FUTURE-READY WORKFORCE SERIES:
RESEARCH-BASED TIPS FOR SUPERVISING EMERGING TALENT

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CONTINUING PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT
PRE-APPROVED
HRPA

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TERRITORIAL ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I acknowledge that the University of Waterloo, where this work was created, is located on the traditional territory of the Neutral, Anishnaabeg and Haudenosaunee people. The University of Waterloo is situated on the Haldimand Tract, the land granted to the Six Nations that includes six miles on each side of the Grand River.

Our active work toward reconciliation takes place across our campuses through research, learning, teaching, and community building, and is co-ordinated within the Office of Indigenous Relations.

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65 years of innovation & growth in co-operative education and work-integrated learning programs

25,000+ co-op students enrolled in **120+** programs

7,500+ employers in **60+** countries

home of the **Work-Learn Institute (WxL)**

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ABOUT WxL & THE FUTURE-READY WORKFORCE SERIES

WxL is the only research unit in the world dedicated to the study and advancement of work-integrated learning (WIL). Through engagement with the entire WIL community, WxL provides research-informed training, consulting and thought leadership for the enhancement of WIL globally.
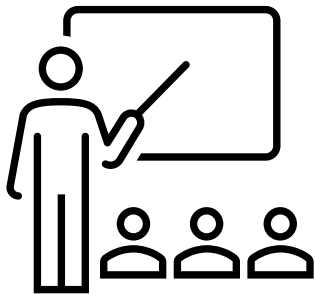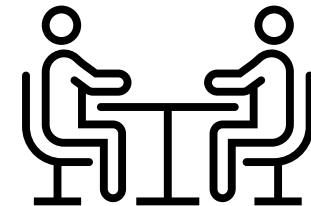
EDUCATION	RESEARCH	CONSULTING

Our **future-ready workforce series** is designed to share insights about the future workforce that can influence how organizations build their talent pipeline through five key themes: recruiting, engaging, converting, retaining, upskilling and reskilling.

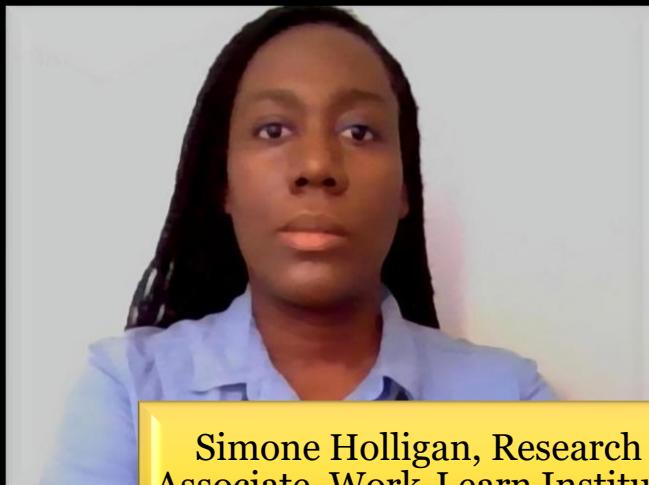UNIVERSITY OF WATERLOO

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MEET OUR SPEAKERS

Anne-Marie Fannon, Director, Work-Learn Institute

Dave Drewery, Associate Director, Work-Learn Institute

Simone Holligan, Research Associate, Work-Learn Institute

Ashley Stegelmeier, Director of Product Development, Ceragen

OVERVIEW

- Quality work experiences

- The 4C model for WIL supervisor support

- Employer spotlight: Ceragen

- Tips and best practices for effectively supervising students in WIL experiences

- Q&A

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QUALITY WIL EXPERIENCES

LEARNING

IMPACT

RELEVANCE

NETWORKING

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OUTCOMES AND THE ROLE OF SUPERVISOR SUPPORT

Quality of work experience influences performance and retention

Supervisor support critical to quality of work experience

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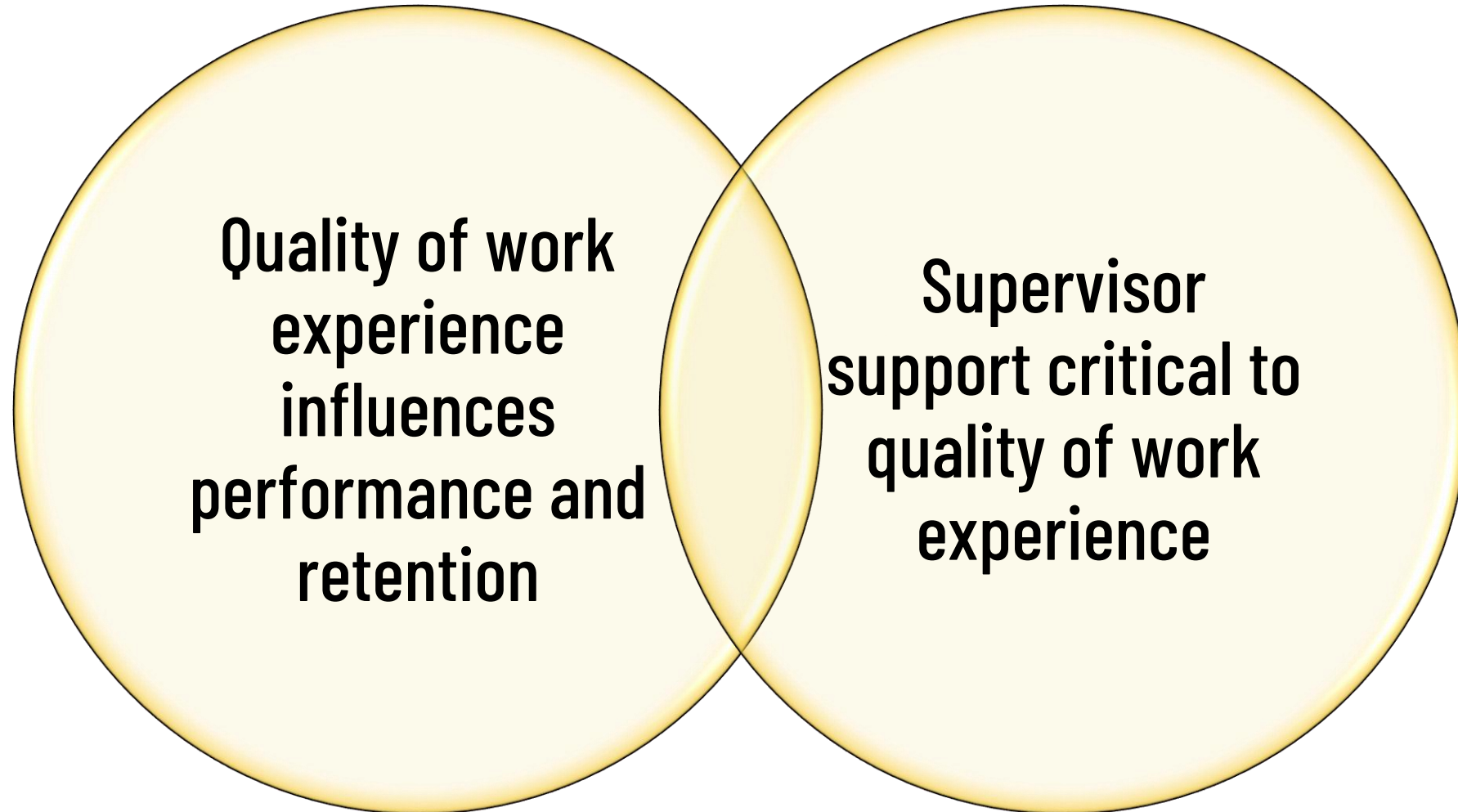
We wanted to know:

WHAT DOES A SUPPORTIVE SUPERVISOR 'DO'?

WHAT WE DID

Study 1

- Interviews with co-op students (n=50)

- What made their work term experience relevant?

