



# BRIGHT Advisor Toolkit

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# About the Authors

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The authors have extensive experience advising diverse populations of students. Additionally, they have both served in training and mentoring roles for other advisors. They have presented on advisor burnout and building advisor resilience at national conferences for NASPA (2023), NACADA (2024), and the Academic Resilience Consortium (2024). They have published work on their BRIGHT tool in NACADA's *Academic Advising Today*. Additionally, they have been invited to speak on the BRIGHT framework at professional development events organized by postsecondary institutions, advising networks, and non-profit organizations. Contact them at: [info@brightstepsac.com](mailto:info@brightstepsac.com).



# About the ASN

The Advising Success Network (ASN) is a dynamic network of national organizations partnering to engage institutions in holistic advising redesign to advance success for all students, including Black, Latinx/a/o, Indigenous, Asian, and Pacific Islander students and poverty-affected students. The network develops services and resources to guide institutions in implementing evidence-based advising practices. Since its formation in 2018, ASN has supported over 250 institutions in 30 states and created more than 50 open-source resources for practitioners and students. ASN is coordinated by NASPA – Student Affairs Administrators in Higher Education, and includes partners Achieving the Dream, the American Association of State Colleges and Universities, the Center for Innovation in Postsecondary Education, EDUCAUSE, NACADA: The Global Community for Academic Advising, the National Resource Center for the First-Year Experience and Students in Transition, and Young Invincibles.



# What is BRIGHT?

The BRIGHT framework was developed in 2023 in response to a NASPA conference prompt asking student affairs professionals, “How can we bring joy back to our work?” This prompt sparked a discussion between the authors centered on which specific facets of our jobs we felt robbed us of our joy. Throughout our discussion, two main themes emerged: stress and burnout.

Focusing on common stressors we encountered in our work and utilizing empirical literature on burnout, we developed the **BRIGHT** framework to assist those in the helping professions to:

- combat emotional fatigue
- mitigate burnout
- develop, both professionally and personally



## **BRIGHT** Framework: **BOUNDARIES, REFRAMING, INTUITION, GOAL SETTING, HELP-SEEKING, and TIME MANAGEMENT**

The authors used their **BRIGHT** framework to develop the **BRIGHT Advisor Toolkit** specifically to address the emotional fatigue and burnout that academic advisors and other student support personnel in higher education experience in their profession. The Toolkit introduces each facet of **BRIGHT**, outlines the research behind the framework, and provides an application section to walk readers through using BRIGHT concepts in their work.

NOTE: Please keep in mind that advisors have different experiences that will impact how they navigate workforce issues like stress and burnout. Experiences in the workplace are influenced by intersecting social identities, like race, gender, disability, and sexuality, that shape how individuals are perceived, treated, and able to navigate systems of power and opportunity. This context is important to remember when engaging with this content. Our examples may feel distant and unrelatable to some or speak directly to others. We encourage you to reflect on this and have discussions with colleagues as issues of dissonance arise.

This work was made possible through the generous support of the Advising Success Network (ASN).



# **BRIGHT**

## **Advisor Toolkit**



### **Who is the Toolkit for?**

The intended audience for the toolkit includes frontline staff, primarily:

- Academic advisors
- Higher education student support staff
- College counselors
- Administrators who supervise and/or train the preceding groups

### **What is contained in the Toolkit?**

- An overview of the state of advisor burnout
- An introduction to the BRIGHT framework
- Research supporting each component of BRIGHT
- An application section including:
  - Practical examples of advisor stress and burnout
  - Discussion questions and reflection prompts
  - Suggestions for utilizing BRIGHT in practice
  - Resources for further reading and support
- Key points and takeaways for each BRIGHT component

### **How can the Toolkit be used?**

- Practical guide for individual advisor use
- Training guide for advising leaders
- Resource material useful to discuss advisor burnout





## Introduction



Higher education institutions are increasingly recognizing the importance of academic advisors in students' success (Auguste et al., 2018; Goemans & Kapino, 2024; Museus, 2021). Academic advisors have a direct positive impact on student resilience, retention, persistence, and degree completion (Mueller, 2023; Walters & Seyedian, 2016; Zarges et al., 2018). In addition, academic advisors also enhance student satisfaction, influence career aspirations, provide supportive environments, and assist with campus navigation (Mu & Fosnacht, 2019).

In order for advisors to effectively carry out these important roles, it is imperative for them to build trusting relationships with students by displaying approachability, kindness, and concern (Pitts & Myers, 2023). However, many academic advisors report feelings of emotional exhaustion and overwhelm (Rubin, 2017; Soria, 2023), making it difficult to display the qualities that have a positive impact on students. For many advisors, the emotional exhaustion and chronic stress they experience at work ultimately leads to burnout which has negative implications for the academic advisors themselves, the students they serve, and the institutions that depend on their work.

## What is Burnout and How Does it Affect Academic Advisors?

Maslach et al. (2001) define work burnout as “a prolonged response to chronic emotional and interpersonal stressors on the job” that “is defined by the three dimensions of exhaustion, cynicism, and inefficacy” (p. 397). Professional burnout can be characterized by emotional exhaustion, decreased enthusiasm for work, apathy, depersonalization, and treating others poorly (Bruce, 2009; Catanzano et al., 2023; Soria et al., 2023). Job burnout research has origins in human services occupations where relational transactions are at the crux of one’s emotional response to the demands of their job (Maslach et al., 2001).

Outcomes of burnout are typically negative and can include reduced job performance, as shown for example in chronic absenteeism or decreased commitment to the organization, and poor health consequences including substance abuse and declining mental health (Maslach et al., 2001). Examples of factors that lead to burnout are sustained stress and work overload (Catanzano et al., 2023). Additional components of work-related factors contributing to burnout include: low wages, outsized job demands, high job intensity, and lack of promotion opportunities (Soria, et al 2023).

**Have you experienced burnout?**

[Visit Psychology Today to take a quick, free burnout test](#)

### Sample of Maslach Burnout Inventory Questions

- I feel emotionally drained by my work.
- Working with people all day long requires a great deal of effort.
- I feel like my work is breaking me down.
- I feel tired when I get up in the morning and have to face another day at work.
- I am at the end of my patience at the end of my workday.
- I have become more insensitive to people in the workplace.

# Burnout and Academic Advising

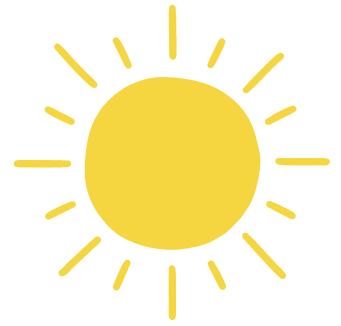


At its core, academic advising is a human services occupation where relationships are essential. Advisor attitudes and their level of emotional availability affect students (Hawthorne et al., 2022; Young-Jones et al., 2013). Students want advisors to be “approachable, compassionate, concerned, and kind” (Pitts & Myers, 2023). However, it is difficult for advisors to display these qualities when they are feeling emotionally taxed, overwhelmed, and burnt out. The factors leading to burnout noted above are a part of everyday life for advisors due to outsized caseloads, poor institutional support, and emotional fallout from student issues. Further, Gregerson et al. (2022) suggested that administrator demands, compassion fatigue, emotional labor, the high work volume, and lack of institutional resources may also contribute to academic advisors’ burnout.

