

YOUTH MENTEE GUIDE:

Grow Your Mentor Relationships



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WHAT IS A MENTOR?

Maybe you are just beginning to wonder about getting a mentor or, maybe you already have a mentor. Either way, you probably have questions about what mentoring is all about. A mentor is somebody who can offer you support and guidance to work toward your goals, coach you through challenging and stressful times, and push you to grow and learn new skills. A mentor is also someone you can just have fun with! A mentor can be many things but should always be safe, caring, and supportive.

WHY WOULD I WANT A MENTOR?

All of us need mentors and benefit from a wide circle of supportive people throughout our lives. Mentors can introduce you to new activities that you may be interested in, help you prepare for a test at school, or offer you advice while you figure out what your passions are.

NOW WHAT?

This guide will offer you tips and insights from other young people who have been mentored about what to expect from a mentoring relationship and how to make the most of it. The quotes and advice here will help you understand and navigate this helpful new relationship. We encourage you to read them on your own or - even better - together with your mentor! Just know that you play a big role in making a mentoring relationship meaningful and we hope the words of other young people here help you reflect on your own mentoring journey.



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WHAT IS A MENTORING RELATIONSHIP?

Here is what other youth have to say:

A mentor is... "Someone to lean on and talk to and share my opinion with."

"Having a mentor gives you an extra person who is not a parent or a teacher that you can go to to talk about things or learn new things from."

"Always keep in the back of your head that your mentor is there for you, that's why they are your mentor. Have fun and if you ever need an opinion or advice, they're always there for you."

"Before I had a mentor, I didn't really do (anything). My mentor helped me open up my future and think about that."

HOW OFTEN SHOULD YOU MEET WITH YOUR MENTOR?

"I try to meet with my mentor frequently because it's really hard to build a good relationship if you're only meeting once a month."

This is why we suggest that you try to meet with your mentor at least once a month, if not more frequently.



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WHAT DO YOUTH TALK ABOUT WITH THEIR MENTORS?

You can talk about all sorts of things with your mentor. You can even ask them what interests them and what they want to talk about! It's really important to get to know each other.

During the first five meetings with your mentor, you may find it helpful to talk with your mentor about some of the goals you would like to work on.

"Most of our time is spent talking and hanging out. We set our conversations up like a judgment free zone, it's very helpful and easy to open up."

"I mainly talk about school stress, daily life type situations and if I need help with a deeper conversation that's there but mainly the daily stuff, like if I need help with homework or something."

"It will take some time to get used to a new mentor. I've had three mentors and it took time to feel comfortable talking to them and communicating with them properly. At first, I had problems speaking with them like I do with most people, but they found a way to comfort me and make sure I know it's okay to talk about certain things. Then, I got comfortable with my mentor, and I ended up speaking more, asking about their day, asking about what they do."



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WHAT ARE THINGS TO DO WITH YOUR MENTOR?

Do activities with your mentor that you both enjoy. Some youth play games, talk about their days, read books, and go to parks with their mentors. There are so many different ways you can spend time with your mentor!

“(My) mentor helped me get out into the community more versus before, I would only really be at home or at sports. I think my mentor has helped push me to do that.”

At some point during your mentoring relationship, you will likely do some sort of goal-focused activity. This can focus on goals that are short term, like getting a better grade in a class or learning a skill, or could be about a bigger long-term goal that you want to achieve in your life, such as pursuing a specific career. Focusing on some goals helps your mentor get to know you better and gets both of you thinking about how you can work together on your path to achieving your goals and dreams. Watch this short video to see one example of doing a goal-focused, life map activity: <https://youtu.be/cY6OPYu6qnA>.

TIPS TO IMPROVE YOUR MENTORING RELATIONSHIP

Here are some tips from other youth your age:

“I would say be off your phone. Like give them your time, your attention, your full attention.”

“You gotta communicate-communicate with them about whether you’re coming, if you’re gonna be late, because they do have snacks and food sometimes, they need to know you are going to be there.”

“You gotta participate, you gotta give feedback. Like if you want something to change, you gotta speak up and tell them the things you don’t like, the things you do. Like you gotta give them feedback to help them, and you gotta speak up. You ain’t gonna get nothing if you don’t speak up.”



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WE HAVE FIVE MORE TIPS FOR YOU:

- 1.** Before you meet with your mentor, **think about three things that you would like to talk about with them.** These can be anything from things you are interested in, to things that you are having trouble with.
- 2.** **Be curious and ask your mentor about their life,** their career, and their interests. You can ask them about world news, events, or things that you have heard about your ancestors or community.
- 3.** **You can learn something new together.** You can talk with your mentor about things you want to learn and ask them about what they want to learn. Find something that you both want to learn about and go to a public library or do some online research to learn about that thing!



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- 4.** You can respect each other's time by talking about when it's appropriate to message each other and how long you have time for meeting with each other. **Then, once you both know what works for each other, stick to those plans!**

- 5.** In order to have a good relationship with your mentor, **it is important to check in with yourself to make sure you feel seen, and safe by your mentor.** If you do not feel this way, you should stop the mentoring relationship. If you ever want help in stopping your mentor relationship, please reach out to a trusted adult who can help. **If you feel unsafe or don't know a trusted adult who can help, contact the Teen Line at 800-852-8336 or text TEEN to 839863.**

We are so excited that you have a mentor and are growing a mentoring relationship. Mentoring relationships are very important for growing and building healthier, happier, and more fulfilling lives - both for yourself and your mentor. Better yet, a healthy mentoring relationship builds our communities into communities with more people who are connected and care for one another! If you want to find out more information about maximizing the value of your mentoring relationship, please visit our website nationalmentoringresourcecenter.org.



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Worksheet: Making the Most of Our Mentoring Relationship

Instructions: Print out this worksheet and work together with your mentor to answer the questions below. Talk with your mentor before answering each question. Don't be afraid to share your thoughts! This worksheet will help you make the most of your mentoring relationship.

1. What are your goals for this mentoring relationship? Remember, this can change over time!

- Youth:

- Mentor:

2. How can we get the most out of our mentoring time together?

3. How often would you like to meet or connect with your mentor or mentee? How would you like to keep in touch (e.g., text, phone call, e-mail, etc.)?

- Youth:

- Mentor:

4. Are there any topics or skills that you would like to discuss (e.g., a hobby, math, a career, how to get into college, etc.)?

- Youth:

- Mentor:

5. What specific challenges or decisions might you like guidance and advice on?

6. How can we create a safe and trusting environment? What might that look or feel like for you?

7. How will we reflect on our progress and check in to make sure our time together is going well?

8. How can we show our appreciation for what we each bring to the mentoring relationship?

- Youth:

- Mentor:

Remember, open and honest communication is the key to a successful mentoring relationship. Take the time to listen, understand, and respect each other's perspectives. Your mentor is here to guide and support you, and together you can make the most of this valuable opportunity for growth and learning.

Signature (Mentee): _____

Date: _____

Signature (Mentor): _____

Date: _____