

ALL Program Resource Guide

Getting Started for Leaders

Thank you for your interest in the Northwestern Network Affinity Leaders and Learners (ALL) Mentorship Program.

This guide is meant to serve as a starting point before your first meeting. We hope that it helps you think about what you are bringing into your pairing and feel ready to jump into the relationship.

We hope to provide you with additional tools and resources to help you continue to deepen and navigate the connection with your learner. Please contact your liaison or email us at affinitymentorship@northwestern.edu should you have any questions or would like to share your experiences with us.

Why Your Relationship Matters

We pulled together a few videos and podcasts that will hopefully remind you of how important and meaningful mentorship is, especially for our affinity communities. This work you have chosen to engage in will hopefully be rewarding, but it also runs the risk of being difficult and exhausting. We hope that you refer back to these points of inspiration throughout the program.

- [Mentorship & Workplace Equity Takes Work | Janice Omadeke](#): Although this TEDx talk is directed at women, Janice Omadeke has a valuable takeaway: good mentorship requires a great deal of vulnerability. It's hard sharing the how and the method of how you got where you are, but it's this vulnerability that will help others behind you find success, whatever that means to them.
- Podcasts: You might enjoy listening to The Michelle Obama Podcast's [two-part episode](#) on mentoring. She sits down with her mentor and her mentees to talk about both perspectives. You also may find some value in [this episode](#) from NPR's Life Kit.

Reflect on Your Experiences

Before your first meeting, take some time to figure out how your skills and strengths can be helpful to your learner.

- **Think about your career and life development as well as getting through your time at NU.** Why have you been successful?
- **Identify challenges you've faced to get where you are.** How did you overcome them?
- **Think about why you signed up to mentor in this program.** Did you have a great mentor? Do you wish you had?
- **What is something you wish you would have gotten great advice on?**
- **Think about any twists or turns in your career and life development.** How did you make decisions? How did you navigate the next steps?

How to Be a Good Leader For Beginners

[This document](#) from the Northwestern Network Mentorship Program lists seven high level guidelines one can implement to be a good mentor. While we have the complete confidence that you will be a fantastic leader, we hope this list can give you some tangible tips to make this new relationship a little less intimidating or overwhelming.

How Much Should I Share?

[To Disclose or Not to Disclose](#): This article focuses on therapists disclosing to their patients, but shares a number of helpful considerations and reflection questions when considering self-disclosure in a relationship based in sharing and learning. We know this is an identity-based relationship, but we thought this could still be a helpful article when considering sharing identities that may not align completely with your learner's identities.



Some Things to Remember

- **Mentoring is different than managing or instructing.**
 - In this relationship, focus on big picture goals, not firefighting and tactical problem solving. If your learner needs that support occasionally and you can provide that support, fabulous. But your relationship may better serve the both of you if you think about big picture topics.
 - The mentee sets the agenda, drives the relationship and big picture goals, not the mentor.
 - The minimum level of trust required for a successful mentoring relationship is far greater than for a traditional managerial relationship. Mentors and mentees will typically share weaknesses and fears they might not share with their managers or direct reports.
 - Experience sharing is at the heart of mentoring. While mentors should do a lot more listening than talking, sharing stories and examples is the norm, not the exception.
- **Know your role and responsibilities.**
 - Help your mentee draw out the knowledge you have that's most likely to help them.
 - Share your relevant stories and experiences.
 - Challenge and offer hard truths without judging.
 - Be a powerful listener who can mirror back what you have heard from your mentee.

Resources at Northwestern For Your Learner

Your learner could share an issue that you don't have the expertise or bandwidth to assist with as fully as you would like. Maybe it's a mental health concern. Maybe their laptop broke and they need a loaner. Whatever it may be, here is a [list of resources](#) available on campus that could be a good starting point to help your learner.

Concepts in this document are adapted from materials created by Andrew Blackman at [Everwise](#).

Take Care of Yourself

[We Need to Talk More About Black Mentorship](#)

Burnout: Although this article specifically dives into Black mentorship, we think this same premise can be applicable to all of our leaders in this program. This article hopefully will remind you that while we appreciate all you are doing to help our learners, we also want to make sure you're taking care of yourself while engaged in this relationship.

Building Trust and Empowering Your Learner

Mentoring at its core is about helping another person do something that's difficult. But those difficult things are tied to a person's dreams and fears, and their strengths and weaknesses. To explore these topics with you, the leader, requires a lot of vulnerability and trust. Here are some tips that may be helpful:

○ Use physical space to create connection. Using Zoom, FaceTime, or another video conferencing platform allows you to simulate in-person meeting with body language, eye contact and active listening.

○ Both opening up and listening. We've already said this in other parts of this document, but we're going to reiterate it again since it is that important. It's going to be a hard balance to find, but when you do it'll be worth it. Take time to share your personal stories and take an interest in theirs. Avoid anything that could be perceived as lecturing. Listen more than you speak and ask sincere questions.

○ Think about boundaries and ground rules. How often do you want to communicate? Are there any topics that you feel unequipped to address? Are there certain parts of your life you would prefer not to share? Are there parts of your learner's life they don't want to share with you? You want to avoid either of you feeling abandoned or intruded upon.

○ Don't solve their problems for them. Help them solve problems themselves. You care and want to see your learner be successful. You wouldn't have signed up for this program if that wasn't true. But help your learner see making mistakes as a learning opportunity. Ask sincere and open questions that give your learner the opportunity to reflect and view their challenges in a new light.