

Good Mentorship

There are a number of different skills that combine to create effective mentoring. Outlined here are suggestions to help you and your mentee get the most out of the mentoring relationship. Be sure you have the time to be involved with mentoring: although it need not be hugely time-consuming, it needs to have an adequate investment from the mentor in order to work.

How to be a good mentor

Begin with a mentoring 'contract': agree the length of the mentoring relationship, the number of meetings you will aim for, their length, and the extent to which between-meeting contact will take place. This helps ensure mentee and mentor know what to expect and don't make unreasonable demands of each other.

Leukaemia UK advocates the developmental model of mentoring: the mentee has autonomy in selecting issues to explore, considering their options, and making decisions.

Use a structured framework, such as OSCAR, to make sure you and your mentee get the most from mentoring sessions; this will help you stay focused.

Encourage the mentee to reflect on their experiences: questions in an email can be a useful way of helping them to do so.

Check in regularly for feedback about the direction, progress and value of the mentoring.

Remember that you may be an expert in your field, but the mentee is the expert in their own life!

Humour is vital for building rapport, and contributes towards a sense of proportion, helping your mentee think through their goals in a wider context, taking work and non-work issues into account.

Maintain mentees' confidentiality at all times.

Be prepared to self-disclose on occasion, even regarding your failures.

If issues crop up during the mentoring that you'd like assistance with, contact Leukaemia UK. Most problems can be resolved.

As a last resort, if you really don't get on with your mentee, consider the 'no blame divorce'; a rematch will usually be better for both parties.

Enjoy your mentoring, and recognise its benefits for your own self-development as well.

Leukaemia UK would like to thank The Academy of Medical Sciences for their support and resources.

