

HOW TO BECOME THE MOST EFFECTIVE MENTOR



Mentoring is a process in which an experienced individual (a mentor) helps another person (a mentee) develop their goals and skills through a series of one-on-one conversations and other learning activities. As a mentor, you will have the opportunity to share your insights and experiences, model an effective workplace relationship, and deepen your skills and thinking.

Understand what you want out of this mentoring experience: Identify some goals for your professional development, and, if appropriate, communicate these to your mentee.

Find out what your mentee is hoping to get from this experience: Ask them what their goals are for this internship, and, if needed, help them brainstorm a few relevant, attainable learning or professional goals.

Help your mentee understand the workplace culture: As they come into a new work environment, be clear about your expectations for them. At the same time, be patient as they acclimate to what might be at first overwhelmingly new.

Be open and inclusive in your actions and your words: Practice cultural humility. Telegraph to your mentee that you are open and ready to listen and learn from them in equal part to how you hope they will listen and learn from you. Model active listening skills and highlight for them the role of active listening in behavioral health work.

Model professionalism: Help your mentee acclimate to their specific work placement. Outline what you expect in terms of professional communication: how should they contact you if they're running late, not feeling well, or asking a question outside of their usual internship hours.

Guide your mentee through the workplace procedures: Be clear on their role and responsibilities: what they are expected to do and not to do, how they are to document their time, and what should they do in case of an emergency.

Be curious and enjoy engaging them around a career in behavioral health: Ask questions. Find out what your mentee's dream career is. Talk to them about what education and certifications you have or hope to get. Provide that insider knowledge: what would you go back and tell your younger, less-experienced self?