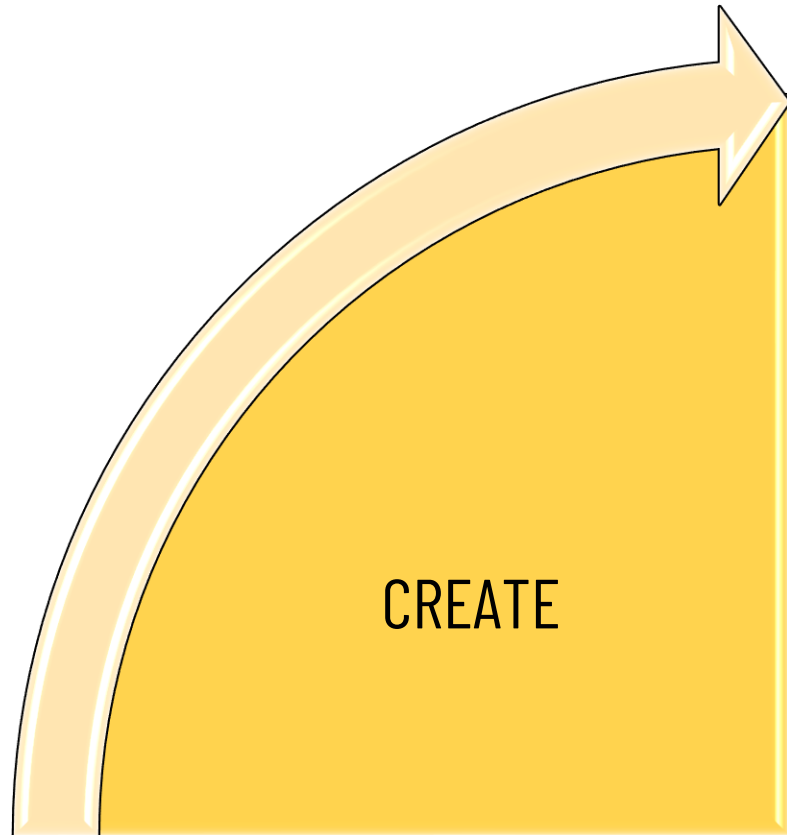- Focused on descriptions of supportive supervisors

Study 2

- Written responses to open-ended question in survey (n=116)

- What did you want more of from your supervisor?

- Coded responses

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THE **4C MODEL** OF WIL SUPERVISOR SUPPORT

CREATE
COMMUNICATE
CARE
CONNECT

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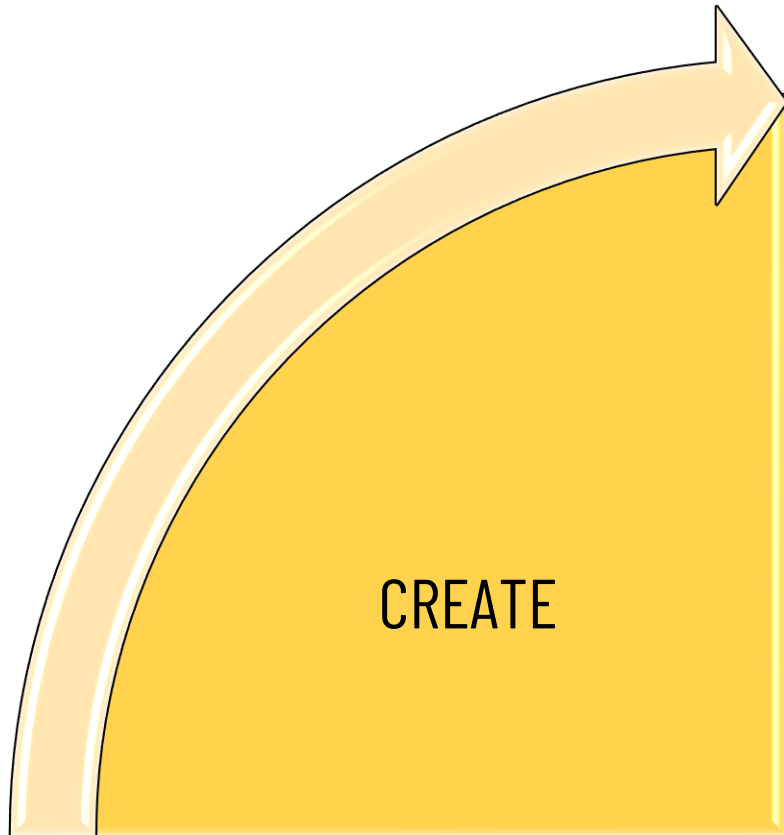
WORK LEARN INSTITUTE
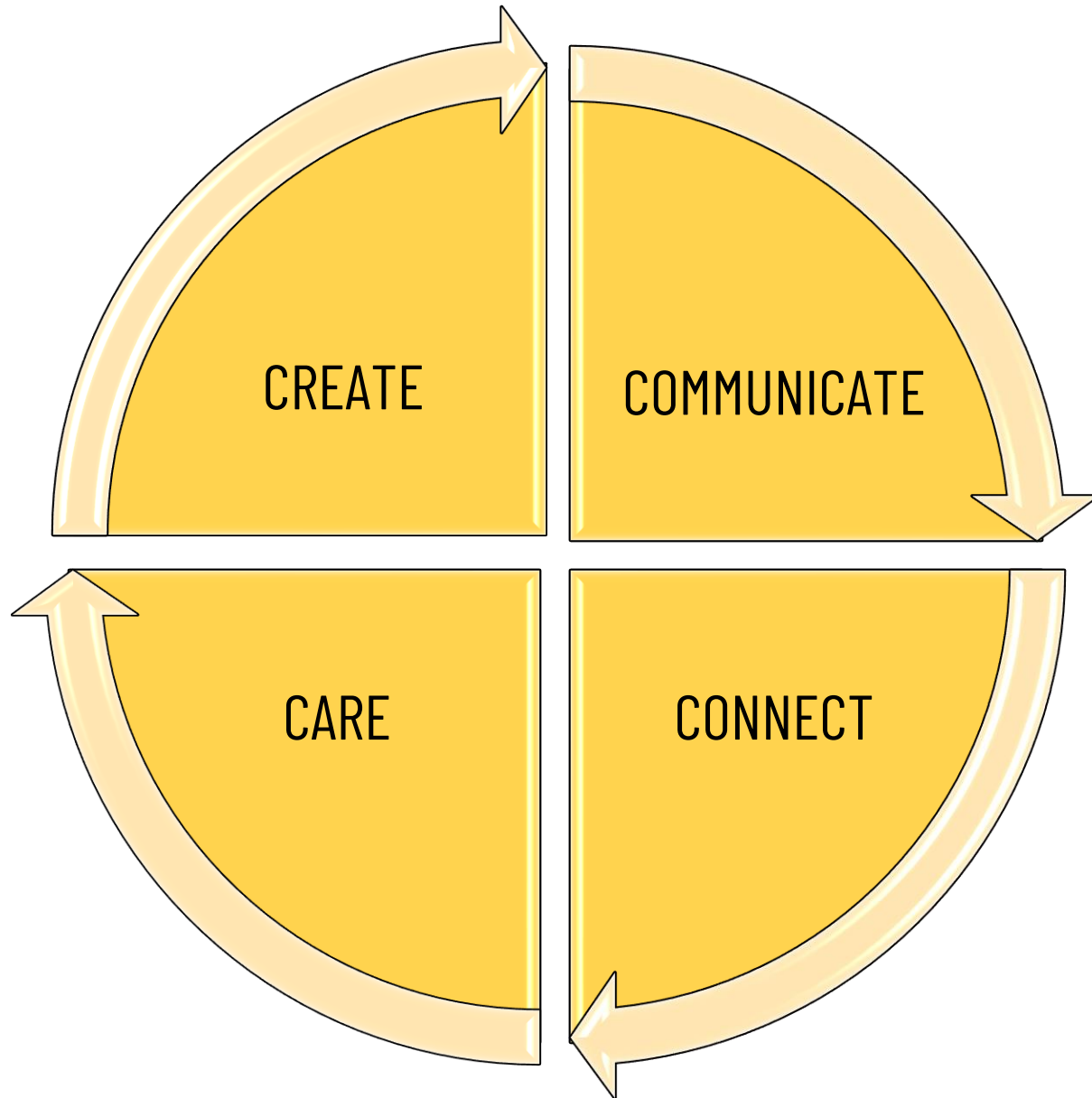
1. CREATE MEANINGFUL WORK

CREATE

Key actions:

A. Outline the "big picture"

B. Provide variety and autonomy

C. Invite ideas

D. Acknowledge contributions

E. Highlight skill development

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CREATE: OUTLINE THE "BIG PICTURE"

