



Mentor Training Handbook

Welcome to ReMBC's mentor training handbook! The goal of this handbook is to help you:

- Understand your role as a mentor
- Learn how to handle difficult issues
- Learn how to build trust and interact effectively with youth online
- Learn where to get support and help for your relationship

Please save this handbook, as you will need to refer to it throughout the program. It should be the first place you turn if you need help or have a question.

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We acknowledge that ReMBC's offices are located on traditional, ancestral and unceded x^wməθk^wəyəm (Musqueam) Territory. We are grateful to be able to host our program on these beautiful lands.

Section 1: Understanding your role as a mentor

Your mentee's expectations

What mentoring is and is not

A mentor is an experienced and trusted advisor, friend or guide. In this program, mentors are NOT meant to act as a parent/guardian, teacher, therapist or any other authority figure. Here is what your mentee should and should not expect while working with you:

A mentor's role is to...	A mentor WILL NOT...
Empower mentees based on what they enjoy and are good at.	Focus on their mentee's flaws and failures or try to "fix" them (unless requested).
Expose mentees to new ideas, experiences, options and ways of thinking, and let them choose what to incorporate into their lives.	Tutor mentees or help them with their homework. But they can provide advice on studying and how to succeed in school.
Share their experiences, give advice, and share resources based on their mentees' personal goals.	Assign their mentees a grade for the program or evaluate their mentee in a formal way.
Help mentees plan for the future based on their strengths and passions.	Try to pressure mentees down a path that is not right for them.
Support and encourage their mentees.	Judge their mentees' choices. A mentor will support their mentees' decisions no matter what.
Answer their mentees' questions and act as a sounding board for their ideas.	Get their mentee in trouble. Though mentors are required to report safety concerns.
Be open, honest, and vulnerable. Share their successes, failures, and personal stories.	Present a perfect facade; a good mentor shares stories about how they learned from their failures, and won't sugarcoat the amount of work needed to be successful.
Be communicative and transparent with their mentee. Always respond within 3 days, and if unable to, will inform their mentee or the eMentoring staff.	Cease communicating with their mentee if something goes wrong or if they are busy or unavailable. Late or sudden stoppage of communication can damage a mentee's engagement and self-worth.

What your mentee expects from you, their mentor

We also explain to mentees what they should expect from you, their mentor. We highlight two key areas:

Near-peer mentoring: This program is appealing to many mentees because the mentors are close to their age and can identify with their experiences. We designed this program around near-peer mentorship because, for youth especially, near-peer mentors are perceived as less intimidating and more relatable. Therefore, your mentee is expecting this relationship to be low-pressure, friendly and fun – kind of like having a slightly-older pen pal.

Strength-based mentoring: Another appeal of this program, and mentorship in general, is that it should be a positive experience with nothing to lose and everything to gain. Strength-based mentoring focuses on playing to your mentee's strengths, instead of trying to "fix" their deficits. Because you are paired one-on-one, you will be able to provide personalized advice by helping your mentee navigate challenges and adversity in a way that utilizes their unique strengths, and does not leave them feeling like they lack "what it takes" or that they are not good enough. Strength-based mentoring should leave your mentee feeling hopeful for the future, rather than discouraged or overwhelmed. Some examples:

- Your mentee is worried that they will not be accepted to post-secondary because they have never played team sports.
 - Strength-based solution: identify other extracurricular activities they have done, including work and family obligations, or times when they have worked as part of a team. Help them find activities/opportunities that they will enjoy, or that fit within their existing activities, or that help them build teamwork skills.
 - Deficit-based: pressuring them to find a sport to try out for.
- Your mentee does not want to apply to post-secondary because they do not think they will get in.
 - Strength-based solution: help your mentee find schools and programs that they meet, or are close to meeting, the requirements for. If they are missing some of the requirements, help them find solutions (e.g. upgrading courses, volunteer opportunities that they might enjoy, etc.)
 - Deficit-based solution: identify all the areas your mentee is lacking in (e.g. bad grades in math, lack of extracurricular activities), and tell them to get better in those areas.
- Your mentee fails an exam.
 - Strength-based solution: work together to discover how your mentee learns best and help them test out different study strategies to find a solution that suits their strengths and preferences.
 - Deficit-based solution: tell them to study harder and focus more on that subject.

