Sometimes they were there to check. And there were others who were supposed to be my coaches and mentors, but they gave me advice only when I went to them. And sometimes I was hesitant to ask, I didn't get that advice. I think it's extremely important that we maintain that regular communication and response to interveners questions and concerns, providing ongoing and professional feedbacks. We will be touching upon it today, as well as in our next webinar, too.

Again, the bullet point that we have is be diligent, and we have underlined diligent, be diligent in providing knowledge, wisdom, development of support. Again, don't wait for them to ask. Be intentional about it. As somebody who has more experience, and some people may not ask because they could be shy, it could be lack of confidence, they don't want to come across as somebody who doesn't know they're doing. Be diligent in providing knowledge, wisdom, and developing support in a confidential way. Maintaining confidentiality is extremely, extremely important.

If you are talking about the interveners and the team [sounds like] [indiscernible] project talking about intervener in terms of not sharing any information that is not supposed to be shared. Even the students of interveners [sounds like], you know all the basic rules around confidentiality. The things, when you all signed, when the mentors sign the agreement form, that clearly talks about there are four or five principles that are outlined which are focused on ethical behavior. We have summarized some of those.

There was a bullet point that you see here, the last one is empowering not enabling the intervener. Examples are, we see this in our roles all the time. We do a lot of work in schools and we see that paraprofessionals, when they're working with students, how they sometimes get answers for them. They will do their work for them. It comes from providing support, but sometimes the line is so thin ... we want to make sure, if your intervener is struggling with writing responses, guide them. Give them, maybe, prompts. Give them tips about it. But not writing things down for them [sounds like].

[indiscernible] telling the teacher I work with, this is what she does and, “Okay I’m going talk with the teacher ....” No! Guide them to address the teacher they having the problem with. Help them solve, rather than solving their problems. If they are struggling with technology and say I can't upload a document and I’m saying I will upload it for you, we do these kind of things, we all do them. We do it as parents, as family, we do it from the goodness of our heart and our feelings for the other person, but I think we have to keep in mind we are growing professionals. Interveners are professionals. And we need to really empower them and not enable them.

I think Leanne, this is you, right?

>> LEANNE COOKE: Yeah, I know some of you have done this ahead of time and Robbin left a note in the bottom. We have a Mentor Confidence Inventory, there is a link down there if you haven't done it. But what it is is a document that looks at things that you are confident in doing as a mentor. In that, the first effort is really examining our own skills.

>> DR. RITU CHOPRA: Leanne, we can request Robbin to share the first form, which is the nice Mentor Confidence Inventory?

>> LEANNE COOKE: If Robbin wants to share that?

>> DR. RITU CHOPRA: There you go.

>> LEANNE COOKE: Wonderful. The things we think about are really that trust and relationship and working with the intervener, we always talk about building a trust relationship with the student. Working with the student, oftentimes the Paraeducators can get so much more [sounds like] than a teacher or person who works in the room [sounds like]. So we need to do that with the intervener as well, to get that kind of quality work from them. Being able to understand what your role is. These are critical things to define a relationship and start it well. Making sure you're kind of on the same page.

When looking at this document, and if you have it here, I know it is small, but again, there is that link there on the bottom. Making sure that if you are not the person that is interacting with them, often, there are other people who are interacting with them, bringing them and maybe having those conversations with them in the process. I think about the students I work with who are deaf blind and the other people they see two or three times a week and how they have different insights than I do. Without that collaboration, we know things aren’t going to go as smoothly. So as a mentor, also encouraging that collaboration, too, and maybe also building those bridges for yourself, as well. I'm going to go to the next page.

>> WILLIE HEPWORTH: Can I share something, Leanne? Before the webinar, I took a little peek at the survey online and we had nine [sounds like] people completed. The results are very, very encouraging. The average score, the mean score was between 4 and 5 for every item except one. Our mentors are between confident and extremely confident on one of these items except one. And that one item was [indiscernible], that just came out. Very encouraging results, we encourage you all to take inventory and self-reflect back on where you are with your skills.

>> DR. RITU CHOPRA: The results are already encouraging. Leanne, you want to go back to the presentation?

>> LEANNE COOKE: We can actually stay on this page. The item, what was the one item? The item that we're talking about here is the Mentor Confidence Inventory in the scoring that happened to the online version of it. But there was a little survey, that link at the bottom there. We could see that everyone was pretty confident in their skills as a mentor which is a good sign. That's half of it.

