












# OUTER COAST

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## “Why have I come here?” Reflection Space

Thank you for volunteering your time as a student at Outer Coast to the Outer Coast Peer Mentoring Program. Whether you are a first-year student in your second semester mentoring an incoming student or someone who has a full year of Outer Coast experience under your belt mentoring someone who is less experienced with our community, we thank you for agreeing to be a guiding light.

**As part of introducing yourself to your mentee, it may be useful for you to tell them why you have signed up for the Peer Mentoring Program or even just why you have decided to come to Outer Coast broadly.** To that end, we have provided a space to capture your answer to the question “Why have I come here?” Please return to this answer periodically throughout your time as a Peer Mentor, both to document if your reasonings and goals have changed and to remind yourself why you decided to tackle this extra responsibility when difficulties arise.

*“Why have I come to Outer Coast and/or the Outer Coast Peer Mentoring Program?”*

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## W-Curve Theory Explanation

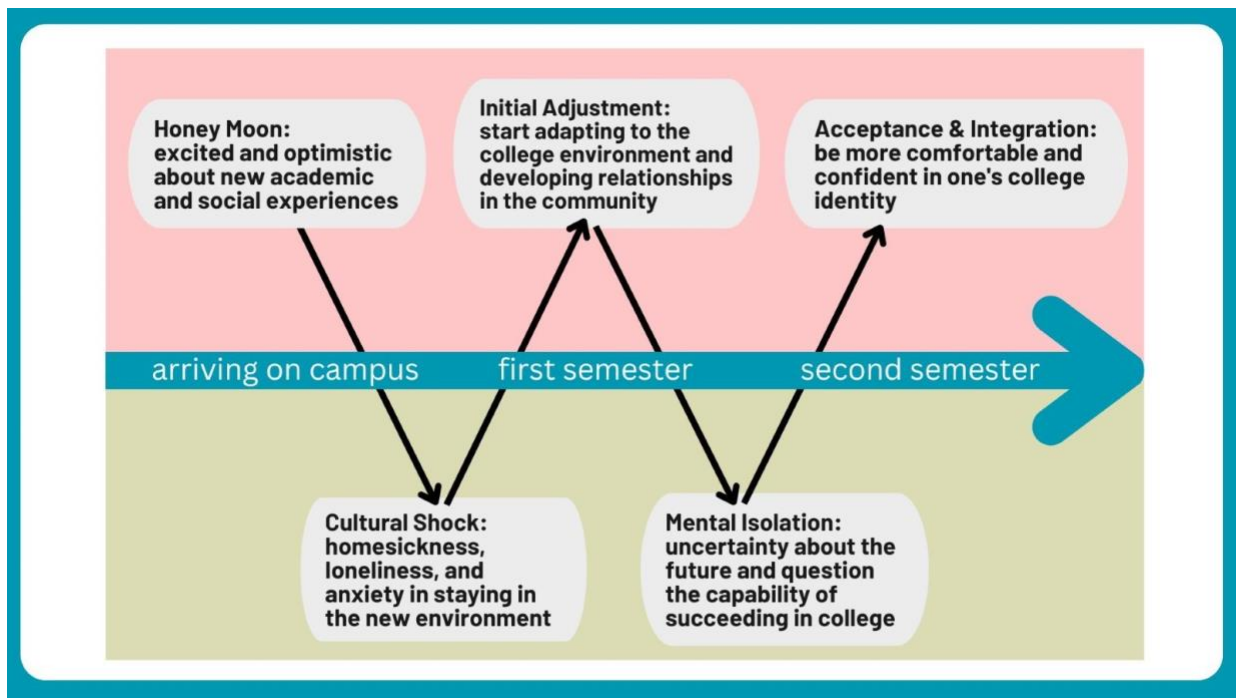


The Zeller & Mosier's Curve of the First Year theory (1993), also known as the “W-Curve” Theory is a powerful framework that sheds light on the transformative experience of college freshman year. As mentors, you play a crucial role in guiding and supporting your mentees through a series of emotional highs and downs, and this theory will equip you with invaluable insights into their developmental journey.

As shown in the graph below, the stages are:

1. Honeymoon
2. Cultural shock
3. Initial adjustment
4. Mental isolation
5. Acceptance and integration

It is important to keep in mind, however, that each student's experience will be different: Each student moves through these stages at different speeds. It is also crucial to understand that this “curve” can repeat—sometimes every semester, sometimes every year, and certainly if/when students transfer to a new institution and/or modality of learning.



By understanding the different stages, you can tailor your guidance to address specific challenges and help your mentees to succeed in their college life at Outer Coast. You

will also find the monthly topics suggested in the next few pages helpful in terms of offering supports to your mentees through their “W-Curves.”

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## Coaching Sentence Stems

For some of you, this may be your first time acting in a mentoring role. One of the hardest parts of mentoring can be saying the right thing to encourage a mentee to explain more, rather than rushing in to try to solve a problem yourself. After all, **it is the mentee who must fulfill the goals they set, not you, the mentor.**

To help facilitate mentee agency as well as to alleviate mentor concern about “freezing up” in crucial moments, we have consolidated a handy guide to coaching sentence stems.

