
Irena Smetáčková

Doc. PhDr. Irena Smetáčková, Ph.D.

Associate professor, head of Department of Psychology of Faculty of Education, Charles University

Expertise and focus:	For most of my career, I have worked at the Department of Psychology, where I teach core courses in social and educational psychology as well as specialized electives, such as Psychology of Gender. My research focuses on school learning, identity development, and professional demands in education and psychology. I collaborate with NGOs and engage in university-wide activities, including serving on the Charles University Equal Opportunities Board, which I formerly chaired. I am currently in my seventh year as Head of Department. Academic work is meaningful to me because it allows me to prepare future teachers and psychologists and contribute to long-term societal development.
Form of mentoring meetings:	Either way, online or offline
Has an experience in:	Academic career
	Link to CV
Previous mentoring experience:	As a mentee – I have previous experience of participating as a mentee in a mentoring programme organized by Odyssey to support young women in their careers. My mentor was Muriel Anton, former CEO and the first CEO of Vodafone Czech Republic. She is an experienced and inspiring leader whose insights helped me reflect on new aspects of my professional choices. The mentoring process helped me realize that an academic career was the right path for me, while also encouraging me not to be afraid of taking on leadership roles, including potentially becoming Head of Department in the future. I have also experienced a different, more informal and long-term form of mentoring through my relationship with my doctoral supervisor and later colleague, Professor Stanislav Štech. I owe much of my professional direction to his guidance, as well as a valuable friendship that has developed over the years.
Motivation:	I believe that mentoring provides a safe and individual space for sharing experiences and reflection, which can help younger (female) colleagues consider different perspectives, make the best decisions for themselves, and manage the pressures of their professional roles, especially when balancing them with their personal lives. I would like to become a mentor to support young colleagues in navigating structural disadvantages that can affect their career development and that, unfortunately, still persist in our academic culture. I also see mentoring as a way to give back some of what I received from the previous generation of women who supported, encouraged, and inspired me along my own professional path.

Career guidance topics you can discuss with the mentor:	• Identifying and utilizing one's skill set • Asking essential life questions • Creating a career plan, strategy • Differences between academic and non-academic careers
Research related experience the mentor is ready to share with the mentee:	• Preparation of scientific publications - how to do it correctly, efficiently, and with quality • Writing popular science articles • Grant writing process, grant application consultation • Management of science and research in an academic institution • Innovative teaching methods • Networking - introducing people in the field • Utilizing the potential of international internships, conferences, etc. • Project management
Open to discuss topics related to family and work-life balance:	Yes
Language:	Czech, English