Soria et al. (2023) recently studied burnout among academic advisors surveying over 800 professional academic advisors from a wide range of institutions across the United States. Utilizing Maslach’s Burnout Inventory as their measurement tool, Soria et al. (2023) found that most academic advisors feel burnout at some point whether it occurs daily, once a week, or just a few times a year. In fact, only 3.9% of study respondents reported never feeling burnout (Soria et al., 2023). In a study of athletic academic advisors, (Rubin, 2017) found 91% of survey respondents noticed burnout in their colleagues. Further, 60% of respondents reported considering leaving their jobs. Rubin (2017) attributed this burnout in part to role fatigue and suppression of feelings and emotions while performing their role.

Academic advisor turnover has negative implications for student success and institutional sustainability. When advising turnover occurs, students experience a disruption in important support services, and often, the work that needs accomplished falls to the remaining staff. Higher education as an industry has experienced increased turnover among full-time staff, including academic advisors, since the pandemic (Bichsel et al., 2023). The CUPA-HR 2023 Employee Retention Survey found that employee retention predictors included job satisfaction and well-being and that increased demands and overwork predict employee attrition (Bichsel et al., 2023). These predictors align with burnout leading to employee turnover. In their study on burnout and turnover among higher education professionals, Winfield and Paris (2022) found that increased job demands and workloads not only led to dissatisfaction at work, but that these conditions also affected the professionals’ physical and mental health and led to increased turnover intentions. Winfield and Paris (2022) noted that budget cuts at institutions often meant more work for less staff and found that burnout is a predictor for turnover intention among higher education professionals.

# **BRIGHT Framework**



Still, in the face of at times less than ideal work conditions, many higher education professionals feel compelled, either out of desire or necessity, to continue doing this important student support work. Systemic changes within the academic advising profession are absolutely called for. However, in the meantime we must also develop and implement timely resources that aid advisors in mitigating some of the burnout that they feel, so they can be emotionally available and accessible to students. The BRIGHT advisor framework can serve as a resource for advisors in mitigating burnout. BRIGHT is an easy to remember acronym that stands for: boundaries, reframing, intuition, goal-setting, help-seeking, and time management. Each of these components are research-backed topic areas shown to be effective in combating the emotional fatigue and burnout that often accompany the academic advising profession.



**In the following section, you will find research supporting each component of BRIGHT as its own factor in stress and burnout prevention as well as the benefits of synergistic use of the framework as a whole.**

**Following the research section is an application section that advisors and student support personnel can review and refer to as needed. The BRIGHT Toolkit is meant as a reflective tool to help readers envision utilizing the BRIGHT framework in their own professional lives. While the Toolkit offers “real-life” scenarios for simulation and reflection, our suggestions are offerings to the conversation on mitigating burnout in the workplace, and do not represent an exhaustive set of solutions.**



# B

## Boundaries

Boundaries are personal limits one sets in their interactions with others to protect their own physical and psychological space (Campbell, 2023). Boundaries can also be described as expectations or ways to communicate behaviors that are and are not acceptable to individuals (Chen, 2023). Boundaries can be set around the amount of time one is available for certain tasks or people, the level of access others have to one's physical space, and even the level of emotional investment one will make in a given situation. Boundaries are not only beneficial to protecting the individual who establishes them, but they can also be a useful tool in guiding others on appropriate conduct and setting relationship expectations.

Berger (2023) studied the management of boundaries in remote workers to determine their effect on work-life balance. The researcher found that employees who practiced setting strict boundaries experienced lower amounts of stress compared to employees who did not and also reported better work-life balance (Berger, 2023). In contrast, those who did not establish boundaries experienced role confusion, decreased well-being, and more work hours (Berger, 2023). Studies on employees who navigated boundary management effectively found positive outcomes for these employees including promotability, decreased work-life conflicts, and enhanced well-being (Chauhan & Rai, 2024).

In a helping profession such as academic advising, it can be tempting to be "always on." After all, there will always be students who need help. Additionally, technological tools, like Zoom or Microsoft Teams, that have become widely used in the aftermath of a global pandemic, further expand advisors' ability to be available even when they are not physically in the office (Moss, 2019). This implied accessibility can cause boundaries to blur. Chauhan and Rai (2024) point to this absence of physical boundaries between work and personal life and stress that successfully learning to navigate work-life integration will be key. They state that, "In the post-pandemic world, the boundaries between work and non-work domains have blurred and become more permeable" (Chauhan & Rai, 2024, p. 421). It is more important than ever for advisors to learn when to disconnect, both physically and emotionally.

While advisor accessibility is extremely important for students, setting boundaries within the advisor-advisee relationship is beneficial to all parties. For an academic advisor, setting and adhering to boundaries protects their personal time and mental energy, allowing them to be “off” and rest (Moss, 2019). For students, boundaries can encourage development, helping students to take initiative on their own, learn independence, and engage in problem solving.

Advisors must communicate their expectations and limits in a clear and direct way to achieve proper boundary setting (Chen, 2023). However, boundary work is not just an individual job to be undertaken by the academic advisor alone; it is also highly influenced by the organization in which the advisor works (Weiss & Ortlieb, 2025). Organizations should promote boundary setting practices and provide guidelines on how to accomplish appropriate boundaries (Chauhan & Rai, 2024; Chen, 2023). Organizational guidelines can provide clear structure and potentially improve the quality of the academic advising provided at the institution (Morris et al., 2023).



# R

## Reframing

Reframing is a tool utilized in cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT) which involves shifting one's perspective on a situation or event in order to ascribe new meaning to or engage in a different emotional approach to the situation or event (Morin, 2024). This tool is often called for when an individual is engaged in distorted thinking or starts to view many situations in a negative light. Using reframing techniques, one can start to recognize automatic negative thoughts and shift these negative thoughts by looking at them with an alternate lens, perhaps enabling them to view situations in a less emotionally charged or negative way (Catanzano et al., 2023).

Growing evidence supports the use of reframing in managing and overcoming burnout in work settings (Catanzano et al., 2023; Joyce et al., 2018). Burnout, and the stress and sense of overwhelm that precede it, can cause negative thoughts or outsized emotional reactions to daily occurrences (Bruce, 2009). Reframing, a skill mastered through consistent practice and reflection, can help individuals to counter these negative thoughts and reactions and temper some of the burnout they are feeling. Studies suggest that reframing is most effective when it is "(a) relatable to the individual, (b) helpful in overcoming the negative thought, and (c) memorable to be accessible the next time a similar thought arises" (Sharma et al., 2023, p. 9977). Reframing has been shown to have a positive impact on an individual's level of resilience (Joyce et al., 2018). And higher levels of individual resilience are associated with increased job satisfaction and lower reported levels of burnout (Topino et al., 2022).

Reframing can allow an academic advisor to see challenges such as complex student issues or increased workloads not just as insurmountable burdens, but also as opportunities for learning, professional growth, and the ability to make a meaningful impact on students. Academic advisors that are asked to take on new responsibilities can view this as an opportunity to demonstrate their leadership capacity instead of a further strain on their time. Experiencing negative thoughts is a normal part of being human (Sharma et al., 2023), especially when an individual is stressed or overwhelmed. However, learning to shift these negative thoughts can prove beneficial to good mental health long-term and useful to promote a healthy work environment.



