

TABLE 5.1 Elements of a Successful Mentorship

Element	Considerations	Examples
Time	Frequency	Weekly, monthly, or quarterly.
	Scheduling	Duration of meeting (quick consult vs check-in). Schedule to protect meeting times and reschedule if necessary. Decide on mutually agreed-upon times/days.
	Accountability	Determine how to inform each other of schedule changes and in what time frame changes need to be made (day before, etc.).
Trust	Respect	Consideration of cultural and personal differences.
	Discretion/Confidentiality	Ask for consent if specific information is shared, and establish parameters on exclusions (safety, health emergency).
	Safe Space	Create an environment where vulnerability is accepted and that includes a judgment-free zone. Prioritize physical, psychological, and emotional safety.
	Model the Behavior	Demonstrate humility, admission of errors, creating a positive work culture, and modeling healthy self-care practices.
Communication	Transparency	Explain how and why systems are developed.
	Openness and Nonjudgment	Be open to new ideas, sentiments, feedback, and criticisms. Avoid judgment and assume positive intent.
	Mode	Identify personal preference to determine the success of interpretation (e.g., discerning tone from a text message). Define the best mode of communication (email, text, phone call, or video chat).
	Personality/Learning Styles	Consider the diversity of individuals (introspective vs extrospective). See DISC Assessment at aaha.org/mentoring under Resources.
	Conflict Resolution	Define the core problem, use reflective listening, collaboratively find a solution or adaptation to move forward.
Respect for All Identities and Barriers	Pronouns	Ensure that pronouns are defined and used properly in all communication.
	Name Preference	Doctor vs first name, correct pronunciation and spelling of name.
	DEIB Influences	Appreciate diversity, value inclusion, and support feelings of belonging. Seek ongoing training with a focus on implicit bias, impact of privilege, barriers, and limitations due to things like financial realities, life stage demands, roles as caretakers, and/or cultural differences and expectations.

The 2023 AAHA Mentoring Guidelines are available at aaha.org/mentoring.

These guidelines were prepared by a Task Force of experts convened by the American Animal Hospital Association (AAHA) and were subjected to a formal peer-review process. This document is intended as a guideline only, not an AAHA standard of care. These guidelines and recommendations should not be construed as dictating an exclusive protocol, course of treatment, or procedure. Variations in practice may be warranted based on the needs of the individual patient, resources, and limitations unique to each individual practice setting. ©2023 AAHA.

