



Mentor Tip Sheet

1. Keep communications open.

Contact your mentee as soon as you receive his or her name. Tell the mentee a bit about yourself, professionally and personally. Listen carefully and ask questions for clarification when needed. Reply promptly to messages sent to you. Consider setting goals for frequency of communication with your mentee. If email communication seems to be breaking down, try a phone call to check in and keep communication open.

2. Define expectations.

Establish clear expectations and ground rules at the onset of the mentoring relationship. Consider writing down a list of realistic goals for the mentoring relationship together with the mentee. Revisit and revise these goals together, and use them to evaluate progress over the course of the year. Goals should be based on the mentee's assessment of his or her ambitions and needs, as well as your assessment of the help you can provide. You should also assess what you hope to gain from the mentoring experience.

3. Take initiative and be an active participant.

Be proactive in all aspects of the mentoring relationship. Offer feedback and advice when asked, but also feel free to introduce new ideas and opportunities to the mentee. The most effective mentor-mentee relationships are built on mutual learning, so be open and alert to what you can learn from the mentee. Ask questions, collaborate, experiment, have fun.

4. Foster a sense of belonging.

Through your relationship, help your mentee feel more included and valued in the library profession. Emphasize commonalities with other librarians and encourage involvement with professional organizations.

5. Be available.

Be available to talk with the mentee, answer questions, and provide advice. Look ahead and let your mentee know if you will be unavailable for extended periods of time. Whenever possible, plan on meeting face to face at conferences or other professional venues.

6. Be reliable and consistent.

Be careful and realistic about the commitments you make to your mentee, but always follow through on those commitments. To be an effective mentor, you must keep your mentee's trust.

7. Offer honest and positive feedback.

Balance truth with tact in your evaluations, and always emphasize the positive. Remember that your goal is to support and recognize your mentee's progress and development in the profession.

8. Be innovative and creative.

Be a resource for new ideas for the mentee. Use your experience, but also ask for your mentee's help to research, brainstorm and innovate.

9. Be aware of cultural diversity.

Value your mentee's unique social, economic, and cultural traits and perspectives, and strive to be a helpful mentor no matter what differences there may be between you. Remember that helping to foster diversity is a major concern of the American Library Association and ACRL.

10. Be ethical.

Consistently act in ways that are ethical; uphold the law and professional codes of conduct.

11. Respect confidentiality.

Keep conversations between you and your mentee private and confidential.

12. Model self-reliance.

Remember that you will not always be available to the mentee. Demonstrate to the mentee how to independently find solutions and work to impart self-management skills.

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