

# NTP Peer Mentoring Program

**Mission:** The NTP Peer Mentoring program is focused on creating reciprocal relationships between mentors and mentees where both can learn and grow from each other's knowledge and experience.

**Goals of the NTP Mentoring Program:**

- Increase student satisfaction and retention.
- Contribute to a holistic student support system.
- Develop meaningful connections between new and more experienced students.
- Facilitate more opportunities for social and networking interactions within the wider NTP community.

## Commitment:

Mentors and mentees are expected to meet at least once per month, preferably in person but e-mail, phone, or other forms of contact are acceptable when necessary. All mentors and mentees are required to attend the welcome event at the start of the academic year and other large group events coordinated by the NTP Staff.

Mentors are required to commit to the mentoring program for at least one full academic year though ideally, they would commit to two years.

A good mentor will be familiar with program rules, expectations, and procedure, and, in the event the mentor cannot answer a specific question, will be able to direct students to those more knowledgeable. Although peer mentors are not expected to be equipped to deal with psychological crises, disputes with advisors, and other personal or degree-related issues beyond their training and expertise, they should be familiar with the people and services available to students who face these issues.

## Confidentiality:

Students will be encouraged to approach peer mentors with any issues they would like to discuss, and these conversations will usually remain confidential. However, there may be occasions when a problem arises that the mentor is not equipped to deal with. On such occasions, the peer mentor should discuss options with the student such as consulting someone, either inside or outside of the program, for advice. It is up to the student to decide if it's okay for the peer mentor to share any identifying or situational information with the person being consulted. Peer mentors should feel free to describe situations in a general manner to other peer mentors and to NTP staff or University Health Services in order to get advice. However, peer mentors have an obligation to report any information regarding potential harm to the mentee or to others by the mentee.

# Tips for Mentoring

How to be a great mentor:

- Meet with your mentee at least once per month.
- Be available via e-mail with a 24 hour response window except on weekends.
- Attend and participate in all NTP Peer Mentoring Program events.
- Be proactive, don't wait for your mentee to contact you or ask you for advice first.
- Be approachable, flexible, and open-minded.
- Be aware of your resources (*yes, you are a resource too!* Refer to the NTP Student Handbook, Graduate School Catalog, and other resources before asking NTP staff). You are not expected to have all the answers but you should be able to help mentees find the answers without defaulting to "just ask the NTP office".
- Share ideas and resources about professional development.
- Check in on your mentee's morale and academic progress/goals.
- Take responsibility for fulfilling your commitments to yourself as well as to your mentor.
- Inform your mentee about your successes, great and small, every achievement is worth celebrating.
- Provide NTP with feedback about your experience as a peer mentor!
- Most importantly, have fun!

How to be a great mentee:

- Meet with your mentor at least once a month.
- Respond to your mentor's emails promptly.
- Attend and participate in all NTP Peer Mentoring Program events.
- Be honest with your peer mentor.
- View your mentor as your go-to person and be willing to seek them out for advice and guidance-don't be afraid to ask questions even if you think they might be silly.
- Be willing to proactively address academic, professional, and personal needs and challenges.
- Inform you peer mentor about your successes, great and small, every achievement is worth celebrating.
- Take responsibility for fulfilling your commitments to yourself as well as to your peer mentor.
- Take the initiative to set up some meetings and recommend places to meet.
- Share your own knowledge and experience with your mentor.
- Build relationships with other peer mentors, they are great resources too!
- Provide NTP with feedback about your experience in the peer mentoring program!
- Most importantly, have fun!

## **Mentoring Partner Commitments Agreement**

All peer mentors and mentees must understand and agree to the commitments below by signing in the designated area.

I understand that I will be a participant in the Neuroscience Training Program (NTP) Peer Mentoring Program for one academic year with one or more mentoring partners assigned to me. I will work with my mentoring partner(s) to set and reach academic and personal goals. I will be available and accessible to my mentoring partner(s) within reason according to boundaries we set at our first meeting.

I recognize that consistent and regular contact with my mentoring partner(s) will increase the chances of us meeting our personal and academic goals. I commit to making a determined effort to maintain regular contact with my mentoring partner(s) and to attend scheduled NTP Peer Mentoring meetings and events.