Tips for strength-based mentoring:

- Identify your mentee's strengths early on. Ask them what they like and what they are good at.
- Show your mentee that you believe in them. Do not be afraid to set high (but realistic) expectations, as long as you convey to your mentee that you believe that they are up to the task.
- Identify opportunities that play to your mentee's strengths. You may have to explain why certain opportunities suit their strengths, especially if it is something new for them.
- Provide lots of positive affirmation and encouragement, and do it often.
- **Please remember that your mentee may not have access to the same resources that you did.** Saying things like "just go volunteer in the hospital" can be quite insensitive if there's no hospital nearby. You may have to find creative solutions if an activity, service or opportunity is not available in their community, or if they do not have access to it (because of financial, familial or other reasons).

References:

- Strength-Based Mentoring: A Practice Guide for Mentors. By Alberta Mentoring Partnership. <https://peel.bigbrothersbigsisters.ca/wp-content/uploads/sites/160/2018/04/Strength-Based-Mentoring.pdf>
- Strength-Based Mentoring: Nurturing children and youth to help them thrive! By Big Brothers Big Sisters of the Fraser Valley. https://albertamentors.ca/wp-content/uploads/2013/10/SB_for_Mentors1.pdf

Program Overview for mentors

Program tutorials

About MentorCity

This program takes place through a platform called MentorCity, which is a messaging platform specifically created for one-on-one mentoring.

- MentorCity allows you to send messages to your mentee without exchanging contact information or personal information.
- You will only be able to send messages to YOUR mentee; you will not be able to contact any other participants in the program.

MentorCity tutorials

The MentorCity tutorials are available on our MentorCity demo account:

Important: This is NOT your personal account!

This is a **demo account** that anyone can access.

DO NOT change any account or profile settings, or send any messages in the message hub.

You will receive a login for your personal account after you have been accepted into our mentor pool.

1. Login to the MentorCity demo account
 - Website: https://www.mentorcity.com/en/sign_in
 - Login email: rembcmentor@mentorcity.com
 - Password: Ruralementoring2019!
2. You will be taken to the demo account's "Dashboard".
3. Click on "Get started" and click through the tutorial. Please note:
 - "Your role as a mentee" is geared towards mentees, but you can view it to understand your mentee's expectations.
 - In order to be accepted into our mentor pool, you must achieve 100% on the "Test your knowledge" quiz. Take the quiz as many times as you need in order to get 100%, and then send a screenshot to e.mentoring@ubc.ca.
 - You can skip the Meet Your Mentor page, since you are not matched to a mentee yet. Remember, please do not write in the message hub of the demo account.
4. When you're done, you can also check out the other courses, if you wish (not mandatory). We recommend checking out the Mentor Training and Resources Portal in the Need Help course.

Beginning your mentoring relationship

The eMentoring staff will match you to your mentee. You will only have one mentee at a time. Please note that it might take weeks, or even months to get matched, depending on when schools come online and when a compatible match is found for you. Please be patient.

1. We will email you when you have been matched, so please **check your email regularly**. **Read and save this email, as you will need to reference it regularly**. Matching emails contain important information about how your mentee will be participating, including course requirements, if applicable.
2. Begin your relationship by following the instructions on the “Meet your mentor” page. This is a guided activity to help you and your mentee get to know each other. **You are responsible for making first contact – do not wait for your mentee to message you first.**
3. When you have finished the Meet your mentor activity, you may move on and start on the courses, or discuss anything you want freeform.

Where to find information about your mentee

Finding out how your mentee is participating

- The email that you received from the eMentoring staff when you were matched will have information about whether your mentee is participating as part of a class or voluntarily.

Finding out what is required of your mentee (if applicable)

This information can be found in two places;

- The email that you received from the eMentoring staff when you were matched.
- Teacher-mentor group on MentorCity: click on the Groups tab to find your mentee’s teacher and school.

How to view your mentee's profile

1. Find “Connections” on your MentorCity dashboard. Click on your mentee’s name.
2. Once you’re on the connections page, click on your mentee’s name again to view their profile.

Sustaining your mentoring relationship

A successful mentoring relationship is initiated and actively nurtured by the mentor. You will need to actively guide the development of your relationship with your mentee – especially in the early stages of the program.

