



## Mentoring Across Cultures

Mentoring across social and cultural differences can have hidden challenges. It is natural to want to mentor people in our own image, but it is important to acknowledge the differences such as race, ethnicity, and gender to provide an authentic mentorship.

### Tips:

Practicing cultural competence requires an open attitude, self-awareness, awareness of others, cultural knowledge, and cultural skills.

- **Open Attitude:** You must not only have in mind what you intend to learn, but also try to move forward with a spirit of curiosity about yourself and others. Be ready to form new perspective and expose yourself to diverse idea and alternative viewpoints.
- **Self-Awareness:** In order to walk a mile in someone else's shoes, you must first take your own shoes off. In other words objectively explore what you may be subconsciously bringing to every interaction. Explore biases, judgments, and your personal background and culture. Recognize your personal biases and cultural competence and engage in self reflection.
- **Awareness of Others:** Recognize that all individuals are uniquely programmed with their own background, worldview, beliefs, and values that might not match up with your own however are equally valid. Acknowledge that our perspective is just that: our *own* perspective.
- **Cultural Knowledge:** Have the ability to acquire and accept information about others values, norms, and beliefs. Use your active listening skills and be able to adapt your communication style to different individuals, groups and cultures.
- **Cultural Skills:** Establish a relationship based on mutual trust. Clearly identify areas of concern and discuss them with mentees.

### Techniques:

- ❑ Share your background and cultural norms with your mentee. Discuss both your similarities, differences, and favorite parts of your identities
- ❑ Ask your mentee if there is anything personal they would like you to know about them. Share something personal with them in return.
- ❑ Find a movie, book, or song that resonates with an aspect of your cultural identity and share it with your mentee. Have them do the same and discuss why that thing is special to them.