Adapted from:

Elena Aguilar, *The Art of Coaching: Effective Strategies for School Transformation*. Jossey-Bass, 2013.  
<https://brightmorningteam.com/wp-content/uploads/2017/09/Coaching-Sentence-Stems.pdf>

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## Active Listening



*“When do I use active listening sentence stems?”*

You use active listening stems to show that you are paying attention to what your mentee is saying, which shows that you value what they are saying. That, in turn, increases the sense of trust between you.



*“What are some active listening sentence stems?”*

- “So...”
- “In other words...”
- “What I’m hearing, then... Is that correct?”
- “What I hear you saying is... Am I missing anything?”
- “I’m hearing many things...”
- “As I listen to you, I’m hearing... Is there anything else you feel I should know?”



*“What is an example of using active listening sentence stems well?”*

Mentee: “This assignment would be hard enough on its own, but now with Mom in the hospital too, it just seems impossible.”

You: “**What I hear you saying is...** it’s the straw that breaks the camel’s back. You could do it if it were the only thing going on, but it isn’t. **Is that correct?**”

Mentee: “Yeah, exactly! Someone gets it!”

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## Nonjudgmental Responses



*“When do I use nonjudgmental responses?”*

You use nonjudgmental responses to show that you don’t think what your mentee is saying is “weird” or “crazy.” If you think something you are encountering is normal (or at least not abnormal), then it is a lot less frightening and isolating. When something is less frightening and isolating, it is easier to talk about it and, maybe, work towards a solution.



*“What are some nonjudgmental responses sentence stems?”*

- “I’m interested in learning (or hearing) more about...”
- “I’d love to hear more about...”
- “Thank you for sharing that. Can you tell me more about...?”



*“What is an example of using nonjudgmental responses sentence stems well?”*

Mentee: “My roommate is so annoying. I thought I’d gotten away from living with slobes when my older brother moved out, you know?”

You: “**I’d love to hear more about...** how it is that your roommate annoys you.”

Mentee: “My roommate leaves dirty laundry on the ground just like my older brother did!”

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## Requesting Clarification



*“When do I use requesting clarification?”*

You use requesting clarification when you are confused by something your mentee said (either you’re not sure what they mean or you didn’t hear them).



*“What are some requesting clarification sentence stems?”*

- “Let me see if I understand...”
- “It would help me understand if you’d give me an example of...”
- “So, are you saying/suggesting...?”
- “Tell me what you mean when you...”
- “Tell me how that idea is like (or different from)...”



*“What is an example of using requesting clarification sentence stems well?”*

Mentee: “STUDENT NAME is so stressful to be around. I’m on-edge when I’m around them.”

You: “**So, are you saying...** that you feel uncomfortable when you’re around STUDENT NAME?”

Mentee: “No, it’s more like... They’re so nervous that it feels like it’s catching. I know they’re not a bad person, but I nonetheless feel bad when I’m around them.”

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## Probing



*“When do I use probing?”*

You use probing when you want to dive deeper into the mechanics of your mentee’s thinking.





*“What are some probing sentence stems?”*

- “What’s another way you might...?”
- “What do you think would happen if...?”
- “How was...different from (or similar to)...?”
- “What’s another way you might...?”
- “What criteria do you use to...?”
- “When have you done something like...before?”
- “How did you decide...(come to that conclusion?)”



*“What is an example of using probing sentence stems well?”*

Mentee: “This essay is just too hard! I’m not a good writer!”

You: “**What criteria do you use to...** define ‘too hard’?”

Mentee: “This essay is too long. It’s longer than anything I ever wrote in high school!”

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Facilitative Phrases



*“When do I use facilitative phrases?”*

You use facilitative phrases when you want to move the conversation into either exploring uncomfortable feelings, focusing on one item in a list, or giving support at the end of a topic or the meeting.



*“What are some facilitative phrases sentence stems?”*

- “I’m noticing that you’re experiencing some feelings. Would it be OK to explore those for a few minutes?”
- “Tell me about a previous time when you... How did you deal with that?”
- “I hear you’re really struggling with... How do you intend to start?”
- “It sounds like you’re unsatisfied with... What would you do differently next time?”
- “You’ve just talked about five different things you want to work on. The last thing you mentioned is... How important is this to you? Which one of those five things do you want to prioritize / do first?”

- “It sounds like you have a number of ideas to try out! It’ll be exciting to see which works best for you!”
- “Your commitment is inspiring to me.”



“What is an example of using facilitative phrases sentence stems well?”

Mentee: “This meeting has been so useful! I want to apologize to my roommate, email my group project partner, go to that event, meet with my professor about the reading I didn’t understand, and try that deep breathing routine!”

You: “Whoa! **You’ve just talked about five different things you want to work on.** That’s great, but you can’t do them all at the same time. **Which one of those five things do you do first?**”

Mentee: “Oh, you’re right! Well, since I’m planning on going back to my room, I want to apologize to my roommate. They’re usually in the room at this time. If not, I will email my group project partner first, since the project is due later this week.”

