

Dr. Harley E. Flack Student Mentoring Program
Tips for Successful Mentoring

1. Make a personal commitment to be involved with your partner for an extended period of time. Successful mentors have a genuine desire to be a part of other people's lives, to help them through the tough decisions, to see them become the best they can be. Mentors must be invested in the mentoring relationship for the long haul: they have to be there long enough to make a difference.
2. Respect individuals and their abilities and their right to make their own choices in their life. Mentors cannot bring the attitude to the relationship that their own ways are better or that participants need to be rescued. Mentors who convey a sense of respect and equal dignity in the relationship win trust of their partners and the privilege of being mentors for them.
3. Listen and accept different points of view. Most people can find someone who will give them advice or express opinions. It is much harder to find someone who will suspend judgment and really listen. Mentors often help simply by your listening, asking thoughtful questions, and giving participants an opportunity to explore their own thoughts with a minimum of interference. When people feel accepted, they are more likely to ask for and respond to good ideas.
4. Appreciate your partners' struggles and feel them without feeling pity for them. Even without having had the same life experiences, successful mentors can empathize with their partners' feelings and personal problems.
5. Look for solutions and opportunities as well as barriers. A mentor balances a realistic respect for the real and serious problems that partners face with optimism about finding equally realistic solutions. Mentors are able to make a sense of a jumble of issues and point out sensible alternatives.
6. Stay flexible and open. Successful mentors recognize that relationships take time, and they willingly take the time to get to know their partners, even to be changed themselves by the relationship.