

# INCREASING EQUITY AT THE WORKPLACE

SUPERVISION AND MENTORING  
SYSTEM TOOLKIT



**STEP 4:  
GENERATE IDEAS FOR  
INNOVATION**



**BOSTON COLLEGE**

School of Social Work

WORK EQUITY

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**Work Equity** is an initiative of the Center for Social Innovation at the Boston College School of Social Work.

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## 4.0 Introduction

We have organized Step 4 of the Toolkit for the Supervision and Mentoring System into two sections.

**Section 1:** The tasks in this section will help your organization generate ideas for innovations that can strengthen the equity of your overall Supervision and Mentoring System, using the seven Levers for Change.

**Section 2:** Recognizing that innovations in supervision and mentoring practices – one of the Levers for Change – can be catalysts for deep change in the equity of the Supervision and Mentoring System, your organization will focus particular attention on supervision and mentoring in Section 2.

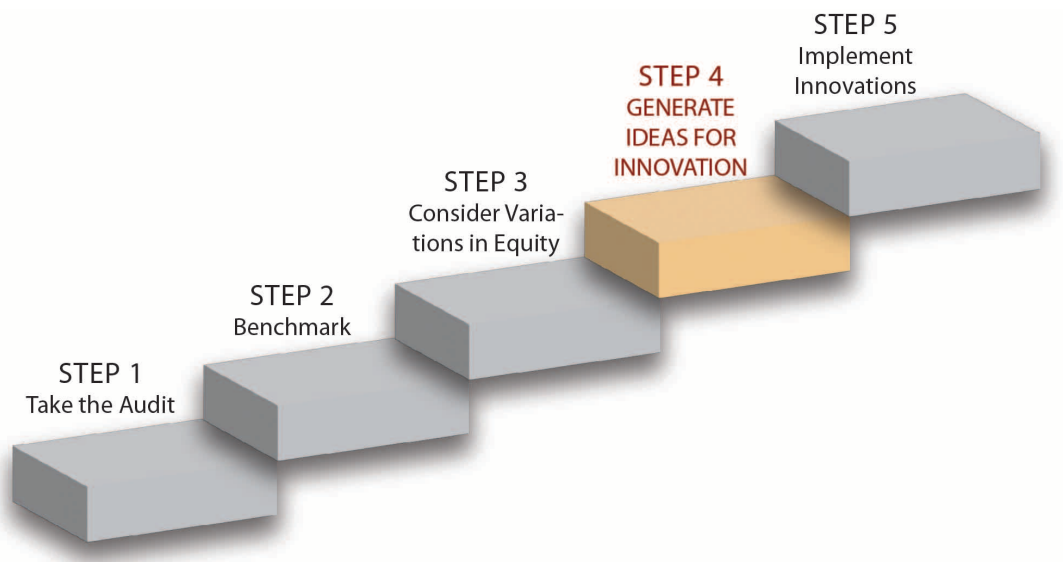


Figure 10: Step 4 of the Supervision and Mentoring System Toolkit

### 4.1 Roles and Responsibilities

The process of design thinking values the diverse perspectives which can emerge from group conversations and debates. (See “Overview of the Supervision and Mentoring System Toolkit.”)

In consultation with your Equity Initiative Committee, the Leader(s) of your Equity Initiative should decide how to best engage different groups of employees in discussions about innovations that can strengthen the equity of your organization’s Supervision and Mentoring System.

**Option 1:** Your organization could invite the members of your DEI Committee to participate in one (or more) brainstorming activity.

**Option 2:** You might convene discussion groups (for example, brown bag lunches, focus groups, etc.) with employees who are affiliated with specific demographic and social identity groups to discuss innovations in your Supervision and Mentoring System that could address some of their priorities and preferences.

**Option 3:** Your Equity Initiative Leader(s) could create a “suggestion box” to invite ideas from employees throughout the organization.

## 4.2 Step 4 Tasks (Section 1 and Section 2)

### Section 1: Tasks to Assess the Equity of Your Supervision and Mentoring System

As noted in the Overview of this Toolkit, Work Equity recognizes that your organization has at its disposal seven mechanisms that have the potential to address some of the root causes of inequities embedded in your organization's employment systems. We refer to these mechanisms as Levers for Change. (Please see the "Overview of the Supervision and Mentoring System Toolkit" for the discussion of the Levers for Change.)

