

Tips for Mentors

Identify Your Role

- Have a clear understanding of why you want to be a mentor.
- Mentor with a realistic assessment of your skills and experience.

Develop rapport with your mentor

- **Develop a biography:** Develop a personal biography (less than one page) to share. Be creative. Don't limit it to the professional or academic experiences.
- **Craft your elevator speech . . . with a twist:** Craft a 10-second elevator speech describing your mentee; gain insight from how you describe each other.
- **Share resources:** Ask your mentee to share resources regarding topics that are of mutual interest, or topics that could help you better understand your mentee's interests and professional goals. Discuss your findings from these resources and why they are interesting and useful.
- **What do you like to do for fun?** What personal hobbies and interests, apart from professional and academic interests, might help your mentor better understand who you are outside the mentorship?
- **Other questions to help establish rapport:**
 1. What gives you the greatest sense of job satisfaction?
 2. What do you see as your major strengths?
 3. What areas should your mentee focus on for improvement?
 4. What helps you most in your work?
 5. Are you happy in your present job? Why or why not?

Communicate Expectations

- Have a clear understanding of your expectations for your mentee and clearly communicate those expectations.
- Stay flexible in changing expectations or plans.
- Create goals with milestones and deliverables.
- Adapt your feedback to your mentee's learning style.
- Be realistic about setting timelines.

Work Together

- Advise, don't dictate.
- Advise on what you know and admit the things you don't know.
- Give good examples.
- Recognize your mentee's weaknesses and build on his/her strengths.
- Offer constructive feedback.
- Evaluate progress.
- Be your mentee's supporter when he/she reaches his/her goals.
- Be consistent and reliable.

Be Supportive:

- Share and reflect on personal and professional information to build trust.
- Honor commitments by meeting when agreed.
- Listen empathically to feelings as well as facts.
- Be accepting and nonjudgmental.
- Use good timing when disagreeing is necessary.
- Make appropriate reinforcing comments often and on a timely basis.

Be Challenging:

- Set high expectations of performance and encourage trying.
- Note “safe,” old patterns of performing that could be transformed or improved.
- Confront issues and assumptions.
- Play “devil’s advocate.”

Be a Pathfinder:

- Help establish a succinct vision for your mentee’s growth.
- Help identify and select among potential learning experiences.
- Help “connect the dots” between activities undertaken and the importance in achieving developmental goals.
- Share your own experiences and act as a role model.

Be Empowering:

- Help clarify your mentee’s thinking and feeling about an issue to enable deciding what action to take.
- Avoid owning and solving mentee’s problem when presented to her or him.
- Allow the mentee to fail as part of growing and learning to take responsibility.

Manage Effective Learning:

- Assist in establishing development objectives.
- Help identify and evaluate relevant learning activities.
- Push for learning in depth (problem-finding, not just problem-solving).
- Identify and challenge your mentee’s reliance on old habits and approaches.
- Guide your mentee in applying specific lessons to a broader context.