CREATE

"Just to let me know for future reference **what the big idea is on a project beforehand** *so that I can give them the best work depending on the situation and expectations."*

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CREATE: PROVIDE VARIETY AND AUTONOMY
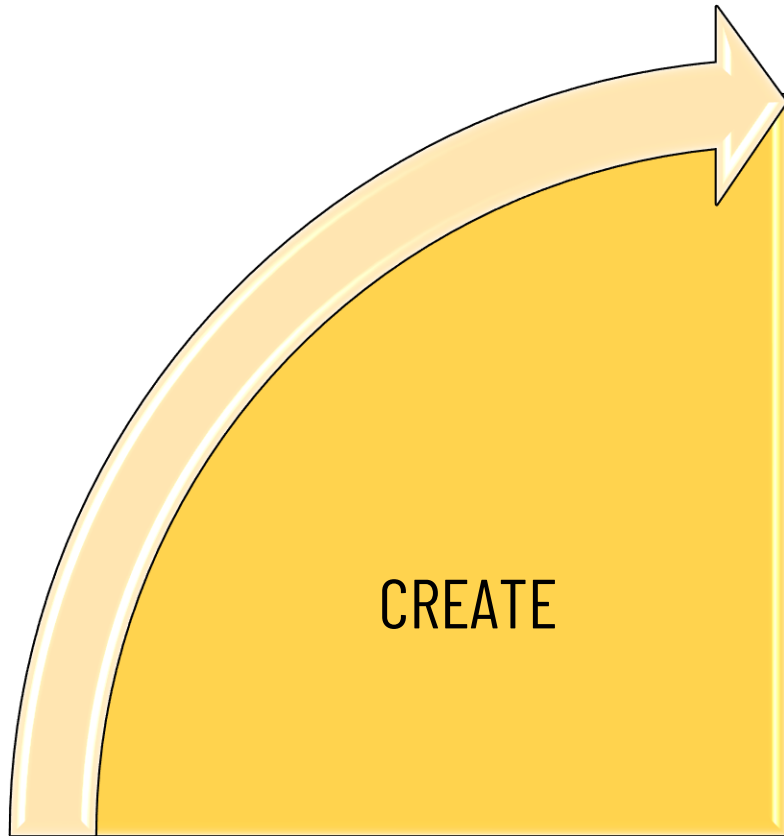
CREATE

*"There was already a project for me in mind. But my supervisor **was quite open with how I wanted to go about it**, which was really nice."*

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CREATE: INVITE IDEAS
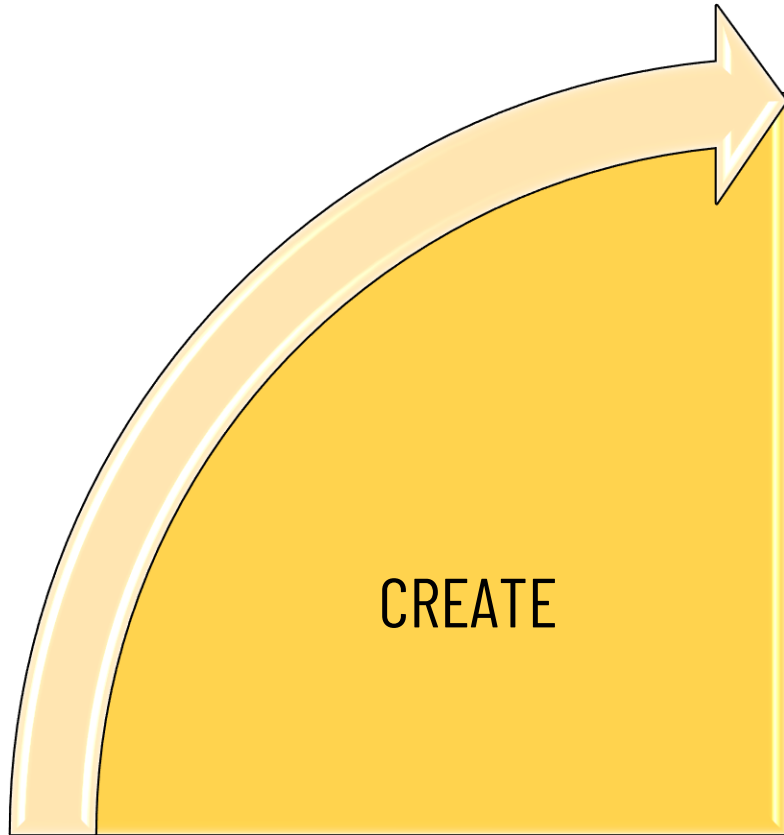
CREATE

"My supervisor was like [...] if you have any ideas or side projects you want to do, **come talk to me.** *And we can [...] support you on that."*

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CREATE: ACKNOWLEDGE CONTRIBUTIONS
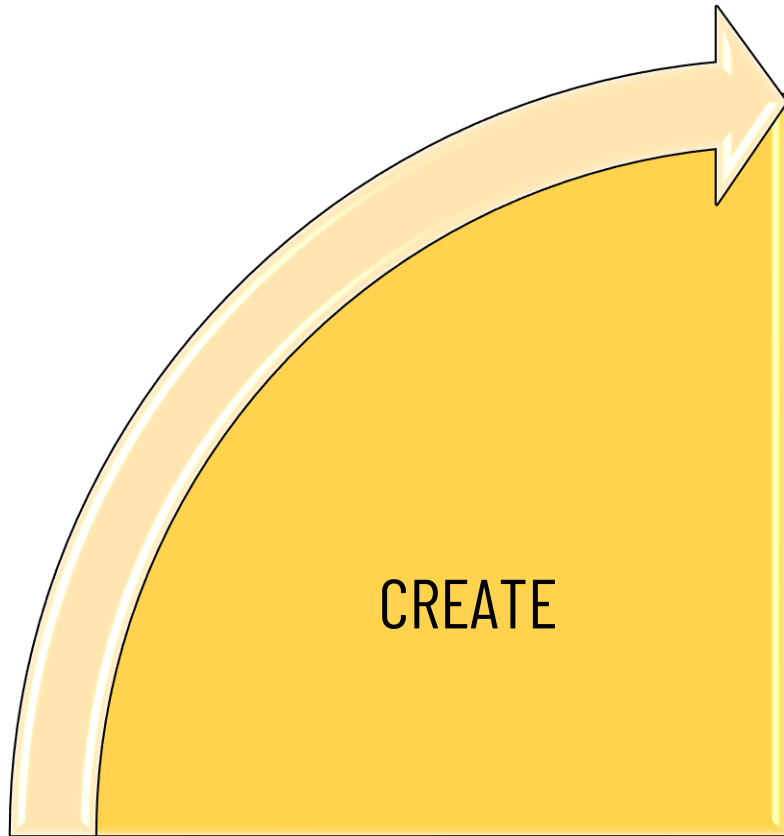
CREATE

*"I really appreciate it, just all the small little comments in the **recognition that meant a lot** for me… it influenced how I use the position because I was just more inspired and encouraged to keep working harder."*

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# CREATE: HIGHLIGHT SKILL DEVELOPMENT

CREATE
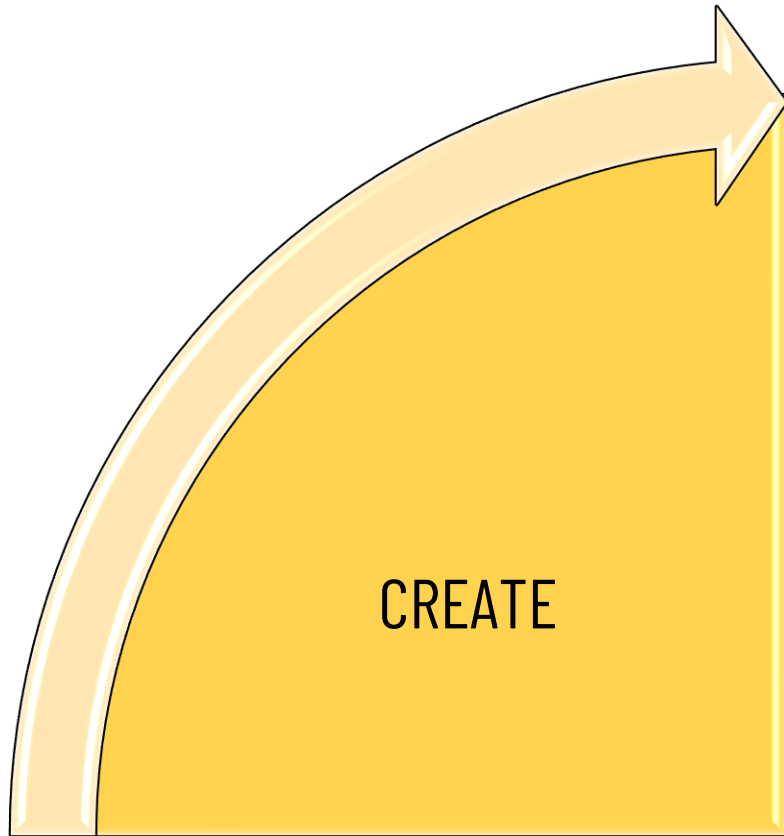
*"I really liked how **they got us to reflect** on what we were learning throughout the term, and how it might have been beneficial in our discipline."*