- **Do not expect mentees to take the lead on the conversation or activities.** You are responsible for starting the conversation (i.e. sending the first message) and moving it along. Your role is to guide your mentee through your relationship to meet their goals, or complete their desired courses.
- **Reminder: 3 strikes policy:** You are required to respond to your mentee’s messages within 3 days. If you violate this policy, you will receive a warning from the eMentoring staff. If you receive 3 warnings within a relationship, your relationship will be terminated and you will be removed from the program.
 - Please let us and your mentee know if you are going to be away or unable to respond within the 72 hour time period. You can always send a quick message promising to provide a more detailed response on later – as long as you follow through.
 - Mentees who are participating through a class need to complete certain requirements in a certain amount of time. Therefore, it’s important to respond regularly so that your mentee can complete these requirements – don’t be the reason your mentee gets a bad grade!
 - **Check the platform regularly to ensure you don’t miss any messages.** Sometimes MentorCity’s email notification system malfunctions.
- **You should never leave a mentee’s message unanswered**, even if there’s nothing for you to respond to. Either keep the conversation going, or suggest to move on to the next thing.
- **Tip:** If you know when your mentee will be online, and are able to, try to be online at the same time as them. Your conversation will go quicker because it will be more like instant messaging.

Tips for writing engaging responses:

- **Mentor:** Remember your role as a near-peer mentor! You should guide your mentee and take the initiative, but you are not an authority figure.
- **Listen:** Actively listen to what your mentee has to say! Whenever you respond to a mentee's message, demonstrate that you heard and understood them. Rephrase or paraphrase their response before adding your own. Respond to their questions, validate their feelings and experiences, and address their concerns.
- **Model** emotional connection by empathizing with your mentee's responses. Ask for details and give them opportunities to expand on what they share while respecting boundaries.
- **Be responsive:** Follow the conversation as it unfolds between you and your mentee; be responsive to the questions and interests of your mentee and let them explore the topic you are discussing in a way that is relevant to them.
- **Be a resource:** Give them as much information as you can. Some mentees will not respond right away, or may respond with quite short answers, but they are still getting a lot out of what you tell them! Remember that your impact and advice can be very helpful, even if it *seems* like mentees are not giving as long of a response as you might have expected.
- **Be a role model** for your mentee! Show them how to communicate, empathize, and find connections by doing so yourself.

Courses

As you saw in the tutorial on MentorCity, this program provides a series of courses that you and your mentee can work through together. Mentees who are participating as part of a class are often required to complete certain courses for a grade. If your mentee is participating voluntarily, you might want to point them to the courses that suit their interests.

It is your responsibility to guide your mentee through these courses, which includes initiating the discussion for each course component, reviewing the background info, doing the activity yourself, and guiding your mentee to the next course when they are done.

Our mentor guide to the program's activities is posted on the Mentor Training and Resources Portal and we will also send you a copy when you are matched.

Mentee Engagement Issues

Before you assume your mentee hasn't responded, login to MentorCity and check your message hub. Sometimes MentorCity's email notifications malfunction.

There are a variety of reasons why your mentee may not be engaged with the program, slow to respond, or not responding at all! The key is to check-in, be patient and understanding, and to not take it personally.

Why mentees don't respond:

- YOU are required to respond to your mentee within 3 days, but we cannot enforce this with mentees.
- They are probably busy – remember how busy you were in high school.
- They may be one of those students who struggle with assignment completion or attendance.

- They may only be able to work on the program during class or while at school. Students may not be able to respond if, for example, the teacher has to skip an eMentoring session (they do their best, but they have a lot to get through in their courses!), or if the computer lab is closed.
 - The eMentoring staff will try to keep you updated on class schedule changes.
 - Please remember that some students – especially those in rural communities – do not have access to internet connected devices at home. This could be a barrier to your mentee responding regularly.

Lower your expectations

First and foremost, your mentee is an adolescent who is still maturing and working on prioritizing tasks and communicating appropriately. Please don't expect their response times, message depth and enthusiasm to match yours.

Most mentees in this program are participating as part of a class. Many teachers have told us that students are reluctant to engage in conversations about their futures and place less importance on academics. This means that, at some point during the school year, you are likely to be matched to a mentee who:

- Is not engaged or interested in this program.
- Does not have a lot in common with you in terms of future goals (e.g., post-secondary)

Therefore, it's totally normal if:

- Responses are few and far between.
- Responses are short or meet the bare minimum requirements.

Below, we give some tips on how to get mentees engaged, but know that as long as you are sending reminders and modeling good engagement, the eMentoring staff and your mentee's teacher will not blame you for your mentee's poor engagement. It's up to your mentee to meet you halfway.

The eMentoring staff tries to keep track of mentors who have low-engagement mentees so that, in the future, we can try to prioritize matching them to mentees who we think will be engaged.