Each of the nine questions in the audit of the Supervision and Mentoring System (Step 1) addresses one of the seven Levers for Change:

1. Policies (Question #1)
2. Practices (Questions #2, #3 and #4)
3. Planning/Evaluation (Question #5)
4. Assignment of Roles and Accountabilities (Question #6)
5. Workplace Culture (Question #7)
6. Workplace Climate (Question #8)
7. Communication (Question #9)

#### *Task 1: Rank Levers for Change from the Audit Items*

**Directions:**

The Leader(s) of your Equity Initiative should put the average scores of your organization's responses to the Audit questions for supervision and mentoring that you calculated in Step 1.






First, in Worksheet #7 (next page) enter the scores into Column A for each of the Levers for Change (that is, the scores for each of the items computed for Worksheet #3). Then complete Column B, ranking each of the Levers for Change by comparing the scores for each Lever.

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## Supervision and Mentoring System Toolkit Worksheet #7

### Ranking the Scores for the Levers for Change in the Supervision and Mentoring System

	<b>Column A:</b> What was your organization's score for each lever for change? <b>(from Worksheet 3)</b>  Put these scores in the open boxes below.	<b>Column B:</b> How strong is each lever for change? Rank order them for weakest to strongest. 1 = weakest lever (lowest mean score) 7 = strongest lever (highest mean score)
 <b>Policy Lever for Change</b>		
1. To what extent does your organization have written policies which ensure the fairness of employee access to high-quality mentoring and supervision?		
 <b>Practice Levers for Change</b>		
2. To what extent are employees in your organization able to request a mentor for career development purposes?		
3. To what extent does your organization require that supervisors/managers will demonstrate competencies related to equity and inclusion at the workplace?		
4. To what extent does your organization expect that supervisors will demonstrate competencies related to equity and inclusion at the workplace?		
<b>Average Score of Two Items Above</b> Use the average of questions 2, 3 and 4 when you rank the Levers for Change in Column B.		
 <b>Planning and Evaluation Lever for Change</b>		
5. To what extent does your organization routinely audit the fairness of supervision and mentoring?		
 <b>Assignment of Roles and Accountabilities Lever for Change</b>		
6. To what extent does your organization hold one or more employees (e.g., supervisors; Director of DEI, etc.) accountable for monitoring the fairness of employees' access to high-quality supervision and mentoring?		
Worksheet continued on the next page 		

## Worksheet #7 (continued)

	<b>Column A:</b> What was your organization's score for each lever for change? <b>(from Worksheet 3)</b>  Put these scores in the open boxes below.	<b>Column B:</b> How strong is each lever for change? Rank order them for weakest to strongest. 1 = weakest lever (lowest mean score) 7 = strongest lever (highest mean score)
 <b>Workplace Culture Lever for Change</b>		
7. To what extent do the actions of your organizational leaders indicate that they believe that there is a connection between the organization's DEI initiatives and the fairness of employee access to high-quality supervision and mentoring?		
 <b>Workplace Climate Lever for Change</b>		
8. To what extent does your organization set expectations that managers and supervisors will foster an inclusive climate in their teams?		
 <b>Communication Lever for Change</b>		
9. To what extent does your organization provide employees equitable access to information about supervision and mentoring?		



The members of your Equity Initiative Committee can consider the rankings of the Levers for Change in your Supervision and Mentoring System and identify opportunities to build on those that are already **strong** (that is, those that are **ranked the highest**). Summarize the observations below.


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The members of your Equity Initiative Committee can identify ways to strength those Levers for Change that are currently **weak** (that is, those that are **ranked the lowest**). Summarize the observations below.

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## Task 2: Highlight Ideas for Innovation in the Supervision and Mentoring System

### Supervision and Mentoring System Toolkit Worksheet #8

#### Your Ideas for Innovation in Levers for Change in the Supervision and Mentoring System

**Directions:**

The members of your Equity Initiative Committee can use the worksheet below to specify possible innovations that can address root causes of inequities.