I don't know if anyone who has taken it is on with us? I would love to know if any of you have any thoughts that came in your mind. I know I did it myself and I will share if no one else will what their experience was or what their thoughts were when taking it. I know there are some areas I was like, maybe I do need to think about this some more. Does anybody have any thoughts? I know there's only a few of you and it's small here. Anyone had any thoughts about when they completed this?

>> DR. RITU CHOPRA: Leanne, Ann has a question. What was that one item, she didn't see it come through captions.

>> WILLIE HEPWORTH: The item was “Can I act as an advocate for my mentor in nonprofessional matters.” Not professional situations.

>> DR. RITU CHOPRA: For my intervener.

>> WILLIE HEPWORTH: For my intervener. Yeah. Can I advocate for my intervener in nonprofessional situations.

>> DR. RITU CHOPRA: Can we come back to the presentation, Robbin? The next part, we would really like you, those who have completed it, if you want to talk about the areas you are most confident about? If there were any areas you thought you could use some help or resources. Again you can unmute yourself by #6 or you use the chat pod.

>> LEANNE COOKE: I can tell you one area I thought about one of the items, I feel encouraged that my mentor intervener adapt materials to the individuals' needs directly. Sometimes I’m not there, and understanding that I also need to provide them instruction and support on finding out who to talk to when they don't know how to do that process. That was one of those things where I need to think further down the line, because I'm not always here. So we talk and build capacity for that.

And we will talk later, thinking about who is in the ecosystem of the student, it can continue to support them in the candidate or mentee, intervener, whatever we like to call them, we are going through that process.

That's one of those things that is helpful to think about as a mentor, that something your candidate or mentee may need, who else in the students round can support them? I'm going to pass this back to Ritu, unless anyone has some thoughts, they're feeling brave?

>> DR. RITU CHOPRA: Yes, please share them. Basically what Leanne talked about, I'm going to back to the slide, we really focused on in this particular section, is what do you need to do before you really start the formal mentoring process? The formal okay, build your portfolio, this is what you do? Before that is taking this inventory and making sure you know where you stand as a mentor. Building, taking the time to build the relationship, getting to know them. Explaining your role, explaining expectations, common understanding of the process. Going to the NICE Module 2 and NICE module, the first half-hour, 45, should focus on building that relationship.

Then of course the actual steps of mentoring, there are four of them. It's a cyclical kind of process. The first is assess and prioritize. The next is develop and implement a plan and having an action plan. The third one is monitoring progress. [indiscernible] reinforce progress then back again, assessing and prioritize. Let's look at each of these functions individually.

The first one is to assess and prioritize in terms of where the interveners stand, where are they with their competency at this point in time? So that you can plan the next steps, really figuring out where the areas of need are, and where they need more help, and how to provide that help will come later.

So first, we have under Module 1, there is an inventory which is really very much like what we have, it's the same, paste on CEC standards, taking all those knowledge and skills, the competencies that have been identified in the CEC standards, and using that to figure out where they stand in terms of their understanding, where our interveners stand.

Robbin, can you share [indiscernible] for us? Thank you very much. There it is.

We will go quickly through this one, recently, this is the [indiscernible] standards and all of the knowledge and skills that are under those, and really having the intervener.... sorry, trying to adjust the size for you…. And again, we will make these forms available for you, we just have to figure out how we were doing that.

Basically what this does is if you have the intervener complete the list, look at all those competencies they're going to be using to upload their artifacts, to create artifacts. They are really trying to get an idea about what is their confidence level around each one of them? Many of them have gone through the open hands, open access modules, they may have had training elsewhere. But if even after training, there were maybe areas that they need help with. So this particular inventory will help with doing that.

Then we have a [indiscernible] inventory, Robbin, can you share Form C? Thank you so much, Robbin. What we recommend is that is filled by, if you are the mentor who sees the intervener on a very regular basis, you would be the person to do it. But this, we recommend this is filled by somebody -- and this is, again, this is the first stage, before they start the process, trying to get an idea where they are -- this, again, has the same items that the mentor or supervising teacher is assessing the intervener at whatever level they are.

The way we suggest you do this is the intervener can complete the intervener inventory and the mentor or supervising teacher sit down together and discusses. There may be some discrepancy in the scores, the intervener might say I'm a 4 at this. Whereas a person who knows the intervener might say you are probably a 3, but you could get to a 4 if you do this. Going through these inventories, again, these are two inventories created using the standards, CEC standards, and the whole idea, completing these inventories really serves many, many purposes.

