

Mentor Best Practice

- Think of yourself as a “learning facilitator” rather than the person with all the answers. Help your mentee find people and other resources beyond your experience and wisdom on a topic.
- Emphasize questions over advice-giving. Use probes that help your mentee think more broadly and deeply. If they talk only about facts, ask about feelings. If they focus on feelings, ask them to review the facts. If they seem stuck in an immediate crisis, help them see the big picture.
- When requested, share your own experiences, lessons learned, and advice. Emphasize how your experiences could differ from their experiences and are merely examples. Limit your urge to solve the problem for them.
- Resist the temptation to control the relationship and steer its outcomes; your mentee is responsible for their growth.
- Help your mentee see alternative interpretations and approaches.
- Build your mentee’s confidence through supportive feedback.
- Encourage, inspire, and challenge your mentee to achieve their goals.
- Help your mentee reflect on successful strategies they have used in the past that could apply to new challenges.
- Be spontaneous now and then. Beyond your planned conversations, call or e-mail “out of the blue” to leave an encouraging word or piece of new information.
- Reflect on your mentoring practice and request feedback.
- Enjoy the privilege of mentoring. Know that your efforts will likely have a significant impact on your mentee’s development as well as your own.