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2. COMMUNICATE REGULARLY AND EFFECTIVELY

Key actions:

A. Set clear expectations

B. Provide structure and guidance

C. Be available (1:1s and troubleshooting)

D. Provide regular feedback

E. Welcome student communication

COMMUNICATE

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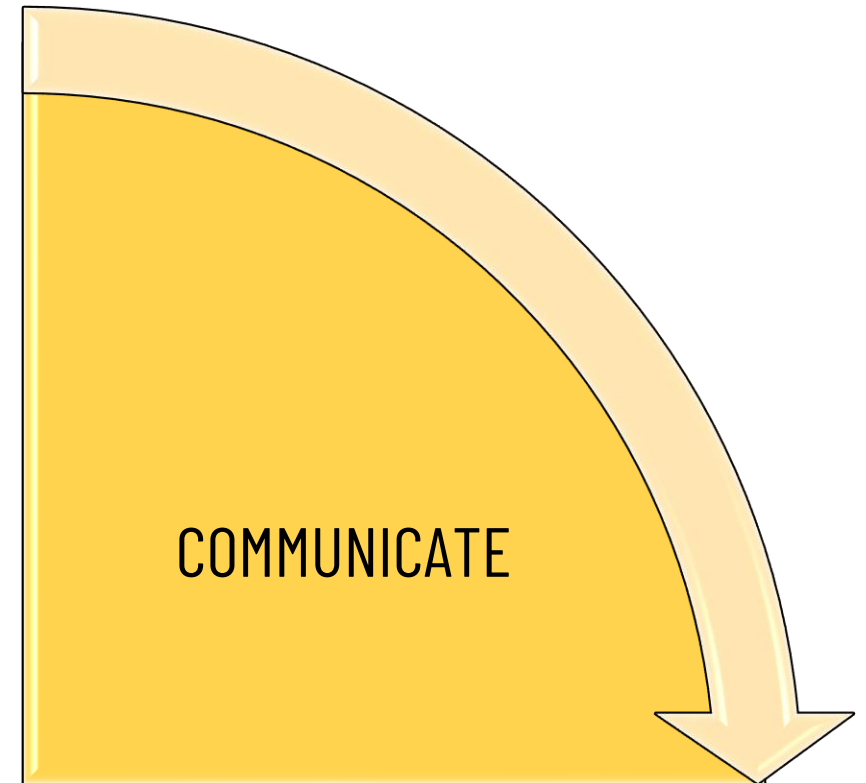
COMMUNICATE: SET CLEAR EXPECTATIONS

*"They were **very clear in what they had wanted** for their tasks and they were really supportive of the process of being a [co-op student]."*

COMMUNICATE

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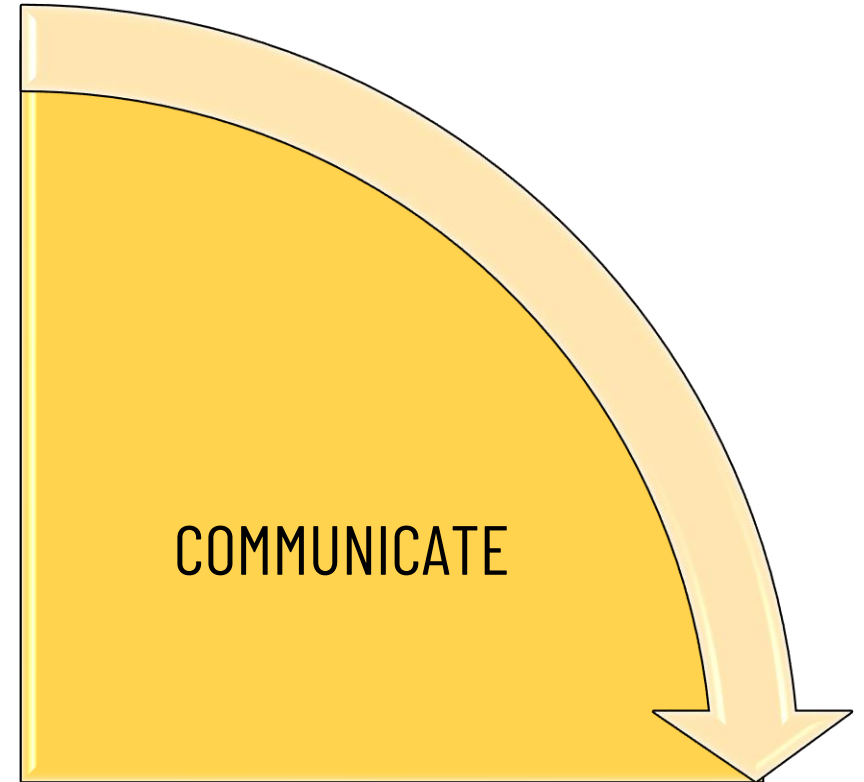
COMMUNICATE: PROVIDE STRUCTURE AND GUIDANCE

*"I wish my supervisor could provide me with more detailed guidance on how to complete certain tasks. **Without previous experience, I don't have a clear understanding** of what an excellent work result looks like."*
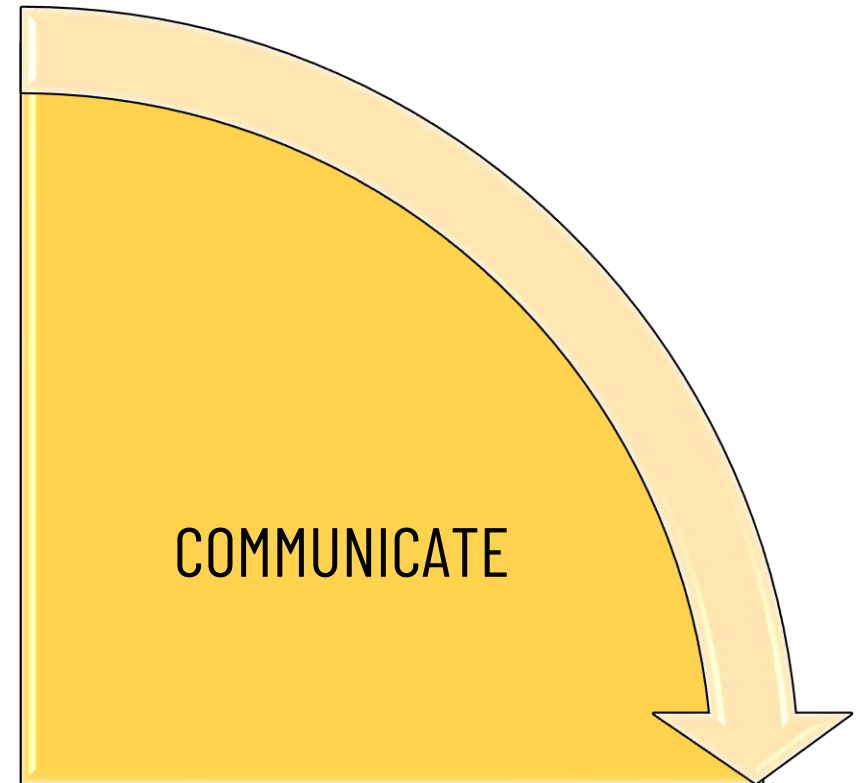
COMMUNICATE

