

WE
THINK
TWICE

RESOURCE GUIDE FOR A SAFE
AND POSITIVE MENTORSHIP





SAFETY CHECKLIST

Your safety should be your top priority when looking for a mentor. Use this checklist to help you find a safe and reliable mentor. Share the checklist with a trusted adult such as a parent, guardian, or other family member before contacting potential mentors.



If possible, choose a mentor that you and your trusted adult know really well. They could be another family member or a family friend, teacher, coach, or community member.

Learn more about this person's reputation at school or in the community. Has this person ever made you or anyone else feel uncomfortable? If you or your trusted adult have any concerns, choose someone else to be your mentor.

If the person you and your trusted adult choose is someone you don't know, ask the person if they have ever mentored a teen before. If so, you and your trusted adult should try to talk with that teen and their parent or guardian to learn about their experience. You can ask important questions, like whether the mentor was honest and reliable.

The first time you reach out to a potential mentor, try not to share personal information. Use a school email account or an email address you share with your trusted adult. Your trusted adult should be aware of what you say to the mentor and how the mentor responds. You can share general information such as your grade level and school name.

Talk with your trusted adult about what you both think your mentor can help you with. Here are examples of details your trusted adult might want to discuss:

- Is it OK for you and your mentor to be connected on social media?
- When (time of day, days of the week) is it OK for you and your mentor to talk?
- How will your trusted adult be involved in conversations, meetings, or activities with your mentor?
- What type of transportation will you use when you meet your mentor in person and what rules should you follow? Should you ride in a car with them? The safest choice is to meet your mentor in a public place like a school, park, or a library where there are other people. Also make sure you follow [national guidelines regarding social distancing](#).
- What other rules and guidelines are important to you, your trusted adult, and your mentor?

Once you and your trusted adult agree on a mentor, arrange for the three of you to talk together or meet. Then, you and your mentor can start to plan regular meetings.

If something happens that makes you feel uncomfortable about your mentor (inappropriate behavior, comments, or questions from your mentor) tell your trusted adult right away and stop communicating with your mentor.



EMAIL GUIDE FOR REACHING OUT TO A MENTOR

Will you be reaching out to a potential mentor through email?
If so, use this guide for writing the perfect first email!

Cc Line

Cc your trusted adult.

Email Subject Line

Greeting

Introduction

Share your reason for reaching out to this potential mentor. How did you hear about them? How did you find their contact information?

Connection

What are your personal/professional/academic goals? How do you think this mentor can help you? What do you plan to do with what you learn?

Brianna is emailing a potential academic mentor. Here are some examples for reaching out to other types of mentors.

Wrap-up & Contact Info

(1-2 sentences) Recognize that your potential mentor's time is valuable and thank them for thinking about becoming your mentor. Let them know that you hope to talk with them and invite them to ask you any questions they may have.

Signature Line

To: Mr./Ms./Dr. xxxx

Cc: Mom

Subject: Potential Mentorship

Mr./Ms./Dr. {Name}

My name is Brianna, and I am an 11th grade student at Fairview High School. I am reaching out because my high school counselor, Ms. Williams, told me that you have mentored other students who are interested in psychology.

I am really interested in learning more about human behaviors and emotions. I plan to go to college and am thinking of majoring in psychology, but I have a lot to learn about the process. Would you have time to tell me more about college, your career, and your experience studying psychology?

Check out these 3 additional examples!

To another student (topic = athletics)

I was on the junior varsity swim team last year, and I would like to be a varsity swimmer on the team this year. I know that you have been on the varsity team for 2 years and are a talented athlete. I would love to be able to swim at the college level, and I know I will have to train a lot to reach this goal. Would you be willing to talk with me about a training plan and help me set realistic goals for this year's swim season?

To a community leader (topic = leadership)

I used to be in your youth group at the YMCA's after-school program. I really admire your leadership skills and enjoyed all the activities that you planned for the group. I would like to be a leader for other kids someday. Would you have time to tell me more about your career, how to become a leader, and how I can get more involved in helping others?

To an employer (topic = vocational skills)

I really enjoyed helping out in your auto repair shop last summer. I want to become a licensed mechanic after I graduate high school. Would you be willing to talk with me about how you got your skills and what you know about our local mechanic training programs?