# Intuition

Intuition is an instinctual knowing or a processing of information that happens without conscious effort (Sicora et al., 2021; Sutton, 2020). It has been described as “gut feeling arising out of experience and pattern recognition” (Hallo & Nguyen, 2022, p. 15). Intuition can be a useful guide in the decision making process, especially when one is overwhelmed with thoughts or emotions. Use of intuition in decision making is particularly fitting to high stress situations (Yu, 2016).

Advisors often experience high work volume and administrative demands (Soria et al., 2023) that lead to heightened cognitive load and stress. Research has shown that when decisions are made without thought, the result tends to increase stress levels (Allwood & Salo, 2012). However, when experiencing increased mental load, decision-making can seem like an additional task one does not have the capacity for. Utilizing intuition in decision-making can reduce that mental load (Sutton, 2020). Additionally, in a study on leadership decision-making, Hallo and Nguyen (2022) found that “intuition enabled a much deeper understanding of the problem situation” (p. 15).

Reliance on intuition can lead to greater self-awareness which can help one recognize the signs of impending burnout. Mindfulness exercises can be used as a tool in developing further self-awareness and intuitive thinking (Xiao et al., 2017). Mindfulness helps individuals adapt to stressful events and reduce tension (Tetrick & Winslow, 2015). Additionally, mindfulness interventions have been correlated with self-compassion, confidence in providing calm and compassionate care, and have been negatively associated with stress and burnout (Moffatt-Bruce et al, 2019).

Intuitive decision-making is also important in work-life balance as it helps individuals make decisions based on personal values (Sutton, 2020). As an example of utilizing intuitive thinking when considering requests for an already thin time, advisors can consider: Does this opportunity feel right for me? Making intuitive choices can ensure time is being utilized wisely. Additionally, advisors must remember that saying no is a form of self-care that can help prevent burnout and lead to personal satisfaction.



# Goal Setting

Goals help people form a direction to follow in their lives and can create purpose and meaning (Lee-Hawkins, 2024). According to goal-setting theory, the best goals are those that are challenging and achievable (Locke & Latham, 2020). Goals can be small and short-term, like daily tasks that can be checked off and aid in organization. Goals can also be lofty and long-term, like career goals. Research shows that setting professional goals contributes to positive attitudes in the workplace (Greco & Kraimer, 2019). Additionally, goal setting can help maintain motivation, supports professional well-being, and promotes job satisfaction (Greco & Kraimer, 2019).

Setting short-term goals that promote organization can help mitigate any impending sense of overwhelm in the face of myriad tasks to complete. Setting long-term goals can provide a sense of perspective within the day-to-day when feeling lost or unmotivated. Goal-setting workshops and mentorship networks can help advisors craft and focus on their goals. When institutions can provide development opportunities that can expand or alter an advisor's work in a way that does not add stress but provide a way to increase skill, employees can become more motivated, enthusiastic and find meaning in their work (Gabriel & Aguinis, 2022).



# H

## Help Seeking

Though help-seeking may seem a natural choice for someone who is struggling, our society often places a heavy value on individual professional achievement, making many people reluctant to ask for help (Liu et al., 2021). Additionally, some fear being viewed as incompetent in their job if they engage in help-seeking (Liu et al., 2021). However, there is research to show a connection between people who receive support at work and reduced rates of burnout (Seppala & King, 2017).

A study on academic advisors in particular showed being a member of a supportive work community was negatively associated with emotional exhaustion (Soria et al., 2023). This research shows that a supportive work environment could possibly offset negative feelings experienced in the professional setting. Research also showed that help-seeking behavior boosted work performance (Liu et al., 2021) and increased creativity (Wang et al., 2022). Additionally, studies suggest that help-seeking is an important behavior to support learning and problem solving within organizations (van der Rijt et al., 2013).

In light of the fact that many fear negative social costs of asking for help (Liu et al., 2021), those training academic advisors should be vocal about encouraging help-seeking behavior. In a study of 133 working professionals, van der Rijt et al. (2013) found that “accessibility and trust were positively associated with the likelihood to seek help and the frequency by which help is sought” (p. 259). This suggests the importance of providing academic advisors with a work environment where help is encouraged and readily available. Help-seeking can refer to asking questions about day-to-day tasks, getting advice on assisting a student, or holistic help with balancing workload. It should also include seeking support from a mental health professional should signs of burnout appear.

# T

## Time Management

Time management refers to effectively and efficiently using work time to accomplish tasks. It also refers to having some agency over how that time is utilized. Time management is shown to have a positive impact on job satisfaction as well as life satisfaction (Aeon et al., 2021). Additionally, time management was linked to decreased role overload and was shown to alleviate psychological distress (Aeon et al., 2021). Ali (2019) surveyed 200 people to determine what they considered to be the benefits of time management at work. The results included that time management: “helps in transforming deadline burdens into achievable milestones,” “helps in improving overall efficiency,” “promotes better work-life balance,” and “can increase focus and reduce stress levels” (pp. 305-307).

Academic advisors report lack of time to complete all that is asked of them as a source of stress and burnout. Soria et al. (2023) found that high workload was positively related to emotional exhaustion. In a study on athletic academic advisors, in particular, O'Rourke (2024) found the long hours and irregular schedules of academic advisors could be demanding and difficult to manage, especially for those with family responsibilities. The participants discussed the experience of working long non-traditional hours, the inability to be fully present for their family, and the impact this has on their experience with job burnout. Learning effective time management strategies could help to alleviate some of the stress academic advisors experience at work.

While Soria et al. (2023) found advisors stressed over high workloads, they also reported that having some control over how to get that work accomplished was negatively associated with emotional exhaustion. Providing academic advisors reasonable agency to manage their own schedules and prioritize their responsibilities is also an effective strategy in mitigating stress and burnout. Ali (2019) states that “organizational culture, particularly through managerial support, employee empowerment, and openness to new ideas, play a vital role in fostering effective time management” (p. 306). Managers need to recognize the potential for academic advisors to be always “on” and encourage proper time management strategies. Additionally, academic advisors should be aware that time management also means protecting our valuable time by setting boundaries around personal time as well as valuing and respecting the time of others when seeking their collaboration or input.

# BRIGHT Framework in Action



The concepts within the BRIGHT framework are straightforward and easy to operationalize for individual academic advisors as well as advising managers. Academic advisors can choose to employ each BRIGHT strategy on its own or utilize the framework as a whole to accomplish a synergistic effect in combating work stress and burnout (Fahey & Freshour, 2023). Learning and implementing effective coping strategies to deal with work stressors provides advisors with the ability to focus more on the students they serve. Learning to effectively cope with work stressors will enhance advisors' ability to focus on their jobs, improve their job satisfaction, and, in turn, develop the positive relationships with their advisees that are central to student success.