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WORK ✕ LEARN
INSTITUTE
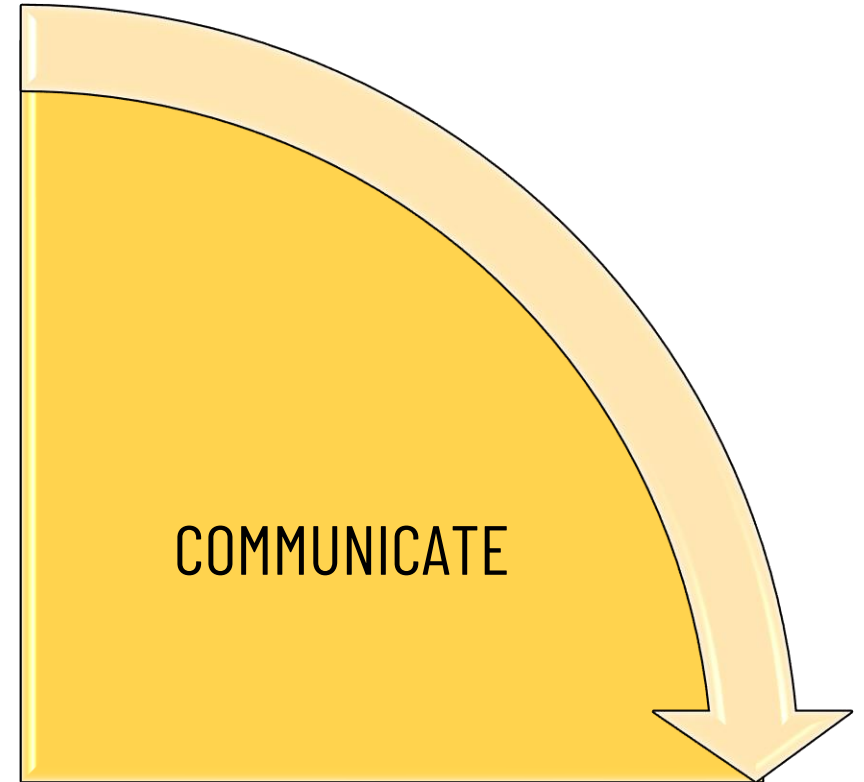
COMMUNICATE: BE AVAILABLE (1:1S AND TROUBLESHOOTING)

*"We had only maybe like, 30 minutes or an hour to meet each month. And I had so much done that **I always felt like I ran out of time** to really mention that to him."*

COMMUNICATE

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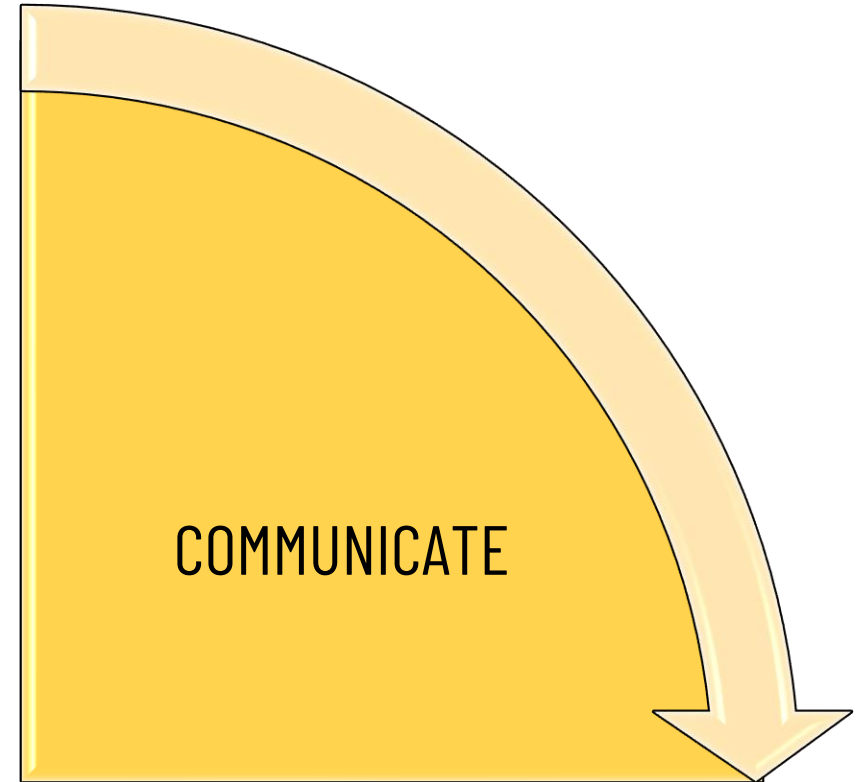
COMMUNICATE: PROVIDE REGULAR FEEDBACK

*"I had to reach out to my supervisor to receive formal feedback, **I wish they would've scheduled some feedback or check in sessions** on their own."*

COMMUNICATE

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# COMMUNICATE: WELCOME STUDENT COMMUNICATION

*"**She was very approachable**. I could message her, I could send her an email [...] it was very clear to me that I was able to contact her and that I would get a response."*

COMMUNICATE

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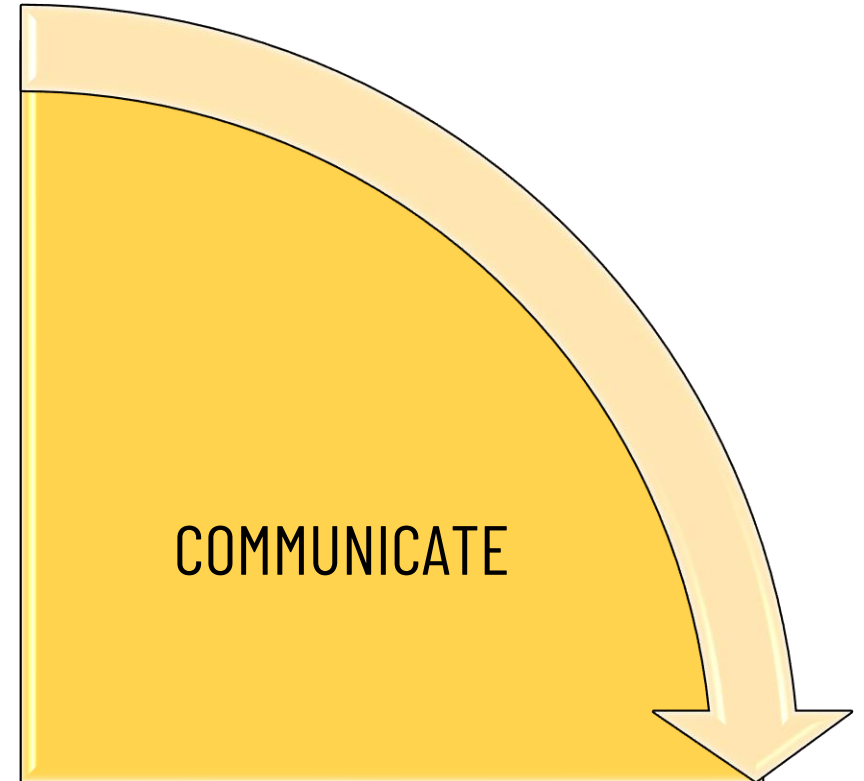
3. CONNECT THEM TO THE ORGANIZATION

Key actions:

A. Share information about the organization

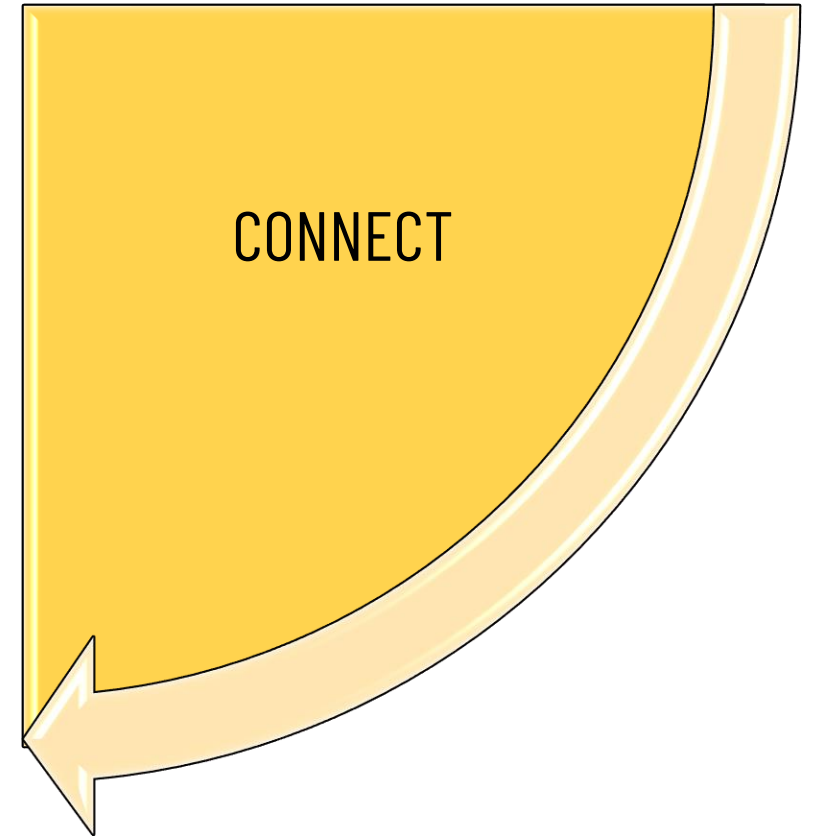B. Bring people "together" (even online)

C. Offer mentorship

CONNECT

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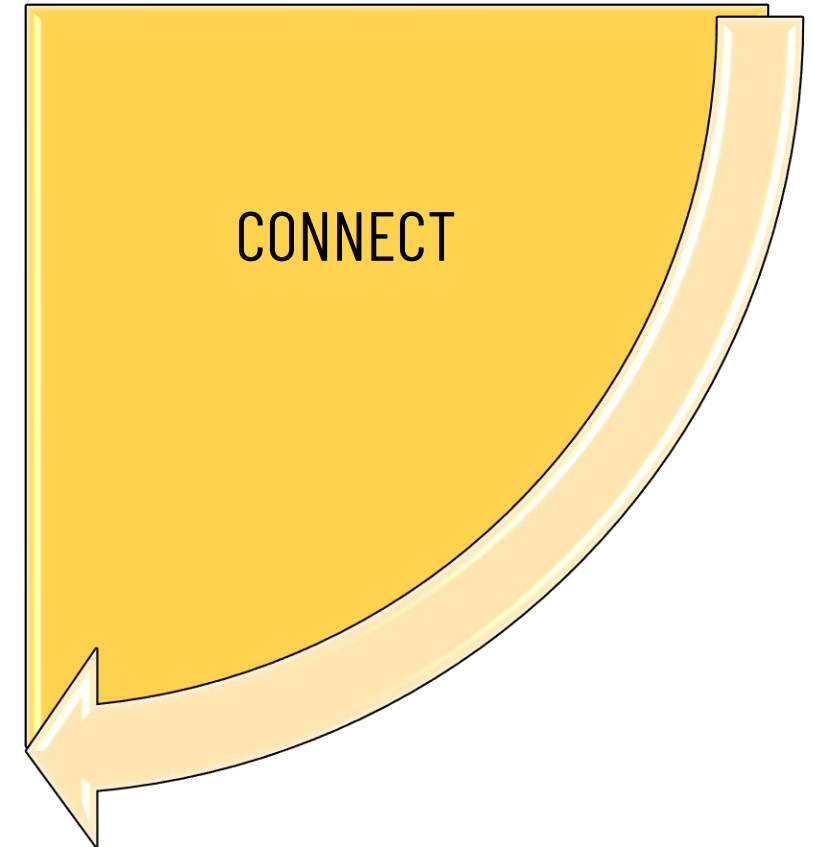
# CONNECT: SHARE INFORMATION ABOUT THE ORGANIZATION

*"**Hold information sessions weekly** with the team to increase everyone's knowledge base."*

"Weekly sync up meeting to [be] aware of what the co-ops have done in the week and bond stronger relationships."

CONNECT

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CONNECT: BRING PEOPLE "TOGETHER" (EVEN ONLINE)

*"Create more **opportunity for staff bonding** (regular dinners, staff outings, team bonding activities) and regular check-ins. When you develop relationships with the people you work with, you work more effectively."*

CONNECT

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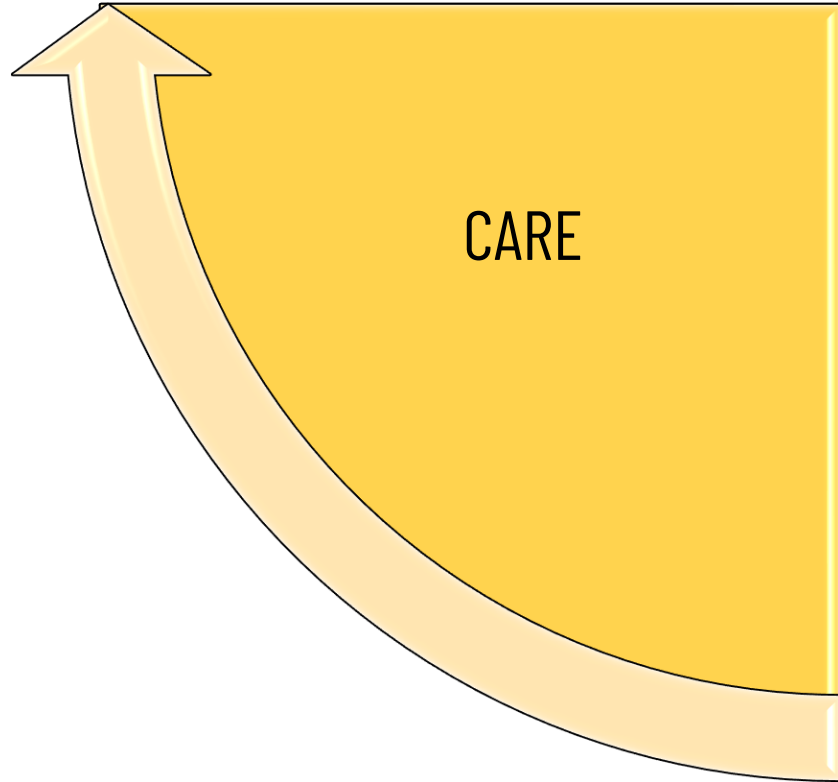WATERLOO