Thank you for considering my request. Please let me know if you have any questions. I look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,
{Your name}



TIPS FOR TALKING WITH A MENTOR

Are you planning on reaching out to a potential mentor for the first time by phone or in person? No worries! Use this guide to prepare for your call or meeting!



BEFORE THE CALL OR MEETING

Take some notes in the space provided. Get ready to introduce yourself!

What is your connection? _____

Examples:

- I was a student in your psychology class.
- We swam together on the same swim team.
- I was a member of your community youth group.
- My uncle, Daniel Rodriguez, is a co-worker of yours. He suggested that I call you.

Why do you want a mentor? _____

Examples:

- I want to study psychology in college, and I am looking for a mentor to help me meet that goal.
- I want to become a stronger athlete, and I need training advice from a mentor with your skills.
- I want to be leader who inspires other young people, and I am looking for a mentor to help me develop that skill.

What are your ideas and expectations for a mentorship? _____

Examples:

- I hope to have weekly meetings to keep me on track with my goals.
- I want to intern for an agency where I can learn how to write news articles.
- I would like to find a mentor who will meet with me until I graduate high school.

Practice your introduction with your trusted adult!

DURING THE CALL OR CONVERSATION

Introduce yourself and make a connection!

Say your name, explain your connection to the potential mentor and tell them about yourself. Help them get to know who you are and what you care about. Then, if you both are in agreement, you can talk about next steps:

- how you like to spend your time
- your reason for wanting a mentor
- your short- and long-term goals
- your suggestion for future meetings (day/time, frequency, location)
- your suggestion for communication between meetings

AFTER THE CALL OR CONVERSATION

Follow up with your mentor. Thank them for their time and summarize your meeting.

Your message can include details such as

- short- and long-term goals you shared in the meeting
- things you committed to doing before the next meeting
- resources or information your mentor will find before the next meeting
- day, time, and location for your next meeting

Send your mentor a summary after every meeting! This can help you stay organized and track your progress.

REMEMBER: Just like any other relationship, it's important to share similar values and agree on expectations for the mentorship. If it doesn't feel right, take some time to think about whether your mentor is the right fit for you before scheduling your next meeting. Talk with your trusted adult about it!



QUESTIONS TO ASK YOUR MENTOR



Do you have a mentor? If so, that's great! Use these questions to begin some great conversations!

SELF-AWARENESS

- How can I communicate more clearly?
- How do I talk to others about my strengths?
- How can I best talk about the things that challenge me most?
- What are some skills you think I can improve?
- Can you suggest any helpful self-reflection activities, like journaling?

DECISION-MAKING

- What tips do you have about how to make the best decisions?
- How do you weigh the pros and cons of different decisions?
- What suggestions do you have for avoiding negative peer pressure when making a decision?

GOALS

- What makes a goal good?
- How can I tell if a goal is realistic?
- How many goals should I have at one time?
- What daily goals should I set to help me meet my big goal?
- How should I track my goals?
- How can I create a timeline for working on my goals?
- What if I realize I've set a goal that's too difficult? Is it okay to change a goal?
- What is a good way to reward myself or celebrate when I achieve a goal?
- What would you consider to be your biggest accomplishment? How did you set and achieve that goal?
- How do you define success?

MOTIVATION

- How can I stay motivated, especially when things get challenging?
- What has kept you motivated in the past? Are there any quotes, songs, videos, or speeches that help motivate you? Can you share them with me?
- What habits will help me be more motivated?
- How can I remind myself to stay motivated?
- How can my support system help me stay motivated?

OVERCOMING CHALLENGES

- How can I prepare for challenges?
- How should I cope with the stress of a challenge? What activities would you recommend for taking a break and avoiding burnout?
- What can I do to recover from a disappointment or setback?
- How should I deal with a constant struggle or challenge?
- How have you dealt with challenges in your past?
- What have you learned from your mistakes?

CONNECTIONS & RESOURCES

- Who should I look up to? How do I find a role model?
- Who are some other people I could learn from? How can I connect with them? Could you introduce us?
- Who has inspired you? Who has taught you the most?
- Have you ever had a mentor? Tell me about them.
- What resources have helped you the most?

NEXT STEPS

- How do I maintain these goals and habits when we no longer meet regularly, like after I graduate or move?
- How can we stay connected long-term?
- How do I maintain these goals and habits in the future, like during college or when I am working full-time?
- How can I become a mentor for someone else?
- In what subjects do you think I would be the strongest mentor?