While it is highly beneficial and recommended for individuals to utilize tools and resources on their own that help them optimally function in their day to day work life, organizations, like higher education institutions, absolutely share in the responsibility of helping to mitigate academic advisor burnout. Weiss and Ortlieb (2025) found that individuals who feel pressure from their workplace to overwork, often "internalize these pressures and 'deliberately' decide to work beyond their limits risking mental and physical breakdowns" (p. 122). It will be most impactful in the long term for institutions to recognize their part in perpetuating burnout and work to improve organizational culture around overwork. Research shows that the most positive resilience building outcomes result from a combined individual and organizational effort (Awa et al., 2010). Further, actions that are individual-centric tend to realize short-term results, whereas actions that are structural or systemic can establish more effective, long-term results (Awa et al., 2010).



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# Application Section

# BRIGHT

## Application



### Overview of the Application Section

One section for each **BRIGHT** component containing:

- Advisor Scenario #1
- Reflection Questions for Advisor Scenario #1
- Advisor Scenario #2
- Reflection Questions for Advisor Scenario #2
- Revisiting the Research
- What to Learn from Scenario #1
- What to Learn from Scenario #2
- Ways to incorporate the BRIGHT topic for:
  - Advisors
  - Advising Leaders
- Reflection Prompts
- Resource section for Further Reading and Support
- For Your Consideration: Respecting Different Perspectives





# B

## Boundaries

### Advisor Scenario #1

George loves to help others. This trait is partly why he became an academic advisor. However, he has noticed recently that his work colleagues require more assistance than his students do. His coworkers come to George instead of first trying to find the answers themselves. They claim, “You know the answers, and it is easier to ask you than to look them up.” While this may be true, and he does not want to discourage his coworkers’ help-seeking behavior, the constant influx of questions is preventing him from getting his work completed. Additionally, he wants to be considered a “team player,” so he feels bad saying no. He is stressed because he feels he is always helping others get their tasks completed while his work piles up.

### Reflection Question for Advisor Scenario #1

1. How could you assist another academic advisor and still set boundaries?
2. Would you continue to help if you have already shown how and where your colleagues could find the answers? Why or why not?
3. Explain how saying “No” is a form of self-care.
4. What could George do if his co-workers become upset with him?

## **Advisor Scenario #2**

Heather is a faculty academic advisor who has become very close to many of her students, engaging with them in class, advising meetings, or anytime they stop by her office. Recently, she gave her personal phone number to a student who was dealing with a tough personal matter. Early one Sunday morning, Heather received a text message from the student asking a question regarding a class. She felt it was a little inappropriate, and the question could have waited; however, she replied to the student. This one text exchange turned into regular out-of-office hours messages, and the student even shared her number with other students. Heather did not want to make the other students feel that she didn't care about them as much as the first student, so she responded to those messages, too. Heather eventually became overwhelmed by the number of messages she was receiving when she was at home.

## **Reflection Question for Advisor Scenario #2**

1. If you were in Heather's position how would you handle the student?
2. Would you have responded to the Sunday morning text message? Why or why not?
3. Would you provide any student with the ability to get in touch with you "after hours"? Why or why not?
4. Would you continue to communicate with students via text message? Why or why not?

## **Revisiting the Research**

- Boundaries are personal limits one sets in their interactions with others to protect their own physical and psychological space (Campbell, 2023).
- Boundaries can also be described as expectations or ways to communicate behaviors that are and are not acceptable to individuals (Chen, 2023).
- For an academic advisor, setting and adhering to boundaries protects their personal time and mental energy, allowing them to be "off" and rest (Moss, 2019).
- Boundary work is not just an individual job to be undertaken by the academic advisor alone; it is also highly influenced by the organization in which the advisor works (Weiss & Ortlieb, 2025).
- Organizations need to promote boundary setting practices and provide guidelines on how to accomplish appropriate boundaries (Chauhan & Rai, 2024; Chen, 2023).
- Organizational guidelines can provide clear structure and potentially improve the quality of the academic advising provided at the institution (Morris et al., 2023).

# Incorporating BRIGHT into Practice

## What to Learn from Scenario #1

While it is admirable that George wants to help his colleagues and show that he is dependable and a “team-player,” it is also important for him to set boundaries. George’s coworkers, perhaps unknowingly, are creating more work for him; however, he is finding it difficult to speak up. This can also lead to resentment which is a negative consequence to being overworked. George can set boundaries around what he is willing to assist with and how many times he is willing to provide help with the same issue. Setting boundaries in this way will also help his colleagues to become more self-sufficient which allows everyone to feel a sense of pride and accomplishment.

## What to Learn from Scenario #2

Individuals in the helping professions tend to want to provide to those around them, no matter the cost to themselves. Heather’s intentions to help her student in need is genuine; however, she can still help while setting boundaries and protecting herself and her personal time. To the student, a simple text message response created the unspoken agreement that it was okay to use the cell phone to communicate and to do so on the weekends. Further, when the door was opened for one student, it potentially opened for all, causing the advisor to feel they are “always on.”

## Ways to Incorporate Boundaries

### For Advisors:

- Adhere to your scheduled work hours.
- Take your lunch break to decompress without interruption
- Try not to take on extra projects when you do not have the time or mental energy.
- Extend help to others while honoring your own needs.
- Leave work at work (including emails, Teams messages, and text messages).

### For Advising Leaders:

- Ensure a clear division of responsibility among team members.
- Check in to make sure all team members are contributing, and work is equitable across the team.
- Teach team members about boundary setting or provide workshop training on boundary setting.
- Model appropriate boundaries for your supervisees.

# Moving Forward

## Reflection Prompts

- Reflect on why boundaries are so hard to set.
- What can you do when students/colleagues/administrators do not respect your boundaries?
- Give an example of professional boundaries.
- Give an example of personal boundaries.

## Resource Section for Further Reading and Support\*

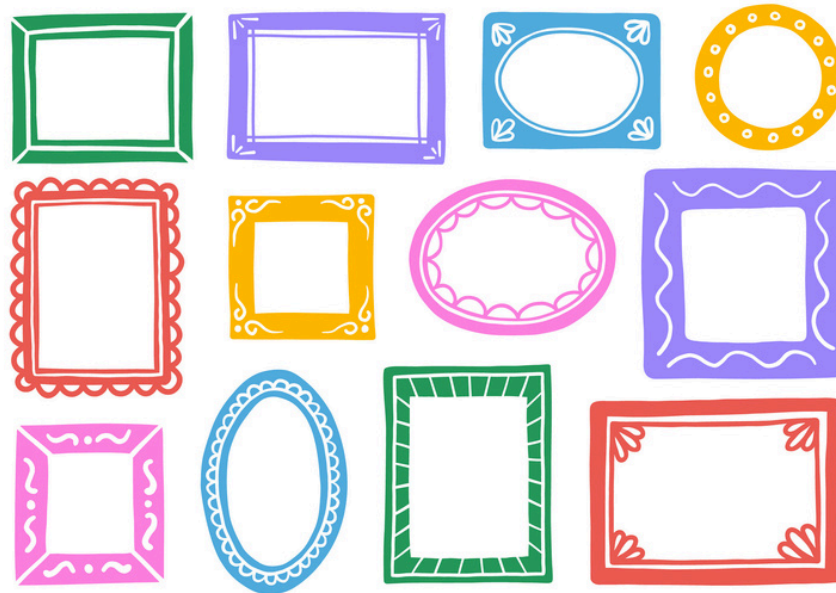
(\*See Reference section for detailed information on all referenced resources in toolkit.)