One of them is you clarify the meaning of some of these competencies if there is some confusion what, exactly, these are. And also helps in acknowledging the strengths and the skills of the interveners -- what they know and if there are any gaps or any areas needed to enhance. It helps to identify that. As I said, those would be the areas of further development. Also, I will give you an opportunity when we do this kind of analysis together, it would give you an opportunity to really define this is where they need some support, what kind of resources can we provide them? What can the team do, the [indiscernible] team do? What can I do if I the mentor doesn't see them that often. Think about having those conversations. There are multiple purposes of these inventories, and they get you off to the right start, because you are starting at the point where you kind of know what needs to be built upon and what needs to be addressed.

Robbin, can we go back to the presentation? Ann has a question, will these forms be in Base Camp or are they on the NCDB website? Very good questions, Ann, we are having these discussions, when Dr. [indiscernible] and I talked about this yesterday, we will figure out right after these webinars where we want to post them. They will be made available to you. We are talking about creating a mentor handbook. Again, some of these ideas we have kind of shared back and forth, but definitely, the whole idea is to make these resources available to you.

If you go back to the presentation, Robbin? Thank you. All right.

As we said, first step is to really assess and prioritize, and we shared these couple of tools with you to do that. Then, the second step is, after you have assessed and prioritized, figure out where help is needed or where, what we need to do to move forward. The next step is to create and develop and implement an action plan. Leanne, would you like to talk about this?

>> LEANNE COOKE: I would. I love a good plan.

One of the things I think is really important in the sample portfolio is there's a lot of artifacts. We found the portfolios that have a higher number of artifacts -- the fewest you can manage to squeak by is 18 or 19. We find more successful if you have a higher number, like 20. With that, there is a lot of planning involved. I think one of the ways to think about is looking at competencies, and a lot of times those can go together pretty easily. I was thinking about [indiscernible] would, for me there were some that went together beautifully. There's three standards in, three competencies in Standard One all about additional disabilities of the student and how do they impact our deaf-blindness. Those three make beautiful sense to all go together.

With that, Robbin, can you pop that mentor-mentee plan of action for us? Essentially, it is a way to group competencies and how we are going to demonstrate them. So we have the standards we are going to address -- which is a wonderful way, again, to group things, and think maybe I will put these together, because that can be one of the overwhelming parts of the process. If we think about that ahead of time, especially for the knowledge competencies, that works really, really well. Because I’m having to show you that I know something, so a lot of times those artifacts are created by the intervener from their own minds, whether it's [indiscernible], a description of the anatomy of the eye and ear? Is it all these things? When the intervener has to create them, that's a good way to show knowledge competencies.

Creating a timeline, because that's another part of the process. This is a year [sounds like] we have to get it done, how we going to do it? I think the really critical part of it is what supports are needed from the mentor? What do you need from me? Having really explicit conversations around that can help smooth that out.

Then the last section, which again is really critical if you're not at the site where the intervener works -- which I think most of us who are on this call are not -- who do we need to talk to there on the team that is regularly interacting with the intervener that would be working on their next portfolio. Is it a TVI? Is it a classroom teacher? The case manager? Who is it that can help facilitate on this little further?

That's one of those critical parts, and it can help the conversation because one of the things we see with our [indiscernible] is I did this, I did this, I did this. Well, you didn't really do it, your team did it, show you are part of the team. It's really important that as mentors we are talking about the whole team approach and their understanding of their role. But also to start developing relationships with the people at their site who can help continue mentoring and coaching them outside of the time you have, as well. Oftentimes our paraprofessionals feel like they're on an island. This is a really great form, I love it, I think it's really helpful to talk about what do you need from me, but who else do you need things from?

>> DR. RITU CHOPRA: One of the things on the form is we start with the anticipated date of portfolio submission and plan backwards. It, if you start it up front you have this in front of you, then there's a timeline, and the plan will change, as we all know, we all have action plans and action plans need to be evaluated on an ongoing basis. Informative evaluation is an important part of it. Some things will change. This is an important outline or something to have and then trying to stick with it. The other thing we said was it really highlighted the importance of having the site based lessons professional involved in some way, because we do not want interveners to be working independently and not having the support from a licensed professional. The mentor cannot be there all the time, but at the same time we do want to make sure it is team construction. The license professionals are, it's driven by the licensed professionals and the intervener is not left to make decisions which they may not have the confidence or skill for. I think that's something we definitely kept in mind with this one.

All right, moving onto the next step, which is monitor progress, Leanne, go ahead.

>> LEANNE COOKE: I can talk about this some more. This is, again, going back to how do we continue these conversations. Again, the planning document can be helpful talking about scheduling things regularly, keeping in contact and all of that good stuff. How do you shift and make sure that your candidate or mentee is still doing really well? One of the things we have created for you, as you come to a close, we will find once we get a portfolio, there are things that are missing. And that would make it easier if you knew the things we look for in a completed portfolio. We have a checklist of things as a mentor to look for, but also the things we look for, so it's kind of a double-edged sword there. What is not there that makes a portfolio complete? I see Robbin is already making her magic [indiscernible] and what would we do without her? I feel like I’m just waving a wand.