What to do if your mentee stops responding:

- If you haven't heard from your mentee for 10 days, send a follow up message gently checking in and reminding your mentee what you were talking about.
 - Copy/paste your previous message, or ask a specific question about the topic that you think your mentee will find interesting.
 - Show concern and provide positive reinforcement, don't demand a response or ask why they haven't responded.
 - *Example:* "Hi! I haven't heard from you in a bit so I wanted to make sure you're ok. Just wanted to say that I've really enjoyed learning about X from you, so I'm looking forward to hearing what you say about Y. As a reminder we were talking about [paste previous message]"
- If they still don't respond, wait another 10 days and check in again. Keep checking in every 10 days.
- The eMentoring staff regularly checks in on all relationships, so we are aware of response issues. Please report engagement issues in your progress reports and we will follow up with the teacher. However, remember that there's only so much that we and the teachers can do in these situations.
- Even if your mentee is unresponsive, it's still worth trying to connect with them and to model good engagement with the program by providing thoughtful responses and advice about the topics at hand. You never know, your mentee may be viewing your messages and learning something, even if they aren't responding.
 - **Tip:** Answer one of the Mentor Questions that you think will resonate with them. E.g.: "Hey _____, I haven't heard from you in a little while, so I thought I'd share my thoughts about..."

Virtual Meetings

You and your mentee may choose to schedule a virtual meeting (e.g. on Zoom). You may ask your mentee if they are interested in doing this, but please respect their wishes if they are not. Conversely, do not feel pressured to meet virtually if you are unable to or are uncomfortable doing so. Please contact the eMentoring staff if you and your mentee are interested in this option.

Mentor Progress Reports

Every two weeks the eMentoring staff will send you an email asking you to fill out a form about your mentee's progress over the past two weeks. You will have 3 days to complete the form, if you miss the deadline your response will not be recorded – reports are sent immediately after the deadline, so we cannot include your submission if you are late! This is your opportunity to report any concerns, questions, and engagement issues – or triumphs! – to the eMentoring staff and, if applicable, your mentee's teacher. More information about how to fill out your progress reports will be sent with the first progress report email.

Progress reports are mandatory, and it is mandatory to write a comment about your mentee – even if your mentee has not responded.

Ending a relationship

Relationships last for as long as your mentee wants them to.

- **You, the mentor, should NEVER be the one to decide when to end a relationship.** This decision must be made in collaboration with your mentee.
- **Do not assume that an unresponsive mentee no longer wants to participate in the program.** There are many reasons why your mentee might not be responding to you and it can be very harmful for a mentor to terminate a relationship before their mentee is ready – especially if their mentee is not responding due to an emergency, emotional, or traumatic situation in their lives. If you are having a trouble getting a hold of your mentee, please reach out to the eMentoring staff.

Reasons your mentoring relationship might end

There are a variety of reasons mentoring relationships end.

- Your mentee's class is ending.
 - Mentees who participate as part of a class will usually only participate for the duration of their class, though you can offer to stay in touch with your mentee after their class ends. When you are first matched, we will tell you when your mentee's class is ending.
 - If your mentee wants to stay in touch, you can continue to communicate on MentorCity with the support of the eMentoring staff, but you will need special permission to communicate outside the platform.
 - You will not be bound by the class's requirements, so you can talk about whatever you want.
- If they are participating voluntarily, your mentee can decide to end the relationship.
 - This could be because they are too busy to continue, have completed their desired activities, or because you have successfully helped them meet the goals they had for the program.
- If **you** are unable to continue with the program.
 - As per our policies, **you are required to participate in the program until the end of your relationship.** It is damaging to your mentee and reflects poorly on you and the program if you drop out before your relationship has run its natural course. If you **MUST** drop out of the program, please follow this procedure:
 - **Inform the eMentoring staff AND your mentee AS SOON AS POSSIBLE! DO NOT** leave your mentee without any communication.
 - Many mentees are trying to complete class requirements, so the eMentoring staff will need to rematch them quickly so that they can get credit for their course. **If you**

delay informing us of your departure, your mentee's performance and grades might suffer.

- Explain to your mentee WHY you are dropping out, so that they understand that it is not personal.
 - It can be extremely damaging to your mentee if they do not understand why you have dropped out, as they might think that they did something wrong or that you do not like them.
 - This could hurt their self-confidence and their willingness/ability to form healthy mentoring relationships in the future.
- Apologize and be humble when informing your mentee of your departure.
- If you are able to, please try to wrap up the relationship as per our Mentor Guide for wrapping up relationships (available on the Mentor Resources and Training Portal on MentorCity, will also be sent to you when you inform us of your departure).

