

# Peer Mentoring Handbook

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# Introduction to Peer Mentoring

## Definition

A mentor is defined as a knowledgeable and experienced guide, a trusted ally and advocate, and a caring role model. An effective mentor is respectful, reliable, patient, trustworthy, and a very good listener and communicator.

As taken from *The Peer Mentoring Resource Booklet* page 2 : [http://www.csun.edu/gehonors/documents/Peer\\_Mentor\\_Booklet.pdf](http://www.csun.edu/gehonors/documents/Peer_Mentor_Booklet.pdf)

## Five Rules of Advising

**1. Provide accurate information.** Get to know degree requirements, campus policies, and scheduling procedures. This is arguably the most important advisor responsibility.

**2. Don't make decisions for your advisee.**

**3. Be a good listener.**

- Do not interrupt advisees' sentences. Let the story be told.
- Establish good eye contact.
- Use affirmative head-nods and appropriate facial expressions.
- Intermittently respond to advisees with "uh, huh" or "I see."
- Recognize the behavior of advisees and not just words that are said.
- Discover many personality characteristics, such as likes, dislikes, motivations, and values of advisees by simply listening to them talk.
- Paraphrase what advisees say

**4. Make Effective Referrals.**

1. Inform yourself of campus resources thoroughly, paying particular attention to the names of contact people and the chain of command in various offices. Eventually, you will develop an invaluable sense of which people in each area are most helpful and responsive.

2. Keep a list of names, offices, and telephone numbers at hand for quick reference

3. When talking with students, pay particular attention to their expressed and implied needs. Often students won't ask to be referred for help, but they very much need referral. For example, they may express anxiety about their financial affairs without asking for

assistance; a referral to Student Financial Aid may be necessary if you probe further.

5. Students are often uneasy about following through with a referral. Try to make them comfortable with the idea, pointing out the friendliness, accessibility, and helpfulness of the people to whom you are sending them. This task can be crucial in the case of faculty and upper-level administration referrals, since students often find these people intimidating.

7. Help students draw up agendas for referrals including crucial questions and procedures for getting the most out of their visits with the people to whom you send them.

8. Facilitate referrals by telephoning the parties to whom you are sending students while those students are with you.

9. When you make referrals, jot down notes in your advising files that will remind you to ask students on their next visit about the results of their contacts. If students report that they haven't followed through, find out why not and discuss the reasons.

## **5. Be Nice.**

### **Expectations**

Peer mentors are expected to:

- Attend a training session held at the beginning of the semester and any informational meetings held throughout the semester.
- All mandatory events must be attended.
- Fill out a monthly status update available online and submit to the peer mentor coordinators or advisor.
- Remain in good academic standing.
- Follow the procedure outlined at the end of the handbook in the case the mentor, mentee, or both decide to terminate their professional relationship.

# Getting to Know Your Mentee

## Thinking Through the First Meeting

Typically, first meetings allow two people to get to know a little bit about each other, attach a face to a name and gain a bit of comfort. To do so, you need to think about what setting would feel comfortable for both of you, and plan out some conversation starters — knowing that these are tools if you need them, not a formula.

- (1) What are some things I could tell my mentee about myself that would help us get to know each other a little bit? What about me and my life story might be interesting and relevant to this person?
- (2) What are some questions I could ask my mentee to get to know him/her a little bit without prying?
- (3) What do I want out of the mentoring relationship — what are my hopes?
- (4) How can I find out what my mentee hopes to get out of the relationship — what questions might I ask?

We recommend you look over your answers to this planning sheet shortly before your first meeting with your mentee. You might even bring it along to offer it as a bit of a roadmap for you both to follow. Use your judgment — but remember to at least look your responses over before the meeting — this will make you more comfortable and relaxed.

As adapted from the National Mentoring Partnership's "Learn to Mentor Toolkit" page 5-6 :  
[http://www.mncpd.org/docs/RBPD%20Web%20Site%20Sep%202009/Mentor\\_training\\_toolkit.pdf](http://www.mncpd.org/docs/RBPD%20Web%20Site%20Sep%202009/Mentor_training_toolkit.pdf)

## Question Ideas

- What was your most important activity in high school? Will you continue it in college? Why or why not?
- What have you enjoyed doing most since graduating high school?
- What things do you like to do in your free time?
- Do you plan to join (or start) any clubs? Which ones?
- What movies have you seen recently? What did you think about them?
- What is your favorite thing about college so far? Why?

# Respecting Boundaries

## Ethical Code of Practice

- The mentor's role is to respond to the mentee's needs and agenda; it is not to impose their own agenda.
- Mentors and mentees should respect the confidential nature of what is discussed as part of the mentoring relationship.
- Mentors and mentees should respect each other's time and other responsibilities, ensuring they do not impose beyond what is reasonable.
- The mentee must accept increasing responsibility for managing the relationship; the mentor should empower them to do so and must generally promote the learner's autonomy.
- Either part may dissolve the relationship. However, both the mentor and mentee have the responsibility to discuss the matter together, as part of mutual learning.
- Mentors need to be aware of the limits of their own competence in the practice of mentoring.
- The mentor will not intrude areas the mentee wishes to keep private until invited to do so. However they should help the mentee to recognize how other issues may relate to these areas.
- Mentors and mentees should aim to be open and truthful with each other and themselves about the relationship itself.
- Mentors and mentees share the responsibility for the smooth winding down of the relationship when it has achieved its purpose – they must avoid creating dependency.
- The mentoring relationship must not be exploitive in any way; neither may it be open to misinterpretation.

## **Confidentiality**

All peer mentors are expected and required to maintain high levels of confidentiality. Peer mentors should refrain from discussing incidents regarding students unless there is a legitimate reason to share such information. Only under the following situations should a student staff member reveal information (to a professional staff member) that has been disclosed to him/her by a student:

- Knowledge of suicidal or homicidal ideations
- Knowledge that child or elder abuse has occurred
- Knowledge that abuse towards a person with disabilities has occurred

As taken from Florida International University's "Peer Advising Training Manual" page 23 : <http://www.docstoc.com/docs/20281597/Peer-Advisor-Training-Manual---DOC>

# Listening Skills

## Active Listening

The four levels of active listening:

- Listening with your ears to the words that are spoken
- Listening with your eyes to the body language
- Listening to yourself using all your senses and signals
- Listening with your mind to make sense of all that you are aware of.

## Responding

Listening is the foundation on which supporting is built and effective mentors need to build on this through making appropriate empathic responses. Some of these responses may be non-verbal, such as slight movements of the head or noises of the 'mm – mm' variety which indicate to the other person that one is present and paying attention.

## Paraphrasing

Paraphrasing is a response to the content of what the mentee has said. By paraphrasing, the mentor summarizes the content of what has been said in such a way as to indicate to the mentee that she or he has been heard and understood. From the mentees point of view, this can help also in clarifying the content of what has been said.

## Reflection

As well as paraphrasing the content of what the mentee has said, the mentor is also concerned to reflect back feelings to the mentee. This then leads to a clarification of the emotional content of what is being communicated. In these ways the mentor communicates empathy and establishes rapport.