

Some Suggestions Based on Experience with BCLP Mentorships

written by Gordon Riggle, BCLP Mentor 2020-2021

Getting to Know Each Other- several days before our first meeting we exchanged short biographies. Then we spent much of our first meeting discussing our backgrounds and interests. Early on we also completed personality/temperament surveys and E.Q. tests and then shared and discussed our results.

Pre-set Days/Times to Meet- At our first meeting we discussed scheduling. Given my mentee's busy schedule, she liked the idea of agreeing to fixed days/times to meet. This allowed us both to prepare for and plan around our scheduled meetings. While we committed to maintaining flexibility in the schedule, we only needed to move one meeting time when she was studying for an exam.

Meeting Modes- At the first meeting we agreed to meet face-to-face when we could and by Zoom otherwise. My mentee quickly created a calendar with Zoom invites for all 13 remaining weeks. For face-to-face meetings we met outdoors at Scott Carpenter Park or Vic's Espresso on 30th Street. When the weather was bad, we would fall back to the pre-scheduled Zoom sessions.

Setting Agendas- we used agendas for every meeting but felt free to depart from them when appropriate. We divided the agenda writing with my mentee doing the odd number sessions. We sent agendas to each other by COB each Friday for our meeting the following Wednesday afternoon. The agenda author also "chaired" our discussion. The benefits included: making good use of my mentee's time; sticking to one-hour sessions; and my mentee gaining experience in creating agendas and leading discussions.

Background Material- sharing relevant background material (e.g., articles, video clips, etc.) in advance, based on the upcoming agenda, made our discussion more productive.

Slides & Graphics- My mentee found occasional slides and graphics very helpful. For example, faced with a daunting schedule and competing demands, she put the Eisenhower Matrix (a copy is located in the Mentor Toolkit) to good use in setting her priorities.

Hands-on Opportunities- My mentee liked identifying opportunities to apply the tools and techniques we discussed to real world situations. For example, one of her goals at the outset was to be more assertive and stand-up for herself. After several discussions about how and when she could be more assertive, she pursued and was awarded a pay raise for the spring semester for her work as a Teaching Assistant in the Physics Department.

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