Wrapping-up instructions

- Under Courses we have a guided Wrapping-up activity that you are encouraged to complete with your mentee.
- When we know your relationship is about to end, we will send you our Mentor Guide to Wrapping-up (also available on the Mentor Training and Resources Portal on MentorCity).
- Please take our survey and encourage your mentee to do the same (there is a link in the Wrapping-up activity).

Section 2: Addressing Difficult Issues

You are NOT required to counsel your mentee through difficult issues, e.g.: sex/romance, relationships, peer pressure, hygiene, behaviour, grades, identity issues (class, cultural, gender), or self-image/personal issues.

If you are **uncomfortable** discussing an issue that comes up (any issue at all!):

- Let your mentee know what's up. For example: "Thank you for coming to me with this, but I am totally unqualified to help you with this issue—I'm so sorry, I want to help you but I don't want to say the wrong thing! Would you like me to help you find someone that can help with this?"
- **Please inform the eMentoring staff**, and we will handle it for you. We've got your back.

If you would like to try to discuss the issue with your mentee:

- Put your mentee at ease:
 - Let them know you are glad they came to you.
 - Reassure them about confidentiality, but remind them you DO need to report safety concerns.
 - Do not be judgemental, e.g.: "Why would you do that?" or "You know better!"
- Honour your mentee's right to self-determination:
 - First, ask them if they would like to talk about the issue with you. Be clear that **it is okay if they do not**, but that you are always here if they change their mind.
 - If they do want to talk, let them decide how the discussion should go, e.g.: "I'm happy to talk about this with you, where do you want to start?"
 - Be clear that they can choose what to share. If you are asking for more information, explain why.
 - Ask if they would like your help figuring out what to do about the issue.
 - **DO NOT give unsolicited advice, or problem solve** (c'mon, we all hate it when we tell someone about a problem and they try to problem solve, right?)
 - Do not assume they need help. Maybe they just want to vent. Make it clear that you believe in their abilities to solve the problem on their own, but you are here to help if they need it.
 - If they DO want your help:
 - Ask them how you can help. Do not assume you know what kind of support they need.
 - Ask them how they are thinking of addressing the issue. If they choose to share their ideas:
 - Use a strength-based approach when providing advice, information and feedback.
 - Validate the solution they propose: provide advice and information that builds off their good ideas and strengths. E.g. "That's a great idea, here's an article about that, and here's what I did when was in a similar situation", "you're good at X so try Y".
 - Do not try to fix their bad ideas or weaknesses, but gently point out any glaring cons, e.g.: "that's a great idea, have you thought about [con]?"

Summary: The dos and don'ts of discussing difficult issues with your mentee

Do...	Don't...
Put your mentee at ease. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Keep the tone light, where appropriate. • Keep your messages informal sounding. • Be reassuring (e.g. "You got this!", "I know you'll make the right decision") 	Suddenly start acting (or writing) differently than before they approached you. Don't: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Switch to a formal tone • Start acting distant
Reassure them about confidentiality.	Give them the impression that their messages are completely private, as you must report safety issues.
Assure them that everyone makes mistakes and nobody is perfect.	Be judgemental. Don't scold them or make them feel guilty about their mistakes/failures.
Honor your mentee's right to self-determination. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ask if they want to talk about the issue. 	Assume you know what your mentee needs. Don't

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If so, let them choose what to talk about. • Ask if they want help addressing the issue. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Force your mentee to talk about the issue (e.g. keep bringing it up if they change the subject). • Try to anticipate where the conversation is going (e.g. give unsolicited advice or information). • Assume that your mentee needs your help.
<p>If your mentee asks for your help (and ONLY if):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ask them what you can help with. • Let them determine how to approach the issue. • Offer advice and information that builds on their good ideas and strengths. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide your own approach to the issue. • Disregard their ideas for how to approach the issue. • Change or fix their bad ideas or weaknesses.
<p>Provide encouragement. Explain that you believe that they are capable of solving this problem on their own – but that you are here if they need you.</p>	<p>Make your mentee feel like they lack the ability to solve the problem on their own, or that they cannot solve the problem without your help.</p>
<p>Only discuss the issue if you feel comfortable doing so.</p>	<p>Discuss an issue that you are uncomfortable with, or if you do not understand these instructions.</p>