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## Directive Phrases



“When do I use directive phrases?”

You use directive phrases when you want to interrupt a mentee’s current train of thought to propose a different way of looking at things or when you have a resource to share. Use these sparingly.



“What are some directive phrases sentence stems?”

- “There is a great book / video / article on that topic: \_\_\_ by \_\_\_.”
- “You can contact \_\_\_ in \_\_\_ department for…”
- “Have you talked to \_\_\_ about that yet? Last week you said you planned on doing so.”
- “Would it be OK if I share some advice that I think might help you? You’re welcome to take it or leave it, of course.”
- “I’d like to suggest…”
- “\_\_\_ is the person in charge of that.”
- “Would you be willing to explore your reasoning (or assumptions) about this?”
- “What would it look like if…? Is there any other way to see this situation?”
- “What do you think would happen if…?”



*“What is an example of using directive phrases sentence stems well?”*

Mentee: “I know what steps I need to take to write this paper now, but I don’t have enough time to finish..! I mean, unless I stayed up late tonight... I have coffee...”

You: “Hang on. \_\_\_ **is in charge of**... extensions. Why don’t we work on an email to them together so you don’t have to pull an all-nighter?”

Mentee: “That sounds like a much better idea! I can’t guarantee the writing would be good that late at night anyway.”

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## When do I need to ask for help with my mentee's concern?



Green Light:  
Self-Governance (Student Body)

- Roommate disagreements (e.g: tidiness, lights-out time, volume, etc.)
- Member of the community not following group-decided norms
- Desire to change group-decided norm
- Feeling excluded from a friend group
- Student makes a mean comment and does not apologize and own impact of actions



Yellow Light:  
Staffulty

- Student does not respond/change behavior in response to a Self-Governance discussion about that type of behavior
- Student more than once makes discriminatory remarks (e.g: based on race, gender, size, nationality, disability, etc.)
- Student's academic standing is at play (students do not grade assignments or decide when an extension is appropriate)





Red Light:  
Outside Outer Coast Experts

- Concerns about whether the student might have a specific condition (e.g: learning disability, eating disorder)
- Threatening violence against self and/or others
- "I wish the world would end tomorrow." / "I wish I weren't here anymore..." (passive suicidal ideation)
- "I could do X, and then it would all be over." (active suicidal ideation)

*Passively Suicidal: A Warning Sign You Should Never Ignore - Ridgeview Behavioral Hospital.* (2022, February 4).  
<https://ridgeviewhospital.net/passively-suicidal-a-warning-sign-you-should-never-ignore/>



Slides are from the [Outer Coast Peer Mentor Onboarding Training!](#)

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## Monthly Meetings Notes Capturing Pages

The following pages of this workbook are dedicated to providing you:

- A standardized way to structure your mentoring conversations (CPR<sup>2</sup>)
- Sample topics organized by time in the semester (beginning, middle, and end)
- Reflection questions to get you thinking what you want to cover in your next mentoring conversation
- An organized space to capture concerns you have that you want to bring up to your fellow Peer Mentors and/or the staffulty liaison

Feel free to use as many or as few as those tools are useful to you. There is no one “right” way to mentor. These pages simply provide a guidance on one way to mentor.

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August

<b>Beginning of Semester Sample Topics</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Summer memories / getting to know you</li><li>• Goal-setting</li><li>• Making friends</li><li>• Creating routines</li><li>• Exploring Sitka</li><li>• Transition to college / new semester</li></ul>

<b>CPR<sup>2</sup></b>	<b>Notes</b>
Check in	
Plan	
Review	
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Procure commitment	
Reflect	

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<b>What do you think went well about that mentoring meeting?</b>	<b>What do you think did not go well about that mentoring meeting?</b>

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June

<b>End of Semester Sample Topics</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Looking back</li><li>• Goal-setting for next semester</li><li>• After Outer Coast plans</li><li>• What information do you want to share with people from home?</li><li>• What do you think went well this semester?</li><li>• What do you want to do next semester to make it better for you?</li></ul>

<b>CPR<sup>2</sup></b>	<b>Notes</b>
Check in	
Plan	
Review	
Coach	
Procure commitment	
Reflect	

*Equity at Work: A Strategic Action Planning Guide.* (n.d.). The Leadership Academy. Retrieved May 2, 2023, from <https://www.leadershipacademy.org/resources/equity-at-work-strategic-action-planning-guide/>

<b>What do you think went well about that mentoring meeting?</b>	<b>What do you think did not go well about that mentoring meeting?</b>

<b>What do you want to follow up about with your mentee for next meeting?</b> (e.g: asking how an anticipated event went, asking about progress on a long-term goal, asking about whether they did the thing they said they would do last meeting)

<p><b>Is there anything you are confused about that you want to ask your fellow Peer Mentors about?</b>  (e.g: “What do I say when they say ___?”, “Is this issue my mentee brought up something other mentees are talking about?”)</p>	<p><b>Is there anything you are worried about that you want to ask your staffulty liason about?</b>  (e.g: concerns about your mentee having a certain condition, mentee not following up on any goals you have set together, mentee’s academic standing being at risk)</p>

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