

LCLD Success in Law School Mentoring Program

Mentoring Tool Kit: Best Practices for Mentors

Building a mentoring relationship requires nurturing and patience from both the Mentor and the Mentee. LCLD has compiled best practices from multiple resources, including the Center for Mentoring Excellence and former LCLD Mentors and Mentees, to help position you for mentorship success.

1 Start by getting to know your Mentee

Establishing a trusting relationship is crucial, so take time to get to know your Mentee before jumping into the work of mentoring. **Find connections and similarities that extend beyond law and careers.**

2 Establish working agreements

To lay the foundation of a mentoring relationship, **it's important that you and your Mentee agree on ground rules.** Build a basic structure for how you will work together moving forward.

3 Help your Mentee develop robust goals

Make sure that your Mentee's goals are worthy of your time and effort – **goals need to be specific, measurable, achievable, realistic, and timely (SMART).** Developing robust learning goals takes time and good conversation.

4 Set and communicate expectations

Have a conversation early in the mentorship to establish your goals and expectations, as well as those of your Mentee. Be sure to **manage your own expectations** and remember that this mentorship isn't an interview – it's a development opportunity. Your primary goal as a Mentor is to give your Mentee advice that allows them to learn and grow on their journey to becoming an attorney.

5 Engage in meaningful, authentic conversation

Strive to go beyond surface-level conversation by sharing your own successes, failures, and learnings. At the same time, **make sure to balance talking and listening.** Mentees want you to listen to their ideas as much as they want to hear what you have to say. Help them reflect on their own experience by asking probing questions that encourage them to develop and share their own insights.

6 Practice two-way feedback

Set the precedent of two-way feedback with your Mentee from the beginning. Be prepared to **offer candid feedback, balanced with compassion.**

- Model how to request and receive good feedback by asking your Mentee for specific feedback on your own mentoring contribution.
- Hold open, honest conversations to encourage mutual accountability and deepen the relationship.

7 Support and challenge your Mentee

Mentees need to feel supported (comfortable) and yet be challenged (a little uncomfortable) in order to grow and develop. Work to develop a comfortable relationship first before launching into the uncomfortable stretch needed for deep learning.

8 Share your personal journey

Use your own experiences, observations, and perspectives to impart valuable information and skills that your Mentee can apply in ways that make sense in their life. **Also remember that you may not have all the answers – and that's okay.** Introduce your Mentee to other attorneys and professionals in your network who can assist them.

9 Check in regularly and honor your commitments

Stay connected and develop a pattern of regular engagement with your Mentee. Be realistic about your availability and only make commitments that you can keep. **Both Mentors and Mentees need to be accountable for following through with agreements.** If you realize that you can no longer meet a commitment, let your Mentee know as soon as possible.

10 Check your hunches and assumptions

If you sense that something is missing or not going well, then **address a potential issue right away.** By directly addressing a potential problem, you'll prevent yourself from incorrectly assuming whether or not your Mentee is on track.

11 Invite your Mentee to events

As an attorney, you'll be invited to a variety of events, some of which may be open to guests. If the opportunity presents itself, invite your Mentee to attend these events. **LCLD virtual Group Mentoring Program events are a great place to start.**

12 Use external resources

Remind your Mentee to connect with the **Career Services Office at their law school** for additional resources. If you have questions about your mentorship, please reach out to your **City Lead or Program Manager** Nancy Richardson at nrichardson@lclldnet.com.