WORK LEARN
INSTITUTE
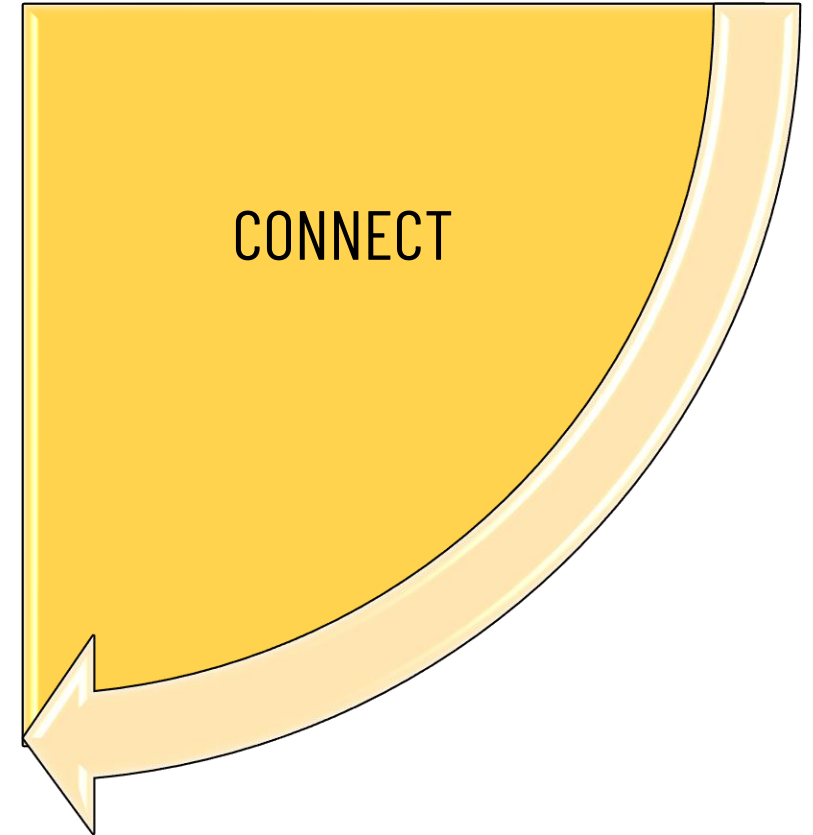
CONNECT: OFFER MENTORSHIP

*"Provide a **robust mentorship program**; so far, the mentorship I have received was more informal (e.g., help from teammates). Having a designated mentor that would check in with me would be nice."*
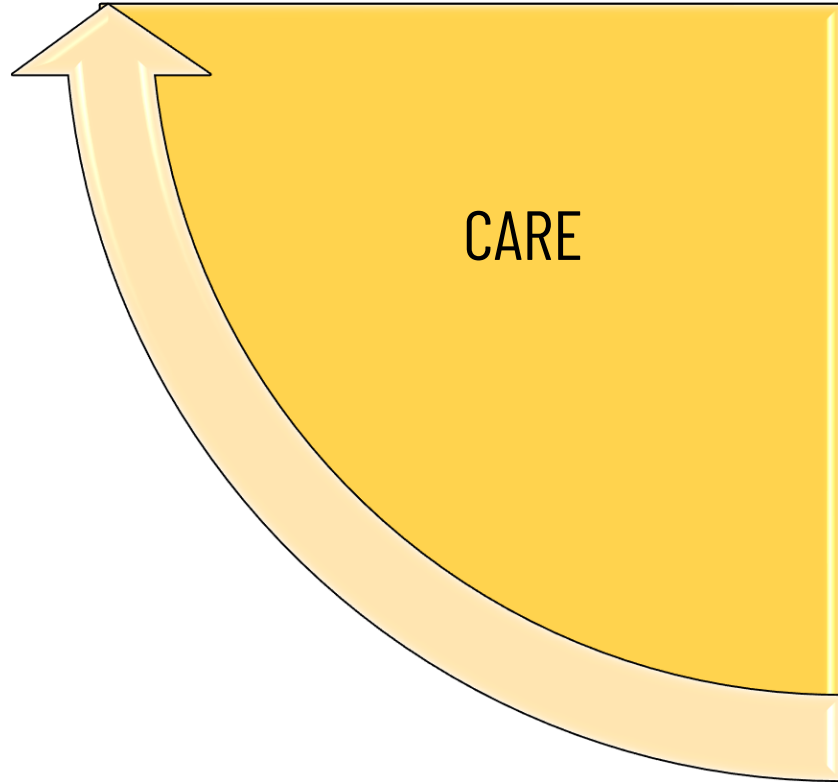
CONNECT

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WORK LEARN
INSTITUTE
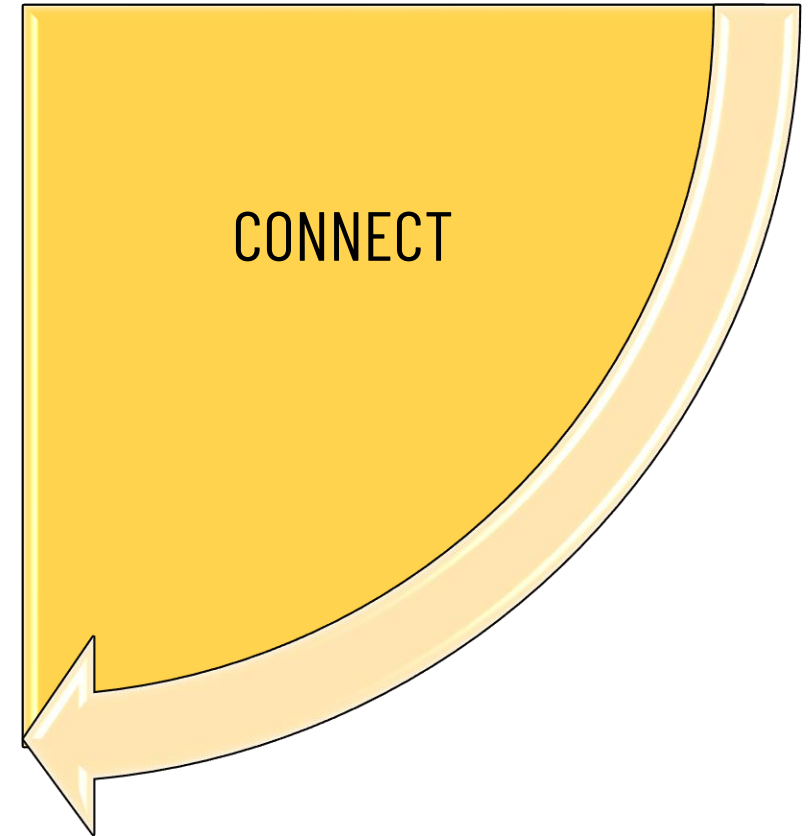
4. CARE ABOUT THEIR EXPERIENCE

CARE

Key actions

A. Foster belonging

B. Provide time for development

C. Match challenge and skill
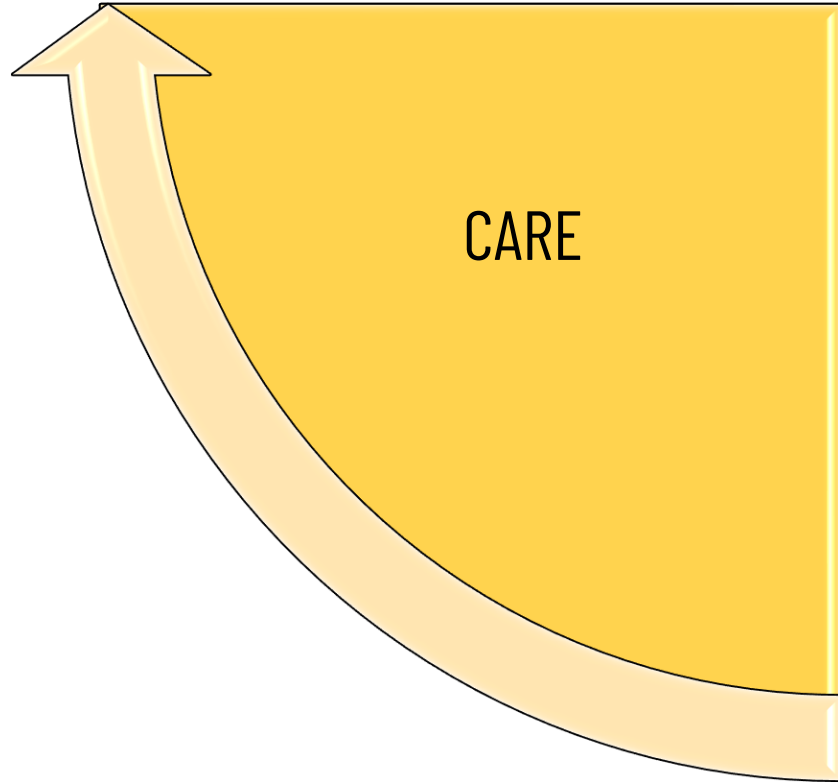
D. Learn about interests and career plans

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CARE: FOSTER BELONGING

CARE

*"They were intentional in making us feel like part of the team, especially with remote [work]... **They included us**."*

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CARE: PROVIDE TIME FOR DEVELOPMENT
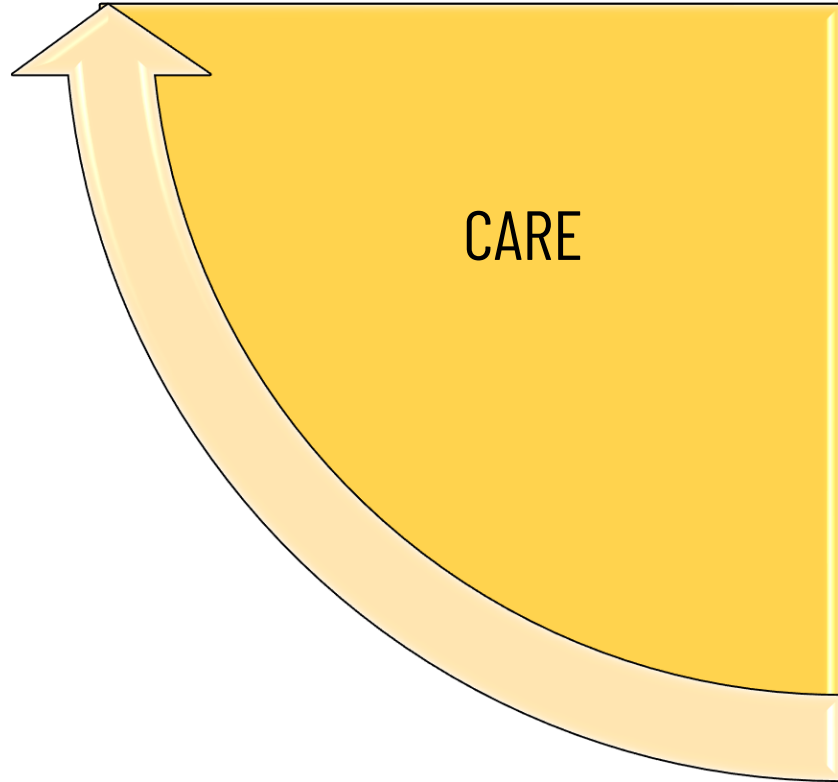
CARE