- *Set Boundaries, Find Peace* by Nedra Glover Tawwab – This book offers practical strategies for establishing and maintaining boundaries at work and also discusses common workplace challenges like people-pleasing and saying no.
- *Boundaries: When to Say Yes, How to Say No to Take Control of Your Life* by Henry Cloud & John Townsend – This book provides insight into workplace dynamics and provides actionable guidance for protecting your time.
- *Boundaries = Freedom: How to Create Boundaries That Set You Free Without Feeling Guilty* by Joseph Nguyen – This book serves as a guide to set boundaries without feeling guilt, to communicate your needs more effectively, and to break out of old patterns.

## For your consideration:

Some individuals may find it difficult to fully understand boundaries or respect boundaries. This could be due to neurodivergence, cultural differences, age (generational), or other factors. However, this does not mean that boundaries should not be set or that boundaries should not be respected by these individuals. Clear and candid individual discussions are warranted when it appears as though set boundaries are not being respected.





# R

## Reframing

### **Advisor Scenario #1**

Alice was just notified by her supervisor that the process for documenting student notes and tracking student progress is changing. The institution will be implementing a new portal for this process. This comes as a surprise to Alice since the system they are currently using for this process was just introduced last year. Alice begins to feel nervous about the thought of having to learn and navigate yet another system while maintaining her work efficiency. She is also frustrated because learning new technology does not come easily to Alice and developing proficiency in this new system will only add more work to her plate.

### **Reflection Question for Advisor Scenario #1**

1. How can Alice shift her thoughts about adapting to a new system?
2. What could Alice do to help with her frustration surrounding technology?
3. How could Alice envision this challenge as ultimately beneficial for her and her students in the long run?
4. What could Alice do to see this scenario positively?

## Advisor Scenario #2

Janae has a student named Robert whom she has been working with for the last three semesters. Although they seem to have a great working relationship, and Robert agrees with Janae's advice during their conversations together, he does not follow through on that advice, and it is negatively impacting his academic success. When they talk through issues at follow-up meetings, Robert laments that he did not follow Janae's advice and cannot really provide a reason as to why he did not. This feels like a trend to Janae as she has a few other students who also seem to be following this pattern. Janae feels a sense of pride and purpose when she is able to help her students solve their problems. So, it greatly weighs on her when she is faced with an issue that she cannot solve or a student who does not take her advice. Seeing students facing academic difficulty even though she is trying her best to help them makes her feel like she is not a very good advisor. After all, there must be an issue with her if students don't trust her advice.

## Reflection Questions for Advisor Scenario #2

1. How can Janae put her challenges with Robert into perspective?
2. How can Janae get past equating her self-worth as an advisor into whether or not every student follows through on her advice?
3. What could Janae do to lessen the weight she feels when she cannot solve one student's problem?
4. What are some ways Janae could shift her thoughts to focus on the positive impact she is having?

## Revisiting the Research

- Reframing involves shifting one's perspective on a situation or event in order to envision the situation or event in a less emotionally charged way (Morin, 2024).
- Reframing allows one to recognize automatic negative thoughts and shift these negative thoughts by looking at them with an alternate lens (Catanzano et al., 2023).
- Growing evidence supports the use of reframing in managing and overcoming burnout in work settings (Catanzano et al., 2023; Joyce et al., 2018).
- Studies suggest that reframing is most effective when it is "(a) relatable to the individual, (b) helpful in overcoming the negative thought, and (c) memorable to be accessible the next time a similar thought arises" (Sharma et al., 2023, p. 9977).
- Reframing has been shown to have a positive impact on an individual's level of resilience (Joyce et al., 2018).

# Incorporating BRIGHT into Practice

## What to Learn from Scenario #1

Alice is understandably upset and frustrated over being required to learn a new system. However, dwelling on these negative feelings may prevent her from moving forward and embracing any positive attributes the new technology may afford her students. Allowing herself to think differently (or reframe her narrative regarding the new process) will open her up to the possibility of how the new system may be an asset to her and her students. Having an open mind will help Alice avoid becoming disgruntled and will positively impact her ability to do her job and learn the new system.

## What to Learn from Scenario #2

Part of Janae's job is to provide guidance to students and to help them with decision-making processes. Janae should try not to take it personally when students do not follow her guidance. She has provided her students with the tools and path necessary for academic success; it is up to the students to follow through. Janae seems to be putting most of her focus on what she has not been able to accomplish. She most likely has numerous other advisees who have benefitted from her advice and guidance. It would benefit her to learn to reframe her negative thoughts and put her actual experience into perspective. Engaging with her supervisor to for feedback may help provide some fresh perspective.

## Ways to Incorporate Reframing

### For Advisors:

- Take a moment to consider another's perspective before you make a knee-jerk decision.
- When receiving a negative email, consider whether you can wait 24 hours to respond to give yourself time to calm down and reflect.
- Practice reframing when you are feeling well, so that it can become an automatic practice when you feel stressed or upset.

### For Advising Leaders:

- Train your team on appropriate customer service.
- Help your team put their work into perspective and remind them of the positive outcomes their work produces.
- Recognize when a team member is exhibiting signs of stress and needs help reframing their day.

# Moving Forward

## Reflection Prompts

- Reflect on why reframing can be helpful in most situations.
- Do you often make knee-jerk decisions? How can you prevent this in the future?
- What can you do when students/colleagues/administrators create stressful situations that cannot be avoided?
- Give an example of reframing in a stressful professional situation.
- Give an example of reframing in a stressful personal situation

## Resource Section for Further Reading and Support

- *Mind Over Mood* by Dennis Greenberger & Christine A. Padesky – This workbook utilizes worksheets and tools to guide readers in practicing reframing negative thoughts and shows how to shift emotional response in real time.
- *Cognitive Behavioral Therapy Made Simple* by Seth J. Gillihan – This book focuses on clear, manageable steps for identifying and reframing negative thoughts and includes exercises to practice reframing.
- Visit Positive Psychology for free tips and worksheets on CBT and reframing: <https://positivepsychology.com/cbt-cognitive-behavioral-therapy-techniques-worksheets/>

## For your consideration:

There will inevitably be negative or stressful situations that you will encounter in your professional life and your personal life. While you cannot always control those situations, you can control how you respond to those situations. Reframing is a skill that takes time and practice to master, especially if you are someone who typically sees the glass as half empty. However, with practice, you can learn to take a moment and reconsider the situation and all the possibilities surrounding it.





## Intuition

### Advisor Scenario #1

It's Monday morning, and Martin looks at his calendar for the week, noticing the lack of any "free time" to focus on several administrative duties that need to be completed. Within minutes of arriving at the office, Martin is approached by a colleague and asked to head a new committee. The colleague states, "We all thought you would be perfect for this; you are the best at multitasking." Martin is one of the junior members in the office, and he feels a strong sense to prove his worth. However, he is already feeling overwhelmed with the workload he has. In addition to the offer to head up the new committee, Martin has also received a few invitations to join other working groups that sounded interesting and enticing. Martin loves his job and wants to grow, but he is starting to become anxious about his responsibilities.

