

Career Mentor

Quick Start Guide

A JCC Career Mentor is a guide, a friend and a resource.

Mentor Roles

A mentor is a person who makes a difference in a student's life. The partnership between a mentor and mentee is built upon trust, respect, and professionalism. As a mentor, you will have the opportunity to become

- **Role Model**
 - Provides an example to follow
 - Expands the mentee's perspective on life
- **Motivator**
 - Expresses confidence in the mentee's abilities
 - Encourages the mentee to try new things
- **Supporter**
 - Helps build the mentee's self-esteem
 - Conveys a sincere personal interest in the well-being of the mentee
 - Listens to the mentee's ideas and concerns
 - Expresses belief and confidence in the mentee's abilities
- **Resource**
 - Introduces the mentee to new people, places, interests and ideas
- **Challenger**
 - Encourages the mentee to set goals and develop a plan of action to reach them
 - Challenges the mentee to succeed and try things on his or her own
 - Encourages the mentee to engage in increasingly complex activities

A mentor is not someone who is a:

- **Rescuer**
Problem fixer, assumes responsibility
- **Bodyguard**
Fights mentee's battles, overprotective
- **Mechanic**
Wants a quick-fix, insensitive to self-esteem
- **Adversary**
Pushes too far too soon, always plays devil's advocate
- **Minesweeper**
Removes obstacles so mentee doesn't have to deal with them
- **Smotherer**
Gives too much feedback, discounts mentee's feelings or concerns

Building the Mentoring Relationship

- Every mentoring relationship is unique. The following are a few tips in order to help both the mentors and mentees create a successful partnership. We hope this will help you in creating a successful relationship with your mentee.

Set Goals with Your Mentee

- Setting goals with your mentee at the beginning of the relationship is critical because it gives direction to the relationship and informs you in how to help the mentee.
- If your mentee doesn't know his/her goals, you can ask questions such as "What made you sign up for the Career Mentoring program?," "What are your specific concerns and questions right now?" or "How can I help you?"
- You can also use the "Goal Setting Worksheet" provided in this packet.

Set Expectations with Your Mentee

- Stick to the decision you made with your mentee on how and when you will communicate with each other, renegotiate as needed.
- If the mentee is unresponsive at any point in the relationship initiate contact. Some students will be overwhelmed by how much they are doing and forget to contact you. If your mentee doesn't respond to you after multiple attempts, please contact the Office of Applied Learning at 716.338.1165

Get to Know your Mentee

- Ask thoughtful questions about the mentee's interests, experiences and background. Be an active listener by feeding back what the mentee says, avoiding interrupting and show interest in your voice and posture.

Offer Options as Opposed to Solutions

- Avoid giving quick solutions. Ask the mentee what he/she is thinking and help him/her process his/her own ideas.
- Make suggestions of things the student might try, for example, "Have you looked into..." or "Something I found helpful when I was in college..." versus "You should..." or "You need to..."
- Remember, often times people will not do what we say, so don't get discouraged if your mentee does not follow your advice.

Share your Story

- Telling your mentee about yourself and your experiences builds trust and rapport.
- Think about how you have learned from your mistakes and how your mentee can learn from them.
- Share your lessons learned during college and beyond with your mentee.

Be a Coach!

- Encourage your mentee to take risks. They may need a little push, but it could help them in the long run.
- Remember, students have much to learn from a professional like you - everything from how to dress to being on time.
- Don't hesitate to give your mentee feedback if he/she is not acting in a professional manner - it could make a huge difference for his/her first interview, job and other life experiences.

How to Relate

- Share what you might have done differently, if you were a student again.
- Refer to the "Suggested Mentoring Activities" on the following page for some ideas of what to do together or talk about.

Possible Questions to Ask your Mentee

- What do you expect from this relationship?
- What are your academic goals?
- What are some of your personal goals (i.e. campus involvement, time management, etc.)?
- What plans do you have for reaching those goals?
- What are your plans for your professional future?
- Do you need help in learning how to network/establish a network?
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Suggested Mentoring Activities for the Mentor

Need some ideas for what to do? The following list is a great place to start!

Career Conversations

- Discuss your educational background and the role of educational preparation in your field.
- Share information about current events or issues in your field.
- Schedule a job shadow visit, if appropriate.

Job-Search Process

- Critique your mentee's resume and/or cover letter and encourage them to contact JCC Career Services.
- Lead your mentee through a mock interview.
- Offer guidance on where to best look for jobs/internships in your field.

Tell Your Story

- Tell your mentee how you prepared for your transition from school to the professional world.
- Share how you have balanced your personal and professional life obligations.
- If you could do it over, discuss what you would have done differently and what you would have done again.
- Talk about how you have dealt with personal or professional challenges.

Networking Pursuits

- Introduce your mentee to colleagues or other contacts.
- Attend a professional association meeting or conference together.
- Guide your mentee in how to conduct an informational interview.
- Check the JCC website, www.sunyjcc.edu for a complete list of upcoming on-campus events

Miscellaneous Tips and Tricks

- It may be difficult to find the time to talk or meet with your mentee, so schedule your next conversation at the end of each meeting.
- Trust your natural mentoring skills: You probably already serve as a mentor in a variety of settings in your life; parents, supervisors, and friends all act as mentors. Trust your instincts!
- Be enthusiastic and encouraging: Enthusiasm to learn and share information shows your mentee that this is a relationship you care about!
- Don't interrupt when your mentee is speaking.
- Respond to your mentees attempts: Mentees are learning to network and build and sustain relationships with professionals. Make time for your mentee and respond to their attempts within 48 hours, if possible.
- Don't assign "homework" or things to do, students have enough from their own teachers and tend to shy away from their mentor when this happens.