

## MENTOR

### Communicate your Intentions

Being a mentor is a wonderful opportunity to share experiences and knowledge with younger, less-experienced individuals. It enhances leadership and management skills and creates a mutually-benefitting networking relationship down the road.

Often college students and early professionals are apprehensive of the real world and starting a career. You as a mentor can relieve some of this distress by answering your protégés' questions and concerns and providing the resources needed to meet your protégés' professional goals and needs.

Many individuals are hesitant to become mentors because they believe they are responsible for their protégé's success. It is important to note that a mentor and protégé have shared responsibility. Although you as a mentor will be doing a majority of the talking during the meetings, it is the protégé's responsibility to provide you with the topics and information he/she would like to discuss.

Recognize that mentoring is *not* teaching or coaching. Rather, it is an opportunity to give back, empower, and assist individuals with their professional development. It is then up to the protégé to act upon what is discussed.

### Define the Structure

SHAPE America recommends the mentorship run from September to May (or January-May and September-December for new members) and that each mentor meets with his/her protégé on a consistent basis. Methods of communication include but are not limited to:

- Email (once per week)
- Skype (once every two or three weeks for 30 minutes to an hour)
- Phone (once every two or three weeks for 30 minutes to an hour)
- Texting (once per week)
- Face-to-Face (once per month for an hour)  
\*\*If you and your protégé so choose, your last meeting can be at National Convention

It is important to note that these are just our recommendations. Every mentorship is unique, and it up to both you and your protégé to develop a system that works.

SHAPE America will provide an online two-month check-in as well as an exit comment card during the last month of the mentorship. Please fill these out so we can get an idea of how your relationship and Mentor Match are going. Both of these surveys will be separate from your protégé.

### Tips and Tactics

- You have the ability to mentor one to an unlimited amount of protégés at a time. Being a mentor should never be an overwhelming task but rather an exciting way to share your own knowledge and experiences with those needing some advice. Be wise in selecting the number of protégés you can effectively counsel at a time.
- Mentors will lead the initial “discovery call” (roughly 45 minutes) to discuss how meetings will go and to confirm you and your protégé are a good match. Refer to the attached page for a discovery call outline.
- Have your protégé fill out a series of worksheets prior to your first meeting. Having these worksheets will give you a general understanding of your protégés’ strengths, challenges, and goals. In addition, consider giving mini assignments/research questions to your protégé in-between meetings. Assignments should never be long and burdensome but rather a way for your protégé to enhance professional development.
- Have your protégé send you an agenda a week prior to every meeting with questions and topics he/she would like to discuss. Review this agenda and gather your thoughts and resources needed for an efficient meeting.
- Listening is *extremely* important. Allow your protégé to speak fully about what he/she is looking for from you before offering advice. With that being said, it is important to act as a resource rather than try to create another “you.” Allow your protégé to develop into who he/she wants to be.
- As a mentor, you should appreciate what you’re giving to your protégé and do your best to empower rather than problem-solve. It is the protégé’s job to arrive at his/her own solutions. You are simply there to guide.
- The relationship you and your protégé share should be valuable and honest. If you don’t know something or feel uncomfortable about a discussion, share that with your protégé. Your protégé will respect you more knowing you aren’t perfect and that you’ve had your own setbacks.