

## A Guide for Mentors

As a mentor, you will play several key roles in your mentee's personal and professional development. A mentor's role is to provide guidance and support to a mentee to help create and develop their professional and personal skills.

**GUIDE** – Your life experiences in your career, in your community, and beyond are invaluable. You can help guide and co-create with your mentee as they chart their own path. This may come in the form of information or advice about education, career choice, or assistance with building your mentee's network.

**MENTORING** – Mentors provide feedback and insight from a different perspective throughout the course of their mentoring relationship. You might help your mentee think through their own decisions or examine real-life personal and or work scenarios that either of you might or have encountered. You may encourage your mentee to step out of their comfort zone by increasing their knowledge and enhancing their confidence.

**SUPPORTER** – Mentors provide support during their mentee's learning journey. Hearing their ideas, fielding the right questions, listening to concerns, and navigating conversations so their mentees can reflect on their mentor's feedback and guidance are important.

**ROLE MODEL** – As a woman leader, you are a role model to your mentee. You can model leadership behaviors and skills by giving examples of ways in which you have faced challenges, behaved ethically, and or solved complex leadership problems. Sharing about how you overcame obstacles can be very inspiring and helpful to your mentee.

**MOTIVATOR:** It is important to provide positive encouragement and support to your mentee. Encourage your mentee to try new things, and have an open and honest conversation with you. Offering positive feedback and praise can go a long way in boosting your mentee's confidence. Help guide them to set realistic expectations, goals, and timelines. Encourage them to dream bigger, and celebrate small wins!

**RESOURCES:** Sharing resources like articles, websites, books, inspiring movies, and podcasts can be very useful and helpful to your mentee. Ultimately, the best resource you can give your mentee is your own personal experiences in life and career.

### Introducing Yourself:

- Find out about your mentee through intentional questions. You might ask where they are from, what some of their interests are, and what career they hope to pursue.
- Discuss how you each prefer to be contacted (phone, email, and FaceTime are all popular methods of contact) and at what times it is best to connect with each other. The more information you provide in these initial stages the easier it will be to connect.

## **Practice Active Listening:**

One of the most important things you can do for a mentee is to listen. Let them talk. Do not feel like you need to have all the answers. Many times, it just takes talking through situations, possible scenarios, challenges, and or barriers that is very beneficial to the mentee.

Active listening creates and builds trust between two people. Without trust, your mentee will be hesitant to not follow your advice and not share as openly as you would like. You must regularly assess where your mentee is on their journey. You cannot be successful in leading them forward unless you know where they currently are.

The following can help:

- Ask for clarification
- Paraphrase to show understanding
- Express verbal and non-verbal acknowledgment

Ask open-ended questions, such as:

- Can you tell me a bit more about that?
- What would you like to learn?
- What are your interests?

## **Get To Know Your Mentee Well:**

Get to know your mentee. Ask them guiding questions to get to know them and their interests. Take the time to take note of what makes them excited. What are some of their challenges? Goals? How can you support them? The more you get to know your mentee, the more you can build on the foundation of a successful and productive relationship.

## **Understand What The Mentee Wants To Learn:**

As a mentor, try to get to the core of what your mentee wants to learn. Mentors sometimes fall into the trap of doing more talking than listening. What does your mentee see in you that they, themselves want to develop? Talk about those objectives and then invite them to prepare the next time you use that skill. For example, they may appreciate your communication style and the effective listening techniques that you use. Work on it together!

## **Establishing Goals:**

Discuss your mentee's interests and goals (use the S.M.A.R.T. goals template). Setting goals is an important step in beginning a new mentoring relationship and can set the stage for a successful partnership. Both mentors and mentees should think about what they hope to gain and learn from the mentoring relationship. Discuss your mentee's courses, activities, current work, etc.

It is helpful to revisit the goals with your mentee throughout the year. Don't be afraid to remove goals if they are no longer relevant, or add new goals during the course of your mentorship journey.

## Remember Your Mentee's Situation:

It is important to balance the amount of experience that qualifies you as a mentor and the situation the mentee is in. The main question is: Is this advice (e.g., what I would do) also applicable in this very different situation?

## Staying Connected:

Share with your mentee about your background education and work. Talk about the field that your mentee is interested in. Share about your career path and profession and how you got started. Perhaps you can recommend a book and discuss it together.

Send your mentee emails/texts as you have new thoughts and ideas. Discuss career trends and opportunities within your field. Discuss the balance between work and personal life. Talk about coping strategies for life's stressors. Ask about your mentee's family and friends.

## Finding Lasting Success:

It is important to understand your own responsibilities and expectations, as well as those of your mentee. Below is a list, by no means exhaustive of typical roles and responsibilities of a mentor, typical mentor expectations of a mentee, and roles/expectations for mentees.

## Roles, Responsibilities, and Expectations:

As a mentor, I expect my mentee to...

- Provide honest feedback
- Be willing to accept constructive criticism
- Commit time to the program
- Be comfortable communicating
- Follow through and follow up
- Be flexible
- Be respectful of my time
- Discuss how to best communicate via email, call, text e.t.c.
- Have fun

As a mentor, I will...

- Provide honest feedback
- Be flexible and available
- Make no judgments and be respectful
- Listen intently and learn
- Encourage and support
- Share experiences
- Be patient and guide
- Be creative and imaginative
- Seek answers and identify opportunities
- Have Fun