

# Uncovering the feedback deadlock that prevents productive career conversations between postdocs and PIs



PRESENTER:

**Becky Ioppolo**

Becky Ioppolo<sup>1,2</sup>, Mollie Etheridge<sup>1,2,4</sup>, Lara Abel<sup>1,2</sup>, Katherine Dawson<sup>3</sup>, Jessica Hampton<sup>1,2</sup>, Zoe Matthews<sup>3</sup>, Kate Murray<sup>3</sup>, Sylvia Osborn<sup>3</sup>, Noam Tal-Perry<sup>1,2</sup>, Steven Wooding<sup>1,2</sup>, Liz Simmonds<sup>3</sup>

1 Research Strategy Office, University of Cambridge, Cambridge, UK ; 2 Bennett Institute for Public Policy, University of Cambridge, Cambridge, UK ; 3 Human Resources, University of Cambridge, Cambridge, UK; 4 Faculty of Education, University of Cambridge, Cambridge, UK

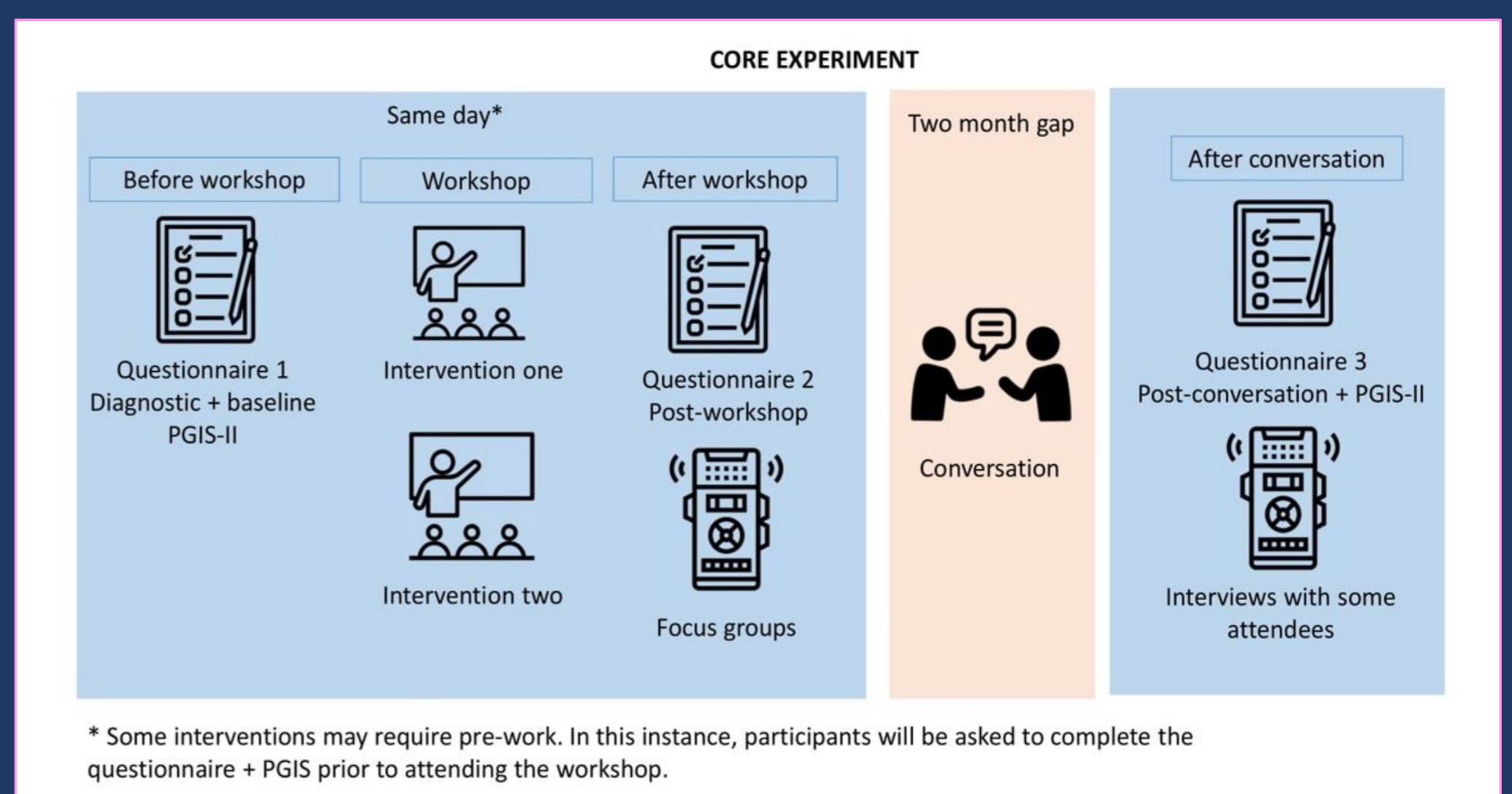
## 360° feedback tools may not be the best way to improve conversations between postdocs & their PIs.

> 4,000 postdocs at Cambridge

14 workshop participants

8 solicited feedback via 360° tools

5 received feedback



### BACKGROUND

Evidence indicates that early career researchers do not receive regular feedback on their performance (Gottlieb et al., 2021).

The research community has proposed implementing 360° feedback opportunities to address this challenge.

Taking an action research approach, we provided postdocs with such opportunities.

### METHODS

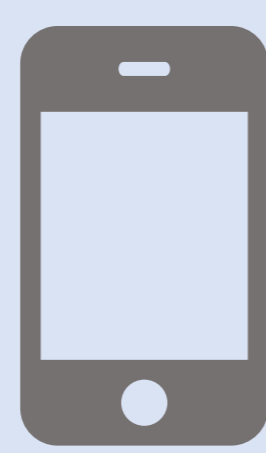
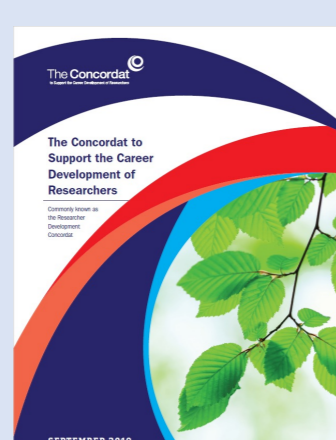
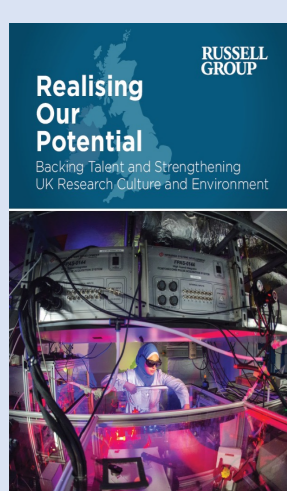
1. We offered Cambridge postdocs a choice of two 360° training opportunities: 'At My Best' and another based on the UKRI Future Leaders Fellowship (FLF) model.
2. Surveys, focus groups and interviews were used to collect participant views before and after the training.

### RESULTS

- 14 postdocs across two workshops.
- All expressed a desire for honest feedback, and the majority had a good relationship with their PI.
- Junior postdocs felt uncomfortable asking for people's time to provide feedback.
- 8 participants used the tools to solicit feedback.
  - Of the 4 who used 'At My Best', 2 received the input requested.
  - Of the 4 who used the FLF 360,
    - 1 did not receive the feedback requested.
    - The 3 who got feedback had completed their PhDs at least six years ago.

### CONCLUSION

- **Seniority plays a role in who asks for feedback and who receives it.**



Visit our project website.

