

GUIDING MENTORING PRINCIPLES

Strive for mutual benefits: The relationship should be defined from the beginning as mutually beneficial. Each participant has committed to the relationship by choice. Each should openly share their goals at the beginning of the relationship and work collaboratively to help achieve them.

Agree on confidentiality: Maintaining an environment of confidentiality is a critical component in building trust between the participants. Without a mutually understood ability to speak freely as the situation warrants, the relationship is unlikely to reach its full potential.

Commit to honesty: The participants should be willing to candidly share what they expect to gain from the relationship and their vision for getting there. They should be prepared to offer frank feedback as appropriate, even if the feedback is critical.

Listen and learn: Mutual benefit and honesty can only be achieved when both members feel their viewpoints are heard and respected. Mentors, especially, need to remember that the relationship is not primarily about them. Mentors and mentees should not be intimidated or made to feel their views are not valued.

Build a working partnership: Consider structuring a working partnership that includes project consultation or active collaborations rooted in the common ground of shared professional or personal goals. These collaborations can lead to discoveries about each participant's preferred working style, daily obligations, personal goals and professional aspirations.

Lead by example: Actions create the most lasting impression.

Be flexible: It might help for a mentoring relationship to have defined goals, but the process may be as important—or more so—than the goals.