When to be concerned

- It is important to know the common signs of how mental illness presents so you can notice if your mentee brings any of them up in conversation. Here are some things to look for:
 - Frequent feelings of anger or worry
 - Having difficulty sleeping or eating – or sleeping or eating more than usual
 - Losing interest in a previously enjoyed activity
 - Feelings of isolation, or avoiding social interactions
 - Having low or no energy
 - Feeling lack of control over emotions
- If you notice warning signs and are worried about your mentee, and feel comfortable confronting them:
 - Try to get some more information — **but only if you are comfortable doing so.**
 - Remind your mentee that you are there to listen, but that they do not have to talk to you. e.g.: “You don’t have to tell me if you’re not comfortable.” or “That’s okay, you can always talk to me later.”
 - You can ask them some questions, but be casual and non-confrontational. **Do not pry!** E.g.: “How are you doing? Have you been feeling a lot of stress lately? If so, how has your mood been?” or “Would you like to talk with me about how you are feeling? I’m worried about you.”
 - Encourage your mentee to get help.
 - First and foremost, they should reach out to an adult, like a parent, teacher, or counsellor.
 - If they do not have an adult to reach out to, you can recommend these resources:
 - Canadian Mental Health Association – BC division: <https://cmha.bc.ca/types-programs-services/youth/> Toll free phone (BC only) 1-800-555-8222
 - Here to Help (Mental Health and Substance Abuse): <https://www.heretohelp.bc.ca/>
 - Youthspace.ca: <https://youthspace.ca/youthspace-resources/>
 - The Lifeline Canada Foundation: <https://thelifelinecanada.ca/resources/teens/>
 - Free support through texting or online messaging: <https://kidshelpphone.ca/need-help-now-text-us/> or text CONNECT to 686868. Or call 1-800-668-6868
- If you are still concerned about your mentee, please contact the ReMBC team.
- **Remember, you are not a therapist or counsellor and we do not expect you to take on this role.**



Section 3: How to build trust with your mentee

Effective online communication with high school students

Though many of you are close in age to the mentees, you have probably matured more than you think! You are used to different communication styles and have more experience with how to present yourself to the world. Whether you've noticed it or not, the way you communicate now is different than how you would have communicated as a high school student. Therefore, below we have some friendly reminders on how to communicate at a level that a high school student will understand and respond to.

Moreover, productive mentoring relationships require trust and it is up to you as the mentor to build that trust. Tone, tact and level of intimidation are all major factors in building trust, and we share our tips on each below.

Style Do...	Don't...
Craft your messages in a clear and engaging way: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Write at an elementary school reading level. E.g. "I can help you out if anything in the program is confusing". <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Tip: this is a good rule for writing for ALL ages (little kids and tenured professors alike) • Keep your messages short and to the point. When writing, bold the main points. 	Be too "scholarly", e.g. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Using jargon or big words: E.g. "I'll be providing pedagogical supports for you". Include information that is irrelevant and unnecessary, or that detracts from your point. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • E.g., If your mentee asks about TRU's application, do not also tell them about UBC's – unless you think this is relevant for them.
Use open-ended questions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • E.g. "what do you like and dislike about living in a rural area?" • E.g. "what do you like about your favourite class?" 	Ask yes/no questions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • E.g. "Do you like living in a rural area?" Ask "multiple choice" questions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • E.g. "What's your favourite class?"
Explain your responses and thinking.	Give one word answers. Provide a response without an explanation.

Tone Do...	Don't...
Feel free to be informal. When writing, write like you talk. Use jokes, slang, emojis, gifs, memes etc. Describe your emotional and nonverbal reactions. Be passionate! E.g. "my heart was racing when I read your story".	Write like you would to a colleague or for a school assignment – i.e., using a more matter-of-fact, detached tone. Write with an authoritative or instructional tone. Use sarcasm – even if it is obvious to you that you are being sarcastic.
Tactfully gather information and ask questions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ask your mentee how they <i>feel</i> about a topic: E.g. "how are you feeling about your plans for after graduation?" • Ask if they have questions about a topic: E.g. "Do you have questions about how to figure out and meet all the admissions requirements?" 	Ask for information/answers directly: E.g. "What are you doing after graduation?" E.g. "Do you know all the admissions requirements for your program?" This can sound like you are grilling them and make them feel pressured.
Share stories to encourage behaviour change.	Instruct or command: E.g. "Don't procrastinate"

