

A Resource Guide for Career Mentors



MENTOR
THE NATIONAL MENTORING PARTNERSHIP

*Thank you for volunteering to serve as a career mentor for individuals in your community.
This guide is designed to support you in preparing for career mentoring sessions.*

UNDERSTANDING EACH OTHER

When connecting with others, it is important to understand the context in which they are living. ***The more we understand what others are experiencing, thinking about and aiming to achieve, the more likely we are to build a relationship with them.*** When we meet others where they are today, we can provide support that helps move them closer to realizing their full potential, achieving their goals and strengthening their confidence.

For youth especially, many struggle with their sense of identity, feeling awkward about themselves and alternating between high expectations and low self-esteem. When stressed, many youth will return to childish behavior, testing rules and limits. As youth enhance their ability to do work (physical, mental, emotional), their intellectual interests are expanding. They tend to focus more on the present with limited thoughts of the future. (Source: American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry)



BUILDING A RELATIONSHIP

As you begin to work with others in a mentoring session, it can feel awkward and uncomfortable for both you and them. Here are some key tips to consider when building a relationship during a career mentoring session.

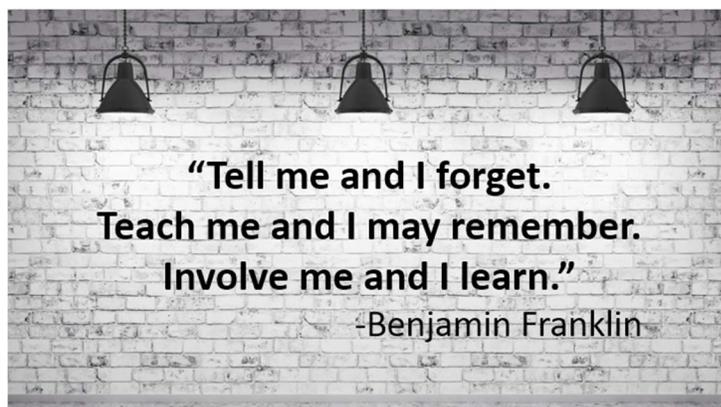
- 1 Focus on collaborating, not directing.** – As mentors, we do not have all the answers. Our primary role is to ask great questions and actively listen to get to know others, to understand their goals, and to help them discover and leverage their strengths. Don't focus on fixing them; be a champion for them.
- 2 Share your experiences and perspectives.** – Instead of telling others what to do, share with them your life experiences and alternative perspectives to consider. By brainstorming options with others, we empower them to reflect on the pros and cons of each option and to make decisions for themselves. Be fully present in the discussion and open to answering their questions.
- 3 Challenge growth.** – Some people focus on reasons why they are not good at something and why they don't feel as though they can achieve a goal or belong at work or school. Challenge their growth by having them reflect on past successes and consider using past success strategies to overcome current challenges. This helps others develop a growth mindset and strengthen their resiliency.
- 4 Be transparent about failures and successes.** – Discuss with others some of your successes, what it took to achieve them and what you learned in the process. Also, reflect with others on your failures, modeling for them how you leveraged failures as learning opportunities and how they influence your thoughts and actions today.



PROVIDING CAREER ADVICE

To best support others in a career mentoring session, consider the following:

- 1 Identify career goals.** – Work with individuals to identify specific career goals. Start by exploring career interests and then work collaboratively to prioritize those interests into a few viable career pathways. Remember to focus on connecting their strengths, skills, and life experiences to career options.
- 2 Map action steps.** – Brainstorm specific action steps that would help individuals achieve their career goals. Breaking bigger goals into smaller milestones makes the path forward feel more manageable and less overwhelming. Consider steps to expand their network, develop or enhance skills, and increase their understanding of career options.
- 3 Make a list of what they have vs. what they need.** – Review their action steps and consider what resources and relationships they have to leverage currently versus what they need to achieve each action step. For example, they may want to explore the legal profession but may not know individuals practicing different types of law. They need introductions to different types of lawyers to set up informational interviews.
- 4 Close the gap.** – As a mentor, help others identify various options that they can consider in closing the gap on what they need to complete their action steps. Remember, don't tell them what to do but guide them with questions and by sharing your own life experiences. Part of closing the gap is helping others expand their network of relationship supports and increase their access to opportunities such as job shadowing, informational interviews, and networking events.
- 5 Confirm clear next steps.** – In modeling a solution-focused approach, work with individuals to confirm the next steps that they have decided to take in pursuing their career goals. Be sure next steps are as specific as possible with a clear timeline that they can hold themselves accountable to. You can help others identify back-up plans and think through how they would respond to potential scenarios that may play out on their career pathway.



ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

- ***Finding the Greatness Within*** – This resource was developed in partnership with JPMorgan Chase and offers mentors tangible tips and resources to leverage when supporting individuals on their path to college and career. (<http://bit.ly/2hHA8vn>)
- ***Growth Mindset for Mentors*** – This resource helps mentors understand growth mindset and how to apply growth mindset strategies to many of the challenges that individuals face in life. (<https://www.mindsetkit.org/growth-mindset-mentors>)
- ***The Chronicle of Evidence-based Mentoring*** – This is an online resource that shares the latest research and new ideas for youth mentoring practices. (<https://chronicle.umbmentoring.org/>)