	Levers for Change	Your Ideas for Innovation	Organizational “Stakeholders” (including decision makers) in this Innovation
	Supervision and Mentoring Policies		
	Supervision and Mentoring Practices	<p>Please Note: Task 3, below, elaborates on practice innovations because they can have a “multiplier effect,” opening the doors for changes in other parts of the Supervision and Mentoring System.</p> <p>You might want to save your ideas for Practice Innovation until you have completed Task 3.</p>	
	Planning and Assessment (e.g., data collection) Related to Supervision and Mentoring		
	Assignment of Roles and Accountabilities for the Equity of Supervision and Mentoring		
	Workplace Culture Related to Supervision and Mentoring		
	Workplace Climate of Inclusion Related to Supervision and Mentoring		
	Communication Related to Supervision and Mentoring		





## Section 2: Supervision and Mentoring Practice Innovations


### *Task 3: Consider Ideas for Practice Innovation in Supervision and Mentoring*

**Directions:**

Your organization may want to adopt a design thinking process to imagine possible innovations in supervision and mentoring.

*Design thinking is a process that can help your Equity Initiative Committee to move from insight to action by brainstorming ideas for your organization to pilot. You can leverage design thinking to create customized equity solutions for your organization.*

The members of your Equity Initiative Committee can use Worksheet #9 (next page) to guide conversations about selected best practices innovations.

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## Supervision and Mentoring System Toolkit Worksheet #9

### Options for Practice Innovation

	Is this option available? Yes or No	If this option is not available, could it be adopted by your organization? Yes or No	If this option is available to some but not all employees, could it be offered to groups of employees who currently cannot access this option? <b>Specify which employee groups.</b>
<b>SUPERVISING</b>			
Are supervisors expected to schedule meetings in a predictable way (for example, twice a month)?			
Do supervisors periodically develop and/or review each employee's workplan? (Also see Toolkit for Employee Performance Assessment and Feedback.)			
Do supervisors and supervisees set agendas for their meetings? Are agreements or decisions recorded?			
Has your organization articulated practices for supervising employees who work remotely?			
Does your organization provide training/resources to supervisors so that their supervision respects diversities?			
Do supervisors touch base with supervisees about their performance periodically during the year and in a timely fashion (that is, in between annual reviews)? (Also see Toolkit for Employee Performance Assessment and Feedback.)			
Does the organization encourage employees to ask supervisors for suggestions about ways to improve their performance? (Also see Toolkit for Employee Performance Assessment and Feedback.)			
Do supervisors ask supervisees for suggestions about ways to improve supervisory meetings?			
Are supervisors expected to build on employees' strengths while they also take steps to address areas of performance that need improvement?			
Does the organization encourage supervisors to periodically review the set of responsibilities assigned to supervisees (including work flow, work load, etc.)?			
Does the organization support supervisors who want to strengthen their abilities to provide supervision in a respectful and unbiased manner?			
Does the organization encourage employees to develop career goals and objectives that they can share with their supervisors? (See also Toolkit for Training and Career Development.)			

Worksheet continued on the next page



## Worksheet #9 (continued)

	Is this option available? Yes or No	If this option is not available, could it be adopted by your organization? Yes or No	If this option is available to some but not all employees, could it be offered to groups of employees who currently cannot access this option? <b>Specify which employee groups.</b>
<b>MENTORING</b>			
Does your organization support employees who want to seek a mentor other than their assigned supervisor?			
Does your organization periodically ask employees if they want to serve as a mentor for a less senior employee?			
Is there a process for employees who want to request a mentor (other than their assigned supervisor)?			
Does your organization provide resources/training about different mentoring roles (such as work-life advisors, sponsors within the organization, liaisons to professionals in other organizations) to people who want to become mentors?			
Does the organization encourage employees to develop career goals and objectives that they can share with their mentors? (See also Toolkit for Training and Career Development.)			
Does your organization provide mentees with some guidelines for expectations they might have for their relationship with their mentor (for example, clarifying their career goals, identifying desired new competencies, etc.)			
Does your organization recognize and celebrate mentors?			
Does the organization provide resources/training to mentors so that they can build respectful relationships with employees in an unbiased manner?			
Does your organization gather information about the impact of mentorship on employees' work experiences and/or career trajectories?			



### Task 4: Prioritize Your Ideas for Supervision and Mentoring Practice Innovation

**Directions:**  
 The members of your Equity Initiative Committee can use the worksheet below to list their top ideas for supervision and mentoring practice innovation.  
 The Leader(s) of your Equity Initiative can develop an “elevator speech” that can be used to present your recommendations to top managers, decision-makers, and other key stakeholders.