I understand that providing regular, prompt, and meaningful feedback about my experiences with my mentoring partner(s) and with the NTP Peer Mentoring group to the NTP staff is an essential component of program. If I feel uncomfortable or overwhelmed by any situation, I will contact a member of the NTP staff for assistance. I will also complete and submit my NTP Peer Mentoring Program evaluations in a timely fashion.

I understand that I must collaborate with my mentoring partner(s) to determine how we will work together and utilize campus resources to help us meet our goals. Since the NTP Peer Mentoring Program is open-ended in this respect, I will play an active role in structuring the mentoring relationship.

Openness, honesty, and trust are key components of a successful mentoring relationship. I recognize that the strength of my mentoring relationships depends on my willingness to incorporate these qualities.

I acknowledge that I am signing up for the NTP Peer Mentoring Program in good faith, and that I will make an honest effort to meet the commitments outlined above.

---

Name

---

Signature

---

Date

## **Mentoring Activity Ideas**

- Walk to seminar or subgroup together or grab coffee before seminar.
- Attend professional development or ethics seminars together.
- Grab lunch-you all need to eat sometime!
- Hang out at Union South or Memorial Union for free movies, concerts, bowling, rock climbing, soaking up the sunshine on the terrace, etc.
- Attend NTP events together like guest speaker events, the NTP picnic, post-seminar celebrations, etc.
- Volunteer somewhere together.
- Check out the Dane County Farmers Market.
- Attend a badger sporting event.
- Join an intramural sport together.
- Go ice skating, sledding, cross country skiing, etc. in the winter.
- Have a game or movie night.
- Visit Madison attractions like the Zoo, various museums, the Mustard Museum in Middleton, breweries, the Capitol, a Mallard's baseball game, etc.
- Go shopping for winter clothing with mentees who aren't used to Wisconsin winters!
- Explore new restaurants around town!
- Visit Devil's Lake State Park and other parks in the area for hiking.
- Make plans to do things with other peer mentors and mentees. If you'd like to suggest activities for the whole Peer Mentoring Group and have questions contact the NTP office!

## **Meeting Topic Ideas**

- Ask how classes are going including subgroups
- Discuss rotation experiences
- Meet before, after, or during a conference
- Talk about moving to Madison/how things are going in the new city
- Talk about work/life balance in graduate school

## Campus Resources

Here is a brief list of some of the resources on campus, this list is by no means all inclusive but it should serve as a good starting point.

LGBT Campus Center: <http://lgbt.wisc.edu/>

LGBT Grad Resources: <http://lgbt.wisc.edu/students.htm#grad>

McBurney Disability Resource Center: <http://www.mcburney.wisc.edu/>

List of Religious resources: <https://kb.wisc.edu/vip/search.php?q=religious&cat=0>

Sports and Recreation: <http://www.wisc.edu/student-life/recreation.php>

Volunteer Opportunities:

<http://www.morgridge.wisc.edu/students/landingpages/localvolunteering.html>

Nighttime Safety Resources:

[http://transportation.wisc.edu/transportation/safeservices\\_walk.aspx](http://transportation.wisc.edu/transportation/safeservices_walk.aspx)

Counseling Services: <https://www.uhs.wisc.edu/mental-health/individual/>

UWell: <http://uwell.wisc.edu/164.htm>

Work-Life Balance: <http://grad.wisc.edu/currentstudents/balance/>

Graduate School Professional Development: <http://grad.wisc.edu/pd/>

Family and parent services: <http://grad.wisc.edu/studentlife/family/>

## Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

- **What should I do if I find that I may not be the best mentor for an assigned mentee?**  
If you feel as if you just don't click with a student, discuss the situation with your departmental contact.
- **How long will I be expected to mentor?**  
A minimum of a one year commitment is required and can be revisited each academic year.
- **What type of advice should I be prepared to give to students?**  
Students tend to ask how long it usually takes students to complete a degree, what steps are necessary to complete the degree, things you have learned along the way (perhaps things you might have done differently), how to deal with advisors, etc. You may also be asked about the more personal side of the graduate school experience, like how to manage stress, cope with challenges, balance relationships with work, live on a graduate student budget, etc.
- **Should I seek help from another mentor if I don't think an assigned mentor is best able to help me?**  
It is certainly fine to build connections with other mentors; this is exactly what the peer mentor network is for! It is likely that, as you progress in your program, you will meet new people, your interests will change, etc. This simply means that you'll be broadening your network of resources and that's a great thing!