So the About Me that is one of the most critical parts of the portfolio, that sets the stage, that tells us what we need to know. And it's also one of the most common places we have to send portfolios back for, because demographics that are missing. Like mentor agreements, you've done all this work, then, you can find the paper that says you did the work and you did it ethically. Things like that can always help when you do the review because it is stressful and takes time. So helping smooth that process out. Things like media releases, it's no good when you get a portfolio back because you forgot to upload those. You don't want that. Making sure video links go through and then say that. So this is a checklist to help you when you're coming down to that close, to make sure you have all your samples done.

>> DR. RITU CHOPRA: We wanted to add that we created this checklist based on how many times we had to send the Portfolio or [indiscernible] because some of these pieces are missing. It's upfront, you take the time to just go through this at your end, of course intervener has their own checklist to complete, but this is more specifically from the signing off end [sounds like]. It helps, ultimately, to show them the review of the process, if it goes back the delay happens. It's harder, sometimes you need another one, it can take anything from six weeks to four months. We have had issues where it has taken that long just to make sure that we don't delay that any further, just go to this list and sign it off and say okay, it's ready to go. That way we won't have to send it back, we can start looking for reviewers right away when it comes to us. All right, going back to the presentation.

So the last step is the reinforce progress. The ongoing feedback to the intervener, that is the most important part of a mentor’s ethical role. It's ongoing. It's not at the end of the process they are going and doing things at their own, you're trying to do it at that time. There may be so many errors that might have been fixed at the right time. If we have to nip something in the bud, it should be ongoing feedback. Should be constructive, definitely acknowledging what they are doing right, but at the same time, if there are things that need to be changed or need to be done better, we are doing them a disservice if we are not going to [indiscernible] out. And the way it is done is all in the presentation. How I present to them is the most important thing. Feedback should be frequent, timely and honest. You cannot find enough how honest feedback, the importance of honest feedback. If they are doing something that's not right or it's not up to expectations, it's always good to point out rather than thinking they are done and [indiscernible] e-portfolio and then having issues with that. I think very, very honest feedback is extremely important.

We do have a form, we look at it now, and again when we do the narrative part we will have a look at it.

This particular form is, and on all the forms we have tried to have the anticipated date of portfolio submission everywhere so that it stays upfront. I need to stick to that. This is a form that the mentor, our suggestion would be, it all depends on your time and if you’re working electronically and giving feedback electronically, that is something you can do, too. But if it can be sitting side-by-side and really having a conversation how things are, I think this particular form is one of [indiscernible] feedback on a particular artifact.

Start with what are the competencies that were selected by the intervener to address that particular artifact. What competencies were [indiscernible]. Then going into, we have a list of questions that can be used while you are having the discussion interviewing the artifacts with the intervener. Are the identified competencies fully demonstrated by the documentation? So you are just looking at the pictures and videos and other work samples, and are the other identified competencies, are they well matched in terms of being demonstrated in the documentation? If they are not, that is not clearly demonstrated, and then having the discussion how do you think this can be demonstrated?

Then, looking at, if you are talking about it and you feel they are not able to demonstrate these for whatever reason, is there any further training or coaching that is needed so they understand what those competencies are and are able to demonstrate those? I think those are the kind of conversations you have with them. That is the information completely [sounds like] that is one of the narrative parts that is so important, and we will talk about that in the next webinar about writing effective narratives. But is it complete? Addressing the questions? [indiscernible] two optional questions, the intervener, have they answered [indiscernible]? If it is not complete, then giving them guidance how they can complete it.

And also in this process, if you encourage the intervener around constantly thinking about what is it that went well, what didn't go well? What is it that didn't work? What is it the intervener is learning through this process so they can improve their future practice or future artifact? You use this as a feedback form like you said, you can use it electronically as an option. But sitting side-by-side and having a discussion is a better option, always. We just have to find the time to do that.

We have some comments here. There is Toni, thank you for preparing and sharing all this with us so we can be better mentors for NICE. I'm on the call but have to drop off the webinar now. All right.

Robbin, can we go back to the form? Yes?

This is something we have to thank our friends at the Minnesota deaf-blind project. Sometimes if one has a figure, more like a graphic it is more impactful. We are seeing it uses questions on top of the document to fill out the four quadrants. What are the strengths, what are the challenges to be addressed, what is something that's a discovery, something that you think you learned? What is it something that needs to be worked on? In thinking about it, the reflection part of it, these are the four pieces.

