

The many roles of a mentor

Being a mentor isn't easy. It takes patience, empathy and generosity. There are many hats that a mentor needs to wear, and you will need to judge which one to 'put on' at different times, as your relationship with your mentee develops and grows.

An active listener

Take the time to listen, understand and interpret what the young person is saying. Suspend your own frame of reference and judgement, and remove distractions.

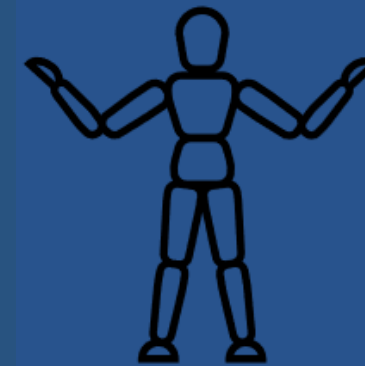


A critical friend

Help the young person work through difficult decisions and weigh up alternatives. Be there to listen and offer encouragement, providing critical feedback which may be difficult for them to receive from a less trusted source.

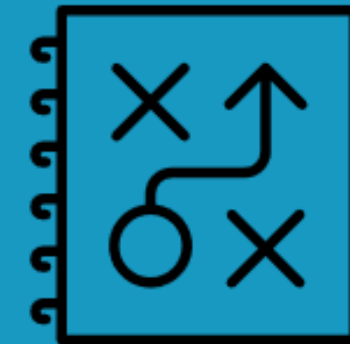
A role-model

Share your own experiences; be positive, confident and ambitious. Show them you believe in them.



A Challenger

Ask difficult questions; ask them to explore their decisions and the consequences of their decisions.



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An advisor

Help the young person to build and implement their goals and support them to plan how to achieve them.



A network facilitator

Help the young person develop their own resources, open doors to networks of useful people, and where they can gain knowledge and expertise.



A truth teller

Be upfront and clear about what you can give and ask the young person what they expect of you.

Be straight-talking, don't over-promise, and never lie.

Open-minded

It is likely to be a learning experience for you too. Be open to learning as much from your mentee as they do from you.



BE RELIABLE



Keep appointments, say what you'll do and do what you say you're going to do. Don't make any promises or assurances you may not be able to keep.