E.g. share a story about when procrastinating did not work out and the steps you took afterwards.	E.g. "You need to use a day planner"
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Be approachable and relatable – leave your mentee feeling like “if my mentor can do it, so can I!” Do...	Don't...
Treat your mentee like an equal: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Remember how you wanted adults to treat you when you were a teen, and embody that. Treat your relationship like a pen-pal friendship. 	Act like you are better than them or talk down to them. Refer to them as a “kid” or a “child”!
Understand that your mentee might feel intimidated by you. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Have a sense of humour about yourself and your experiences. Keep the focus on your mentee. Regularly highlight and celebrate their strengths and accomplishments. 	Focus on your accomplishments Compare your accomplishments to your mentee’s. Try to impress your mentee. Take yourself too seriously. Try to sound adult-ey or smart.
Help them understand that you do not need to be perfect to succeed. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Emphasize that you are not perfect, but you still made it to where you are today! Be vulnerable – share your failures, struggles and flaws, and how you overcame them. 	Feel like you need to be a perfect example for your mentee. Put pressure on your mentee to be perfect, or feel like they need to succeed at everything. Make your mentee feel bad about their flaws, or if they fail at something.
Relate to your mentee at every chance: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Find something you have in common, and then keep bring it up. E.g. respond to the topic, then add “did you see the new episode of...?” Include information about your day-to-day that they might relate to. E.g. if you both like baking “I tried a new muffin recipe the other day...” 	Ignore your mentee if they bring up something you have in common that is not related to the curriculum (e.g. it’s okay to talk about video games). Close yourself off or be afraid to show your personality.
Show an interest in your mentee’s life and day-to-day: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Learn what is going on in their lives, this could be both in school and outside of school, and ask questions. E.g. respond to the topic, then add “how was your soccer game?” Admit if you feel out of touch with “teen culture”. Ask your mentee what is popular and ask for recommendations—this can help level the playing field in your relationship. 	Focus solely on the curriculum. Ignore what your mentee shares about their life. Pretend to know what your mentee is referencing (e.g. a celebrity, movie or song) if you do not.

Providing appropriate support to your mentee

Support your mentee’s right to self-determination

- Encourage your mentee to share their opinions. If they are reluctant to share, it might be because their opinion differs from yours, so assure your mentee that you will accept their opinion without judgement.

Allow your mentee to decide for themselves what advice to integrate into their life. Do not pressure them to take your advice, or to go down a certain path. Frame your advice as a suggestion and let your mentee know that you will support them even if they do not take your advice.

Be honest, but kind

- Giving feedback: Ensure that your feedback is encouraging; show that you are providing feedback because you believe your mentee will succeed. Your feedback should focus on your mentee's strengths. If you have something negative to say, explain *why* and *how* they should change their approach and also say at least two positive things. The positive things should be *specific* – avoid statements like “Good post! But...” Instead, find specific things your mentee has done well. This will help them begin to identify their own strengths, in addition to building trust and emotional support. Always end on an encouraging note. When you are logged into MentorCity you will be able to see the guide on giving feedback in the Mentor Training and Resources Portal.
- Be open and honest about your experiences and perspective:
 - Your role is to help mentees realize the steps they need to take in order to reach their dreams, even if it is hard work. In other words: Discourage “magical thinking”; instead help your mentee understand what is needed to reach their goals.
 - Be positive and encouraging if something is harder, or different than they expected: e.g. “I know this seems like hard work but I know that you can do it, and I am here to help you if you need it!”

Inclusive and appropriate language.

Avoid phrases that have negative connotations for, or exclude certain groups, or that appropriate terms specific to a group or culture.

- Here are some commonly used phrases that that you should avoid:
 - Gendered statements like “you guys”, “ladies and gentlemen”, or “the girl in the back of the room” – excludes certain genders or those who do not conform to those genders, makes an assumption about the gender of a person.
 - “That’s crazy” – could be seen as demeaning to people with mental illnesses.
 - “Oh my god” – could offend someone who is religious.
 - “Minority group” or “person of colour” – use “underrepresented” or a specific identifier instead.
- Please view the resources below for more information on inclusive language (optional).
 - [BC Public Service: Words Matter Inclusive Language for the Workplace](#)
 - [UBC's Inclusive Language Resources database](#)

Section 4: What to do if you have questions or need support

Procedure Steps

- 1) **Before you do anything else**, consult this handbook
- 2) Consult the resources in the Mentor Training and Resource Portal
- 3) (if non-urgent) Write it in your next progress report
- 4) Contact the eMentoring staff

Mentor Training and Resources Portal – on MentorCity

All of ReMBC's resources for mentors in one place.

