

Mentoring in Context: intersecting identities and ruralities

These Women Can!

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Focus

Explore the wider context within which mentoring /supportive relationships are located in institutional contexts such as the University of the Highlands and Islands located in a Rural Region .

Some Emerging themes

Mentoring contributes to successful career advancement for women.

BUT what is less clear is

What are the qualities of the relationship that makes mentoring a success ?

Emerging themes

Women Face Barriers in accessing mentoring and in mentoring relationships

BUT

These barriers have rarely been explored in much depth.

Some Emerging themes

Gender matching in mentoring has mixed results – positive and negative

So...

Is the traditional mentor – protégé mode of mentoring appropriate for women's career trajectories?

Intersectionality

Intersectionality as reaction against the universalising discourses of feminism in the late 1970s and 1980s.

Emphasis on:

- Multiple, layered identities which operate simultaneously and are contingent on context (time and place : historical, social and political, rural-urban)
- Within group differences – moving beyond essentialising categorisations
- Understanding the interaction of various social identities and how policies, opportunities , etc. that impact on one aspect of our lives are interlinked to others.

Where does 'place' come in?

Intersectionality potentially provides a lens for understanding, explaining and assessing the impact of the ways in which our multiple identities

- converge
- affect opportunities and access to support, rights, etc.
- are shaped by geography

The introduction of **place** helps to focus on the ways in which diverse places/geographies might facilitate or constrain opportunities given intersecting identities

Rural Places

- Notion of place as relational / social constructed
- As warm and welcoming – stigmatising /exclusionary
- Rural as not ‘neutral’ but embodying cultural and social characteristics which are ethnicised , genderised, sexualised.....
- Overcoming the ‘tyranny of geography’ challenges of Rurality – UHI context

Intersectional identities –rural nexus lens and Mentoring

So what does the intersectional identities –rural nexus lens mean for mentoring in the UHI?

- Mentoring is not just a one to one relationship but is situated in broader social , institutional and geographical contexts that shape the relationships and what is possible.
- How does one acknowledging differences in experiences and power positions in mentoring whilst also providing a space for mutual challenge and collaboration?

Some Experiences





Lingering questions

- Does the traditional mentoring model reinforce societal hierarchies ?
- Using an intersectional and rural lens what type of mentoring relationships would be most helpful to women in an institution like the UHI?
- Are there differences in women's mentoring experiences across different disciplines – social sciences , arts, sciences etc. ?

THANK YOU!