

# Mentor Tips and Strategies

## **Purpose of mentoring**

- One-to-one relationship or partnership that focuses on the needs of mentored participants.
- Fosters caring and supportive relationships.
- Encourages individuals to develop to their fullest potential.
- Helps an individual to develop his or her own vision for the future.
- It is a strategy to develop active community partnerships.

## **Roles of mentors**

- Teacher/trainer - Providing learning opportunities and offering the mentor's experience as a guide
- Positive role model – Demonstrating exemplary behavior and offering values that will increase chances for success
- Social supporter/guide – Providing encouragement to the mentee as he or she embarks on new experiences
- Resource supporter/advocate – Speaking and acting on behalf of the mentee and helping the mentee access community resources
- Challenger – Encouraging the mentee to maximize his/her potential
- Friend/companion – Being consistently available and sincere; providing the mentee with a caring, interested friendship.

## **Locations of Mentoring**

- Mentoring can take place in a wide array of settings
- Meetings should be in the public, such as at a workplace, in a school, at a faith-based organization, in a community setting and in the virtual community, where e-mentoring takes place.

## **Basic Guidelines for Mentors**

- Be reliable – Try to visit /communicate with your mentee on a regular basis. If you have to cancel an appointment be sure to communicate as far in advance as possible.
- Be consistent – Short, regular contacts (about once a week) can often accomplish more than a long visit or lunch dates which can take a while to set up.
- Focus on your mentee – Ask questions, get to know his or her interest, activities and goals.
- Give lots of Feedback – Take every opportunity to give positive feedback and helpful suggestions. Your advice is important and is essential to the student's development.
- Be safety minded – Meet in public spaces where other people are around. If you are going to meet outside of school or work, drive separately. If you are touring a business or site, be sure to consider the need for safety glasses, appropriate clothing, etc and advise your mentee in advance.
- Set limits – Let your mentee know how best to contact you. Include best times and how often you are available by phone, email, in person.
- Include mentee in developing plans – Ask your mentee to share in making decisions about your joint activities. Encourage creativity from your mentee.
- Encourage problem-solving skills – You don't have to answer all of the questions your mentee may have. Consider yourself a resource and refer your mentee to other sources of information. Helping your student learn where to look for answers is one of the best tools you can share.
- Contact program director if you have concerns.

