

## **Mentorship: Frequently Asked Questions for Those Just Getting Started**

### **What is expected of me as a mentor in counseling?**

As a counseling mentor, you are expected to provide guidance, support, and expertise to your mentee. The nature of this will depend on the specific client, but often includes offering business-oriented advice on how to get and retain clients, properly market and expand the mentee's practice, how to obtain a physical space, and other general practice-related questions. While you may offer professional development guidance, mentoring does not include the same support as clinical supervision. The mentor serves as a role model to the mentee, using their own experience in the field as a basis for providing information on what has worked for them.

### **How do I establish a strong mentorship relationship with my mentee?**

To establish a strong mentorship relationship, focus on building trust, communication, and mutual respect with your mentee. Take the time to get to know them, understand their goals and challenges, and tailor your guidance to their individual needs. Be approachable, empathetic, and available to offer support when needed. This doesn't mean you have to be available to the mentee 24/7, however. Make sure to establish professional boundaries in the beginning so you and your mentee both fully understand the expectations of the mentorship relationship.

### **What should I do if my mentee is struggling with a particular aspect of counseling?**

If your mentee is struggling with a particular aspect of counseling, offer them guidance, feedback, and encouragement to help them overcome challenges. Provide practical strategies, resources, and examples from your own experiences, and be patient and supportive as they work through difficulties. Again, the mentorship relationship is established to address business-oriented issues. Specific client-related information should be addressed in clinical supervision, and you can direct the mentee to speak to a supervisor about these issues.

### **How can I support my mentee's professional development and career goals?**

Support your mentee's professional development and career goals by helping them identify their strengths, interests, and areas for growth. Offer advice on continuing education opportunities, networking strategies, and career advancement pathways within the counseling field. Encourage them to set goals and create action plans to achieve them.

### **What should I do if I disagree with my mentee's approach?**

If you disagree with your mentee's approach to counseling, engage in open and respectful dialogue to explore different perspectives and understand their reasoning. Offer constructive feedback based on your own experiences and expertise, while also acknowledging the validity of their perspective. Use the differences in opinions as an opportunity for mutual learning and growth.

### **How can I help my mentee navigate ethical dilemmas in counseling?**

From time to time, it may be relevant to discuss ethical issues in practice during mentorship. Help your mentee navigate ethical dilemmas by providing guidance on relevant ethical principles, laws, and codes of conduct within the counseling profession. Encourage critical thinking and ethical decision-making and

offer support in identifying potential courses of action and considering their implications. Remind them of the importance of consulting with supervisors or colleagues when faced with complex and/or client-oriented ethical issues.

**What boundaries should I establish in my mentorship relationship with my mentee?**

Establish clear boundaries in your mentorship relationship by defining expectations around communication, meeting frequency, and confidentiality. Respect your mentee's autonomy and professional judgment, while also setting limits on the extent of your involvement in their personal and professional affairs. Strive to maintain a professional demeanor and avoid any conflicts of interest or dual relationships.

**How can I provide constructive feedback to my mentee without being overly critical?**

Provide constructive feedback to your mentee by focusing on specific behaviors, observations, and outcomes rather than making personal judgments. Offer praise for their strengths and accomplishments, while also highlighting areas for improvement and suggesting actionable steps for growth. Frame feedback in a positive and supportive manner, emphasizing your belief in their potential to succeed in this profession.