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## Keys to Effective Mentoring

### In the role of mentor, consider the following:

- Take a holistic approach—in addition to being a lawyer in training, a mentee is also a person with unique qualities. Tailor mentoring to each individual's situation and needs.
- Make mentoring a democratic endeavor, a two-way street where feedback and input from both parties is encouraged and solicited—collaborate don't dictate.
- Really listen. And ask for their thoughts on what they should do or what they think; don't just tell them what to do.
- Mentoring should be focused, authentic and honest even if the "truth" isn't always pretty.
- Avoid a "boot camp" or "hazing" approach to mentoring, which can contribute to stress. Be willing to admit your mistakes. If you give poor advice or direction, don't be too proud to admit fault.
- Provide constructive criticism—instilling false confidence doesn't do anyone any favors.
- Give them an opportunity to improve—don't simply redo their work yourself.
- Instead of providing answers or advice that pertains to only one specific issue, discuss the thought process behind how this type of decision is made and how to apply the methodology to other situations.
- Mentoring should be an intentional activity. Everyone is busy and an "open door policy" just isn't enough.
- Be proactive—you have to reach out and not just assume they will come to you with questions or concerns.
- Make yourself available and assure the mentee that you are truly interested in spending time with them and that mentoring benefits you, too!

### As a mentee, contemplate these things:

- Be respectful of their time—everyone is busy. Prepare your thoughts and questions in advance, or try to find solutions on your own first...your conversations will be much more productive!
- Try to apply advice they've offered previously—show you have solved some problems independently and even worked with others to find solutions.
- Know what else might be on their plate—asking for help or advice while they're prepping for a trial puts everyone in a tough position. Instead, make an appointment to speak with them once their calendar is calmer.
- Don't "mentor shop" meaning run the same issue by multiple people. While second opinions are certainly helpful in some cases, a mentorship is about building trust and rapport.
- Be proactive! Determine particular areas of law or skills you're interested in developing and ask for help in finding those opportunities.
- While independence is terrific, definitely ask questions or for help with a situation if it is something you're unfamiliar with or not ready to tackle—a good mentor will not think of you as a bother!