



KEYS TO EFFECTIVE MENTORING

ESTABLISH TRUST THROUGH LISTENING AND STORYTELLING

Mentors and students connect best through the practices of storytelling and conversation. In those conversations, they exchange:

- Information
- Experiences
- Models for action

LISTENING AND ASKING QUESTIONS

A mentor can assume the role of an informed colleague who helps students identify strengths and interests within themselves. Ask questions like:

- “What are some things you’d like more information about?”
- “Are there any particular challenges you are anticipating/worried about?”
- “Tell me about some of your interests in this field.”

Follow-up questions:

- “Why are you interested in that?”
- “What do you like about that field?”
- “Why is your interest meaningful to you?”

TELLING STORIES

Mentees

The formulation, “Tell me about...” is a great way to get to know students, their interests, and their goals.

- Allows students to control their own narrative and decide what to share and what not to share.
- What students choose to emphasize can give you insight into their thinking and how they are framing the issues/challenges.

Mentors

Telling stories from your own experience is also a good way to connect with mentees without providing overbearing advice.

- Students can decide what they take from your experience that is applicable to their own.
- Helps the mentor resist the urge to give advice that is too directive.
- Talking about and recognizing differences between your experience and the student’s experience is important—provides room for creative adaptations and options.