### Reflection Question for Advisor Scenario #1

1. Will saying "No" negatively impact Martin? Why or why not?
2. Should Martin continue to say "Yes" regardless of his workload to prove he is a team player and can handle his job?
3. Is Martin agreeing to tasks (outside of his job description) that do not foster a sense of pride/joy?

## Advisor Scenario #2

John has been one of Holly's most reliable and loved advisors. Lately, though, Holly has been noticing some changes in John. Holly stops by John's office to talk about one of John's favorite students. The student stopped by when John was in another meeting and let Holly know that he was having some class issues and really wanted to talk to John about it. John's response to Holly sharing this news was a big sigh as he muttered, "Here we go again..." Holly is concerned because this is not John's typical demeanor. She's noticed that he's more irritable lately, quickly losing his patience with coworkers. He's also been coming in late more often and complains about being tired, where he was once very energetic.

### Reflection Question for Advisor Scenario #2

1. What could be a possible explanation for John's change in behavior?
2. Should Holly approach John and explain that she sees a change in his attitude? If so, how should she go about this?
3. How could John use intuition to respond to this scenario?
4. How could Holly use intuition to respond to this scenario?

### Revisiting the Research

- Intuition is an instinctual knowing or a processing of information that happens without conscious effort (Sicora et al., 2021; Sutton, 2020).
- Intuition has been described as "gut feeling arising out of experience and pattern recognition" (Hallo & Nguyen, 2022, p. 15).
- Intuition can be a useful guide in the decision-making process, especially when one is overwhelmed with thoughts or emotions. Use of intuition in decision-making is particularly fitting to high-stress situations (Yu, 2016).
- Utilizing intuition in decision-making can reduce mental load (Sutton, 2020).
- Intuitive decision-making is also important in work-life balance as it helps individuals make decisions based on personal values (Sutton, 2020).

# Incorporating BRIGHT into Practice

## What to Learn from Scenario #1

It is natural for Martin to want to be a part of committees and special groups to show his worth, especially being a junior member of the team. However, this desire to prove himself could lead to overburdening and burnout without intentionality behind his decision making. Saying no is not a sign of weakness or laziness; it is a form of self-care and a way to set boundaries (as we have previously discussed). Martin can use his intuition to make the best decisions for himself to reach his goals, become more confident in his abilities, and prevent taking on more responsibilities than he should.

## What to Learn from Scenario #2

John is exhibiting classic signs of burnout. However, Holly should not jump to the conclusion that John is suffering from burnout. In fact, she has no idea what is going on with him. He could be experiencing an issue in his personal life. Holly could consider sitting John down for a conversation to discuss the changes she is noticing and to determine if it is within her capability (or role) to help John. If it does turn out that John is experiencing burnout due to work issues, Holly can refer him to institutional resources to assist him.

## Ways to Incorporate Intuition

### For Advisors:

- Ask yourself the following questions before agreeing to a request:
  - Does this align with my job description?
  - Does this provide career development enrichment?
  - Do I feel passionate about this request?
- Trust your intuition when you feel you should decline an invitation.
- Find ways to be okay saying “no” to colleagues and students in a respectful and courteous manner.
- Be aware of signs and causes of burnout in yourself and others.

### For Advising Leaders:

- Honor an advisor’s ability to turn down a request that is beyond their responsibilities.
- Mentor team members to exercise their right to say ‘no’.
- Be respectful of individuals who are inclined to say yes; limit asking these same folks to help repeatedly.
- Be comfortable with initiating difficult conversations when you recognize signs of burnout in others.

# Moving Forward

## Reflection Prompts

- Reflect on why intuition can be helpful in most situations.
- Practice listening to your inner monologue and complete a values assessment (refer to resources).
- Use your values assessment to create and write down your personal and professional goals.
- Give an example of using your intuition in a professional situation.
- Give an example of intuition in a personal situation.

## Resource Section for Further Reading and Support

- *Intuition at Work: Using Your Gut Feelings to Get Ahead* by Jessica Pryce-Jones - This book helps readers decide when to utilize intuition at work and how to trust gut to make faster and better decisions.
- *Intuition at Work: Trust Your Gut to Get Ahead in Business & in Life* by Melanie Barnum - This book guides the reader on leveraging intuition in achieving professional and personal goals utilizing inspirational stories and practical exercises.
- Complete a Values Assessment - understanding your core values can put you in tune with your intuition. Visit Positive Psychology for example values assessments: <https://positivepsychology.com/values-worksheets/>

## For your consideration:

Not every decision can be arrived solely utilizing intuition. Indeed, the resources above provide tips for using data combined with intuition to make decisions. Further, sometimes institutional goals or the spirit of collaboration will necessitate making peace with decisions that may not be our first choice. Still, intuition should be part of overall decision-making.



Let's stop and take a break for some well-being discussion. (Please note: While Nettie has been a Registered Dietitian and Nutrition counselor for over 20 years, neither of us are mental health experts. If you are feeling depressed or anxious, please seek proper medical advice.)

Burnout is not just a mental feeling of exhaustion. There are many physical symptoms of burnout as well, and we should consider how stress, anxiety, and burnout can affect us physically. If you have experienced:

- Increased or decreased in appetite with no other explanation,
- Weight gain,
- Inability to fall asleep or stay asleep,
- Digestive issues,
- Headaches,
- Muscle tension, or
- Increased heart rate or blood pressure,



there is a good chance that you are either approaching or have reached a level of burnout. One important component of overall well-being is finding something meaningful to you that helps relieve stress. Some examples include exercise, hobbies, meditation, socializing, traveling, etc. Finding your individual best stress reliever will assist you in feeling relaxed.

## Reflection Section

- What is your best way to feel relaxed and refreshed?
- Think of a time that you took a break and were more productive afterwards.
- What physical symptoms do you have that could be related to burnout?
- How can you manage stress to address these symptoms and regain your energy and passion for your work?

## Consider Mindfulness

Mindfulness breathing exercises are a popular way to help reduce stress and recharge. You do not need to be trained in this form of "exercise" – just concentrate on your breathing. You can also do a quick internet search for short mindfulness breathing exercises. If this is not for you, here are some additional suggestions to take a break, refocus, and recharge:

- 15-minute walk around campus or your house
- Read a chapter in a book
- Listen to your favorite podcast, song, or video
- Call a friend or family member just to say "Hello"
- Work on a puzzle
- Stand up and stretch
- Positive affirmations



## Goal Setting

### Advisor Scenario #1

Mike's to-do list is long and feels never ending. No matter how much effort he puts in, his list never seems to get shorter, and he rarely feels accomplished at the end of the day. This is starting to weigh on Mike, and he's losing some of the joy he first felt when he began this job. Mike has also recently wondered if he even likes his job or if he's just stuck. He thinks, "Will it be like this forever?" When he first started his job, he envisioned moving into higher level roles and was inspired by his supervisor. However, now he can't imagine how he will ever advance if he isn't getting much accomplished.

### Reflection Question for Advisor Scenario #1

1. How can Mike use goal setting to reduce his feelings of overwhelm and motivate him at work again?
2. How can Mike avoid catastrophizing and better see the big picture?
3. What can Mike do to ensure that he is getting work accomplished and feeling productive on a regular basis?
4. How can his supervisor help with setting goals?