If we have our friends from Minnesota, I don't know if they are here, we would love for them to share what their experience has been in using different in their mentor training. Do we have anyone from the Minnesota project? Did you see the, Leanne did you see the names?

>> LEANNE COOKE: I think we have someone from Minnesota but I am not sure, offhand. I can tell you I used this form to try to see if it works. One of the things I found in using it was it really creates that cyclic process. Maybe there was a strength, but this will actually work better for another competency or in another area because that was [indiscernible] here. That is one of the beautiful ways that this tool of feedback can become part of that wonderful cycle.

>> DR. RITU CHOPRA: So as we said, [indiscernible] is very, very important, giving suggestions to improve. Then we have the slide on Out of Line of Sight mentoring when you are not there all the time, what do you do?

>> WILLIE HEPWORTH: I'm going to speak to this a little bit. As Leanne mentioned a little bit earlier, we do have mentors that aren't on-site and are basically doing distance mentoring. It's called Out of Line of Sight, it's got a lot of different things. I kind of refer to it as distance mentoring. But there are certain strategies you can use to address these challenges.

The first one, I would say it's more structure and organization from the start instead of a [indiscernible] relationship. By that, I mean getting started on the right foot. Get all the business of handwriting in the beginning, expectations, accountability, commitment. Get that all straightened out in the beginning so that everybody knows where they stand and they are starting off on the right foot.

Also from the beginning, from the start, you have to start building the relationship. You’ve got to start establishing that human connection. That's what's going to build the trust, which is going to build the long-term commitment.

Share your personal experience. Sit down at your first meeting with your mentee and share some personal experiences, where you're at, how you got to this place. That helps to connect to do that.

Another thing that we have now is technology like never before that can really help us connect. If you have an iPhone, if you both have iPhones, mentor and mentee, you can FaceTime. Utilize whatever technology works for both of you. There's so much out there now. Adobe, what we're doing right now.

If you have an hour where you are not totally slammed, you can text or email your mentee and say hey, I'm in the office for another hour, do you have any questions? Do you want to have an informal meeting? It kind of makes it seem almost like a drop in meeting, like you just drop in to somebody's office. That helps.

Again, we talked about planning, this goes back to the first one, structure and organization. Plan thoroughly and plan ahead, plan way ahead. Schedule kind of meetings, schedule more meetings then you need. You can always cancel a meeting, you never know. Things happen. Sometimes you may not be able to meet. Having more meetings scheduled than you need really helps.

Another thing is encourage your mentee to make connections with his on-site team. Just don't rely on distance mentoring. Seek out other support, seek out other [indiscernible] and seek out guidance. As a mentor, someone who is doing distance mentoring, if you could somehow, if you have the opportunity to connect with the on-site team and using some kind of technology up there, please do so. You can get feedback from the team members who are with your mentee day in and day out and give you a little more insight of where they are, give you a better picture of where their strengths are, their challenges are. There are strategies that help ameliorate these obstacles for long distance mentoring.

Does anybody out there have any ideas, other ideas of strategies that we can utilize in distance mentoring?

>> DR. RITU CHOPRA: There are a few who do the long distance mentoring, did you have anything to add? All right. We have a webinar evaluation, there is a link to it, Robbin also put it in the chatbox, that goes around the evaluation of this particular webinar. We also want to invite questions, comments, concerns are welcome. You can type those in. We also wanted to tell you what is coming in on the next webinar, which is the 20th, that is Ensuring Intervener Success in NICE Part 1: Importance of Strong Narratives and Reflective Practice.

We will talk about, again, the expectations of the NICE e-portfolio process, the two parts of it which are documentation and explanation. We will talk about the importance of strong narratives and artifact explanation. We will also talk about reflective practice. That is what is coming in the next webinar. We do hope you will join us.

In the meantime, let's go back to the previous slide. Any comments, any questions that you might have at this point in time?

>> WILLIE HEPWORTH: You're very welcome.

>> DR. RITU CHOPRA: Thank you, everyone.

>> ROBBIN BULL: Okay, I think we will do a formal wrap up of this. If anybody has any final questions in the chat pod, they can email those to you or put those in the chat pod. We are looking at a formal close of the webinar. Thank you so much.

>> DR. RITU CHOPRA: We will figure out a way to share those forms and documents, some people have questions about those. Thank you very much, and thank you so much, Robbin, for all your help.

>> ROBBIN BULL: All right, we look forward to number two.

[END OF TRANSCRIPT]