## Supervision and Mentoring System Toolkit Worksheet #10 Your Ideas for Supervision and Mentoring Practice Innovation

Ideas for Possible Innovation	Implementation Factors
Idea # 1: Summary of Key Components	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Purpose (Goals/Objectives) Draft Statement _____</li> <li>• Expected (Measurable) Outcomes Draft Statement _____</li> <li>• Pre-implementation Preparation (e.g., informational materials, training, etc.) Draft Statement _____</li> <li>• Announcement/Enrollment Draft Statement _____</li> <li>• Steps 1, 2, 3, etc. of Implementation Draft Statement _____</li> <li>• Estimates of Time and Resources Needed for Implementation Draft Statement _____</li> </ul>
Idea # 2: Summary of Key Components	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Purpose (Goals/Objectives) Draft Statement _____</li> <li>• Expected (Measurable) Outcomes Draft Statement _____</li> <li>• Pre-implementation Preparation (e.g., informational materials, training, etc.) Draft Statement _____</li> <li>• Announcement/Enrollment Draft Statement _____</li> <li>• Steps 1, 2, 3, etc. of Implementation Draft Statement _____</li> <li>• Estimates of Time and Resources Needed for Implementation Draft Statement _____</li> </ul>
Worksheet continued on next page	

## Supervision and Mentoring System Toolkit Worksheet #10 (continued)

Ideas for Possible Innovation	Implementation Factors
<p>Idea # 3: Summary of Key Components</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Purpose (Goals/Objectives) Draft Statement _____</li> <li>• Expected (Measurable) Outcomes Draft Statement _____</li> <li>• Pre-implementation Preparation (e.g., informational materials, training, etc.) Draft Statement _____</li> <li>• Announcement/Enrollment Draft Statement _____</li> <li>• Steps 1, 2, 3, etc. of Implementation Draft Statement _____</li> <li>• Estimates of Time and Resources Needed for Implementation Draft Statement _____</li> </ul>

### *Task 5: Present Idea(s) to Leaders, Decision-Makers, and Other Stakeholders*

Share your ideas for innovation with people/groups that might be stakeholders and decision-makers supervision and mentoring, as well as people who will determine whether the innovation can be pilot tested.

 **Go to Step 5 of the Supervision and Mentoring System Toolkit: Implement Pilot of Innovations**

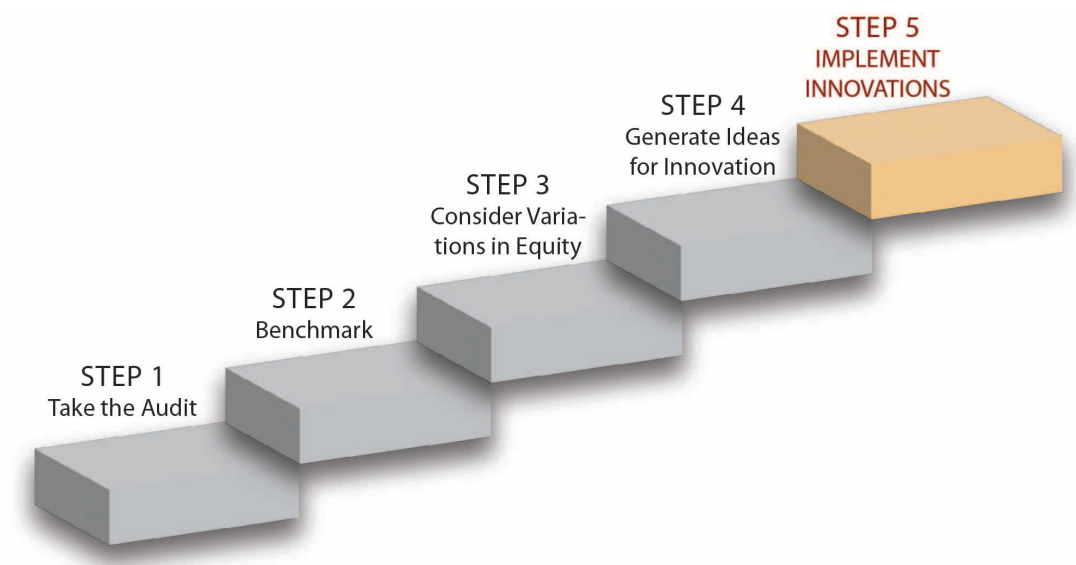


Figure 11: Step 5 of the Supervision and Mentoring System Toolkit