## **Advisor Scenario #2**

Ana has taken on an assistant director role that gives her oversight of the day-to-day responsibilities of an advising team. While she is excited for the opportunity to lead, she feels a bit in over her head and is often very stressed out. There seems to be little cohesion among her team, and it feels like they are treading water with all of the tasks they are required to accomplish. Her direct reports come to her frustrated about lack of time and continually getting new tasks thrown at them. Ana isn't sure how to improve the team's morale other than providing encouragement and trying to pick up the slack where she can.

### **Reflection Question for Advisor Scenario #2**

1. How can Ana utilize goal setting to help create cohesion and guidance for her team?
2. Why is it important for Ana to consider goal setting as a leader?
3. In what ways will goals and goal setting work to improve the morale of the team?
4. What other advice do you have for Ana as a new assistant director?

### **Revisiting the Research**

- Goals help people form a direction to follow in their lives and can create purpose and meaning (Lee-Hawkins, 2024).
- Goals are best when they are challenging and achievable (Locke & Latham, 2020).
- Setting professional goals contributes to positive attitudes in the workplace (Greco & Kraimer, 2019).
- Goal setting can help maintain motivation, supports professional well-being, and promotes job satisfaction (Greco & Kraimer, 2019).

# Incorporating BRIGHT into Practice

## What to Learn from Scenario #1

Mike was better able to envision advancing in his career at the start of his position. It is important for him to recapture this big picture goal to maintain motivation and avoid catastrophizing. His supervisor was a source of inspiration for him. Mike should approach his supervisor to explore mentorship opportunities and learn how his supervisor sets goals. Additionally, Mike can explore ways to incorporate daily goals into his work to feel less stuck and more accomplished.

## What to Learn from Scenario #2

As someone in a leadership position, Ana has been tasked with providing direction for her team. Ana is responsible for setting priorities and helping her team manage daily tasks. Engaging in team goal setting can help provide group cohesion and a shared sense of purpose. Ana can also engage with her team members individually to help them structure daily and weekly goals.

## Ways to Incorporate Goal Setting

### For Advisors:

- Work to create manageable daily or weekly goals; avoid lengthy to-do lists.
- Write down your goals to solidify these aims and keep you focused.
- Create a realistic plan for achieving your goals.
- Revisit your goals and your plan at regular intervals to ensure you are meeting your goals and revise them as appropriate.

### For Advising Leaders:

- Help staff learn how to set and adhere to goals; follow up and set goals together.
- Ensure you are setting attainable goals for your team that align with your team's values and mission.
- Offer goal setting workshops facilitated by goal-driven professionals.

# Moving Forward

## Reflection Prompts

- Do you have both short-term and long-term goals?
- How do you stay accountable to your goals? Do you share your goals with others?
- How do you know when you have achieved your goals?
- How often do you revisit and revise your goals?

## Resource Section for Further Reading and Support

- *The Mountain Is You* by Brianna Wiest - This book examines recognizing and overcoming self-sabotage in order to achieve goals.
- *Big Goals: The Science of Setting Them, Achieving Them, and Creating Your Best Life* by Caroline Adams Miller - This book explores the latest psychology research on goals and provides worksheets for helping to turn goals into action.
- *Succeed: How We Can Reach Our Goals* by Heidi Grant Halvorson - This book focuses on research-backed strategies on planning, motivation, and perseverance.
- *How to Begin: Start Doing Something That Matters* by Michael Bungay Stanier - This book discussing the creation of "worthy goals."

## For your consideration:

You are not required to have lofty, long term goals to engage in goal setting. Goal setting can be as simple as mapping out a plan to more effectively accomplish things you are already doing. However, personal and professional development is important in the field of academic advising.





# H

## Help Seeking

### **Advisor Scenario #1**

Sara has a full calendar of advising appointments, reports to be completed, emails that need a response, and a line out her door. She has not been able to get caught up since Fall scheduling started, and she has started becoming irritated easily at work and at home. She has always been an independent woman, striving to accomplish her professional goals. Due to her schedule, she has not been able to attend any of the recent work training events, and her students are asking questions that she does not immediately know the answer to. Sara doesn't want her colleagues to think she is unable to effectively do her job, but she is starting to drown. She loves her job and does not want to feel this way.

### **Reflection Question for Advisor Scenario #1**

1. What techniques or strategies could Sara use to feel less overwhelmed?
2. Can Sara share her workload and ask a co-worker for assistance with a project?
3. What could Sara do to decrease the amount of work at one time?
4. How can Sara feel she is able to assist her students without spending additional time finding answers?

## **Advisor Scenario #2**

Jordan loves that part of her job is getting to know new students and giving them advice. She is very open and approachable and takes pride in the fact that her students can tell her anything. The students share their wins and losses, and it usually feels like she hears a balanced mix of both. But lately, she is starting to feel that his students are only coming to him with challenging problems. More often than not, she feels tired at the end of the day, and she has started to put effort into showing her concern, where it used to feel more natural. She cares for his students and wants to be a source of guidance for them; however, she can't help but feel drained and is beginning to feel anxious when she sees certain names pop up on her calendar.

### **Reflection Question for Advisor Scenario #2**

1. Jordan is feeling emotional fatigue. How can help seeking benefit her in her situation?
2. Why is asking for help sometimes perceived negatively?
3. How could a structured mentorship program that fosters help seeking mitigate feelings of burnout?
4. Do you know what mental health resources are offered at your organization?

### **Revisiting the Research**

- Many people feel reluctant to ask for help due to the heavy value society places on individual professional achievement (Liu et al., 2021).
- Some people may fear being viewed as incompetent in their job if they engage in help-seeking (Liu et al., 2021).
- Research shows a connection between people who receive support at work and reduced rates of burnout (Seppala & King, 2017).
- A study on academic advisors showed that being a member of a supportive work community was negatively associated with emotional exhaustion (Soria et al., 2023).
- Studies suggest that help seeking is an important behavior to support learning and problem solving within organizations (van der Rijt et al., 2013).

# Incorporating BRIGHT into Practice

## What to Learn from Scenario #1

It is important for Sara to recognize that she is overwhelmed and experiencing burnout and to understand that it is okay to say, "I need help." If her work overload is preventing her from proper training, it will be a great disservice to her students and prevent her from performing her role adequately in the long run. Becoming frustrated and easily irritated can be harmful to both Sara and the people she encounters on a daily basis. Seeking help can provide some relief for the burnout symptoms she is experiencing. Further, asking for help can foster creativity, teamwork, and feelings of community, especially if that help is reciprocated. Sara should try to understand that everyone could use help from time to time.

## What to Learn from Scenario #2

Jordan is starting to feel the mental weight of his helping profession and is experiencing some compassion fatigue. It is important for Jordan to find an outlet to talk about her own feelings and work through some of the negativity she is experiencing. This outlet may be in the form of trusted friends or coworkers for simple venting, or it may be advisable for her to find a professional mental health provider. Additionally, Jordan should attempt to better understand her own limitations when it comes to listening to personal problems and setting boundaries with students. It may become necessary, depending on the issue at hand, for Jordan to refer some of her students to experienced mental health professionals on campus who can provide them with the outlet they need as well.