[Click here](#) (must be logged into MentorCity) or go to the **Need Help** course on MentorCity.

Resources include:

- Emergency procedures for if your mentee comes to you with a time-sensitive issue.
- Guides for starting off and wrapping up relationships.
- Guides for supporting mentees who are participating as part of a class and voluntarily.
- A guide for supporting your mentee through the program's curriculum and pedagogical supports for each course.
- Program guides to support you during some common situations that might arise:
 - Mentor Quick Tips: a short series of tips on a variety of topics.
 - How to relate to a mentee whom you don't have a lot in common with.
 - Guide for providing feedback.
- Guides for supporting youth from specific groups (e.g. LGBTQI2-S, Autism, gender-specific tips), or who are facing specific challenges (e.g. incarceration, substance abuse, trauma)

If you have a question or are having an issue, please visit this page to see if one of these resources addresses it, then if you still need assistance, please contact the eMentoring staff.

Contact the eMentoring Staff

Reach out at e.mentoring@ubc.ca any time you need support. Meet the eMentoring Staff:

Senior administrative coordinator: Parvaneh Rahbar (she/her): Parvaneh is responsible for communicating with and coordinating all of the program's participants. She makes sure the program runs smoothly!

- **Bio:** Parvaneh has completed her Master's degree in Business Administration. Her personal experience as a mentee during the job application process upon arrival in Canada has deeply shaped her appreciation for the transformative impact of mentorship. She eagerly joined the eMentoring team in 2017.



Project manager: Juliet Oshiro (she/her): Oversees the program's design, development, and operation, including mentor training, content, knowledge translation, evaluation and partnerships.

- **Bio:** Juliet's background is in science outreach; during and after completing her PhD in biology she created and worked on various science education initiatives. Along the way, she participated in several mentoring programs as both a mentor and mentee, and these positive experiences led her to join the eMentoring team in 2019.



Indigenous initiatives manager: Angela Nash (she/her): Angela provides support for Indigenous students and mentors in the program. She ensures that our program is a safe and inclusive space for Indigenous participants and their communities.

- **Bio:** Angela is Wəlastəkwewiyik (Maliseet) from Sitansisk (St. Mary's First Nation) in Fredericton, New Brunswick. She has been involved with the program since 2019, bringing her vast knowledge of engagement, relationship building, and the "Two-Eyed Seeing" approach to research as well as intellectual property. She is an advocate for the underserved!



Other eMentoring Team Members: The Principal Investigators

eMentoring's Principal Investigators provide strategic advice and direction for the program.

- **Katherine Wisener:** research and evaluation
- **Dr. Blair Stanley:** liaison to our funders (the Joint Standing Committee on Rural Issues) and rural liaison.
- **Dr. Sandra Jarvis-Selinger:** program founder and Faculty advisor.

Section 5: Closing Remarks

Everyone is different

- You and your mentee may have different ways of communicating and expressing yourselves. Pay attention to how they craft their messages, and try to use a similar style.
- Every mentee is different; you may need to adjust your writing and communication style with each mentee.
- Try different strategies for communicating with your mentee until you find what clicks.

Relax! Most mentees LOVE their mentors. The only exception is when the mentors are slow to respond, or do not respond at all. As long as you respond to your mentee within 3 days, you will do great!

Advice: from one mentor to another!

- "Be proactive, but have realistic expectations about what mentees will commit to. It may not be very easy to get them to be keen about the process, but keep trying!"
- "Go in with open expectations and be very receptive to the mentee, since most of them haven't had a mentor before. Do everything you can to block off a little time every few days to respond. This helps mentees know to expect replies at a certain time."
- "Try to revisit things that mentees mention they want to work on. It's hard to see if there is a lasting impact on the mentees if you never come back to it again, so it's helpful to see how they're progressing in things that they identify as important."
- "Look at your mentees' profiles to see what you have in common; mentees are more engaged if you leverage your shared or similar interests, this shows you can relate to them. Also look for things you find interesting in their profile and ask about that. Take time with introductions to show that you are a real person."

Advice from high school teachers

- "Your mentee cares what you think about them! Give them lots of praise and encouragement and be sure to say positive things in your progress reports – some teachers share the nice things you say with the mentees as a way to motivate them".
- "Mentees like to see the effort you put in – for example, they can see if you are messaging at 3am and will be very appreciative of you staying up so late for them! Mentor motivation leads to mentee motivation."

Thanks for reading the handbook! Happy mentoring!