*"I picked areas that I was really interested in that I wanted to improve, and she not only gave me the go ahead but **gave me a ton of valuable resources** to pursue that training and that knowledge."*

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CARE: MATCH CHALLENGE AND SKILL

CARE

*"The supervisor really **pushed me to do more** or pushed me to think differently in terms of what that job could entail."*

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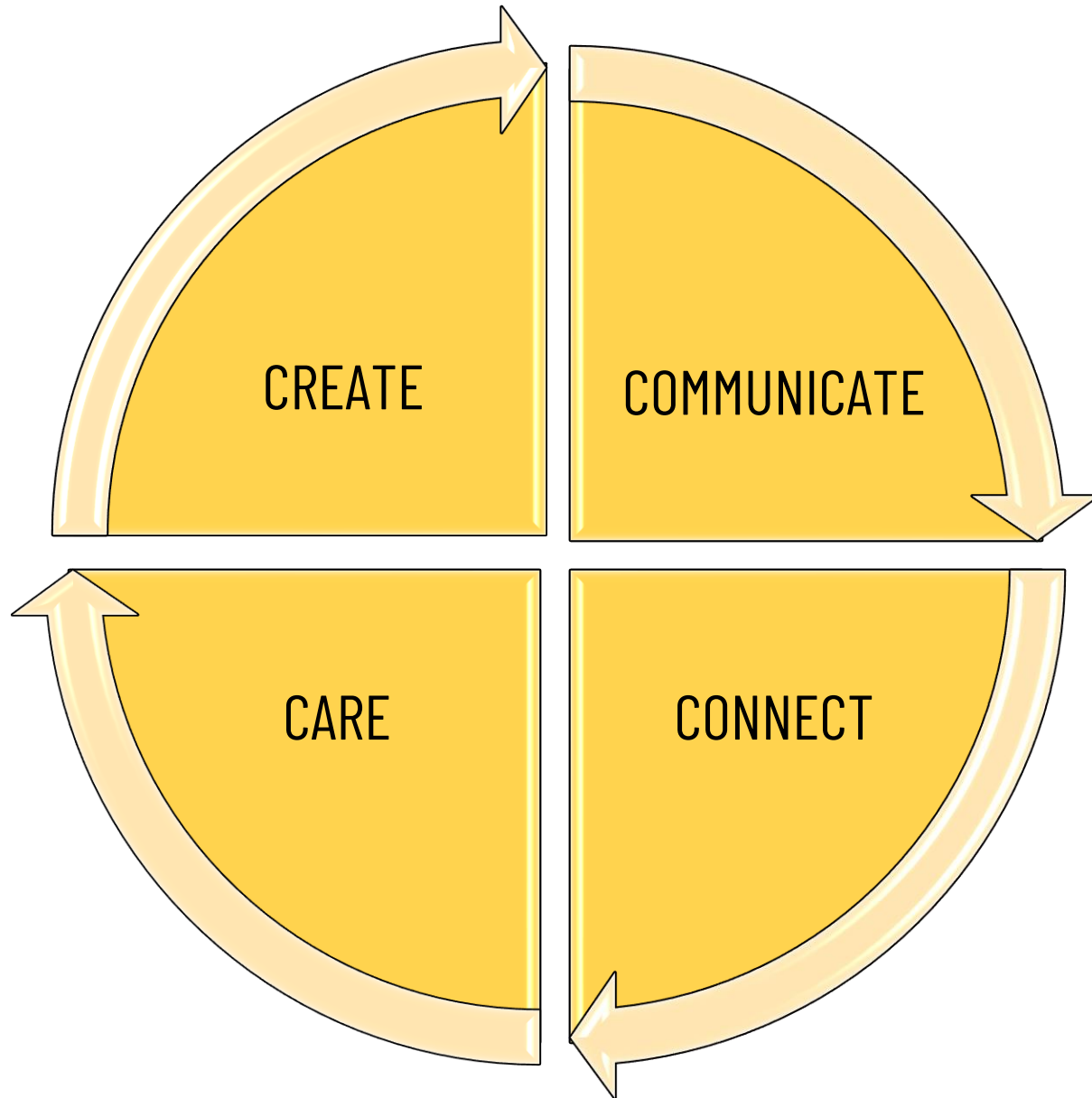# CARE: LEARN ABOUT INTERESTS AND CAREER PLANS
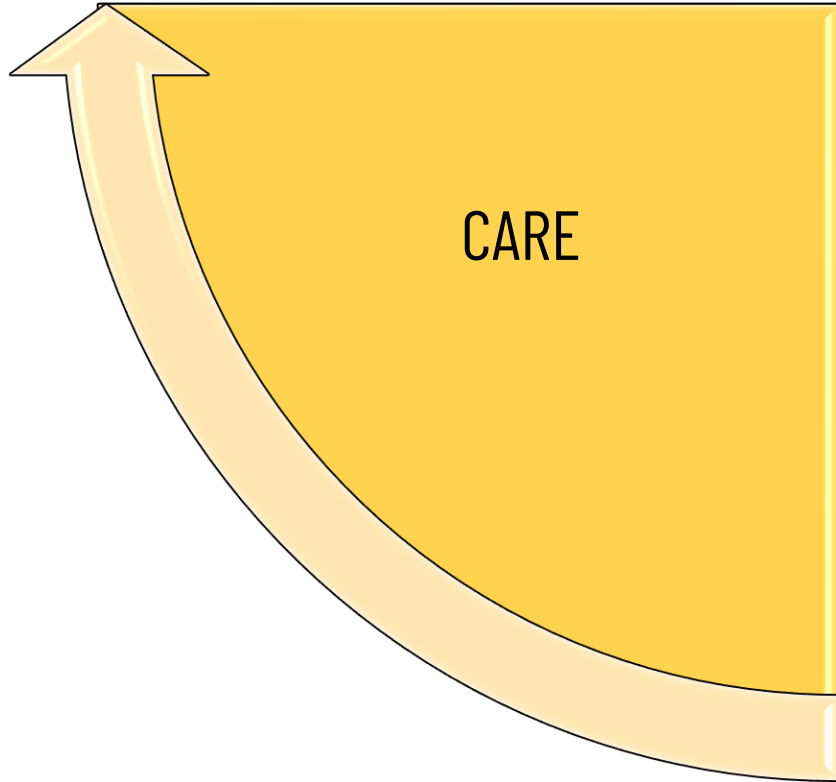
CARE

*"She was just an absolutely fantastic support and kind of **supported me in all of the goals** that I had, whether they were job related, academic related, future career related. That was just really wonderful, and I couldn't have asked for a better supervisor."*

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THE FIFTH C:

THE
4C MODEL
OF WIL
SUPERVISOR SUPPORT

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RECOMMENDATIONS

Timing	CREATE	COMMUNICATE	CONNECT	CARE
Week 1	• During onboarding, share why the student's work is important to the organization	• Invite questions	• Officially welcome the student to the organization (email, meeting, meet and greet)	• Discuss career paths in and beyond your organization
Through the work term	• Seek opportunities to acknowledge the student's work	• Set up weekly 1:1s	• Create social opportunities to connect co-op students (with each other and full-time staff)	• Show how the student's work adds value to your organization

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STAY CONNECTED...

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THANK YOU!

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