## Ways to Incorporate Help Seeking

### For Advisors:

- Learn to feel okay asking for help; practice help seeking.
- Understand both your strengths and limitations so you can better know when you can provide help and when to ask for help.
- Offer a helping hand when you see others who may be in need of help.

### For Advising Leaders:

- Make a point to offer help and foster a supportive and trusting environment.
- Encourage teamwork during notoriously busy time frames.
- Consider establishing a formal mentorship program for advisors.
- Create a culture of care and support where team members feel comfortable asking for and providing help.
- Demonstrate help-seeking behavior to model expectations.

# Moving Forward

## Reflection Prompts

- Do you know what mental health resources are offered at your organization?
- What prevents you from asking for help at work?
- How do you find support in advising?
- How can you provide support to mentees, or coworkers?

## Resource Section for Further Reading and Support

- *Go To Help: 31 Strategies to Offer, Ask For, and Accept Help* by Emily Sampson Smith and Debbie Bayntun — This guide delivers actionable strategies for offering, asking for, and accepting help in professional settings.
- *Helping: How to Offer, Give, and Receive Help* by Edgar H. Schein
- *Asking for help: a relational perspective on help seeking in the workplace* by Van der Rijt et al. (2013)—This academic publication explores how workplace relationships moderate help-seeking behaviors.
- *Help-seeking at work: an integrative review, organizing framework, and future research agenda* by Chen et al. (2024) - This academic review synthesizes the literature on workplace help-seeking, and provides practical implications for organizations looking to foster a help-seeking culture.

## For your consideration:

Asking for help is not always easy and is sometimes not met with the response the help seeker is hoping for; however, that does not mean you should not do it, or offer it. As the consideration in the Boundaries section, some cultural, gender, or age differences could impact an individual's perception of asking for help. However, help seeking can foster a supportive environment, changing the negative connotation to one of acceptance and teamwork.





# T

## Time Management

### Advisor Scenario #1

River takes pride in their ability to multitask. They will start several tasks and projects at a time and work on all of them at the same time throughout the day. River is frustrated because even though they are working very hard, their to-do list never appears to get shorter. Instead, it gets longer. River feels if they work on five tasks at a time, they will be five times as efficient. However, their stress builds when tasks and projects never seem to end. River is overwhelmed and not sure how to get ahead of things.

### Reflection Question for Advisor Scenario #1

1. River feels that the solution to a long to-do list is multitasking. How can multitasking be harmful?
2. How can River use time management strategies to reduce their stress and sense of overwhelm?
3. How can River learn to prioritize tasks to stay organized?

## **Advisor Scenario #2**

Soran enjoys being an academic advisor because he gets to interact with so many different interesting people. He asks his students a lot of questions to get to know them. However, he's been finding that his meetings often run over time and make him late for his next appointment. He also isn't finding time to keep good notes about his appointments, so he often forgets what he spoke about with the students, sometimes having to ask the same questions again and again. Even though Soran is a very good conversationalist and takes care of his students, some students are starting to think he is not paying attention and the students don't like having to wait when Soran is late for appointments. This has been pointed out by Soran's supervisor, which makes Soran very anxious. He is starting to enjoy the position less and less.

## **Reflection Question for Advisor Scenario #2**

1. What time management strategies could Soran incorporate to help mitigate his overwhelm?
2. How can Soran use time management strategies to make his student meetings run smoothly?
3. How can Soran's supervisor support him in utilizing time management?

## **Revisiting the Research**

- Time management is shown to have a positive impact on job satisfaction as well as life satisfaction (Aeon et al., 2021).
- Time management was linked to decreased role overload and was shown to alleviate psychological distress and overall stress levels (Aeon et al., 2021; Ali, 2019).
- Other benefits of time management include: improvements in efficiency, positive gains in work-life balance, and increased focus on tasks (Ali, 2019).

# Incorporating BRIGHT into Practice

## What to Learn from Scenario #1

Multi-tasking can be harmful as it may lead to heightened stress, mental fatigue, and making errors as one juggles multiple projects. In River's case, multi-tasking has also led to reduced productivity, the exact opposite of what they felt they were accomplishing. It is important for River to learn how to prioritize tasks and focus on completing one project to feel a greater sense of accomplishment and reduce stress.

## What to Learn from Scenario #2

Soran loves to engage with his students, but he needs to reflect on how effectively he is running meetings. As the advisor, Soran is responsible for guiding student meetings and keeping things on track. Learning how to properly manage meetings and keep good notes while being personable and open will help Soran become a great advisor. Soran's supervisor (and potentially senior coworkers) can support him through providing guidance and training on meeting management. Additionally, perhaps Soran can propose a workshop or networking event, so he can engage in the extended, casual interactions with students that he loves while focusing on the tasks at hand while in his advising meetings.

## Ways to Incorporate Time Management

### For Advisors:

- Dedicate time and intention into reviewing and preparing your calendar.
- Avoid setting back-to-back meetings where possible and create space for note-taking.
- Engage in time blocking for important tasks.
- Reflect on your processes.

### For Advising Leaders:

- Provide training on how to effectively and efficiently run advising meetings.
- Provide advisors with the agency to determine the manner in which they complete tasks; micromanagement can lead to frustration and disengagement.
- Provide resources and support for time management skills and follow up regularly.

# Moving Forward

## Reflection Prompts

- How do you prioritize tasks and organize your time?
- Do you often engage in multi-tasking?
- Can you set aside ten minutes each day to review and prepare your calendar?
- Are you guiding meetings or do you take a more passive approach?

## Resource Section for Further Reading and Support

- *Eat That Frog!* by Brian Tracy — This book focuses on overcoming procrastination with actionable strategies to tackle your most challenging tasks first.
- *Atomic Habits* by James Clear — This book explores how habits contribute to productivity and time management.
- *First Things First* by Stephen R. Covey — This book contains lessons on prioritization and aligning actions with top priorities.
- *Four Thousand Weeks: Time Management for Mortals* by Oliver Burkeman — This book offers a thoughtful perspective on making the most of limited time.
- Todoist, Notion, Trello, & TickTick: Examples of popular and highly rated apps for time management and organizing priorities.

## For your consideration:

We don't always get to dictate what our priorities are, and sometimes multi-tasking may be necessary. Additionally, at times, student situations may cause meetings to necessarily run long. We know that as advisors we must be flexible and adaptable. However, you can determine when and where you have agency to utilize the time management suggestions offered here.





## Summary

The **BRIGHT** framework and this toolkit are intended for use among academic advising professionals, college counselors, higher education support staff, and those that oversee or train these integral higher education personnel. Academic advising is a human services profession that can be demanding with reports of overwork, high stress, and burnout among advisors. This toolkit is offered to assist with supporting individuals in this profession to prevent and mitigate that stress and burnout.

This toolkit is designed to be used as either a comprehensive guide or can be broken down by each component. The application section provides practical suggestions and useful discussion and reflection prompts for use by individuals or in training workshops.

**BRIGHT Framework:**  
**BOUNDARIES, REFRAMING, INTUITION,**  
**GOAL SETTING, HELP-SEEKING, and TIME MANAGEMENT**



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