Up the Hill Project

Tips For Online Mentoring

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WHAT IS THE UP THE HILL PROJECT?

The Up the Hill Project is a program for people with an intellectual disability to audit topics at Flinders University in South Australia. For more information: https://www.flinders.edu.au/engage/community/clinics/up-the-hill-project

Tips for online mentoring came from the experiences of participants, the mentors and the Up the Hill Project Coordinator.

☑ MEETING YOUR PARTICIPANT

Meeting your participant online for the first time can be overwhelming. It could be good to have some questions ready to ask.

- What are your interests?

- How can I support you?

- What is your experience with technology?

- What is the best way to keep in contact?
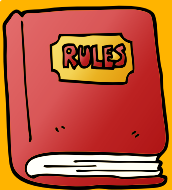
☑ SET BOUNDARIES

In the initial stages of the relationship, it is good to set boundaries.

- Think about and discuss the purpose of the mentoring relationship - what you both want to get out of the time together.

- What to do if you are not able to meet online on a particular day.

- Create some rules - what you expect of each other (e.g. no phones when the other person is talking; how often you will take breaks; appropriate contact time; etc.).

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☑ SET A ROUTINE

Some mentors have found that having a routine can help organise the sessions, and make it more productive:

- Identify a day or time that is suitable for everyone.

- Have a plan for sessions - have information ready on the computer, write some notes of things you need to talk about.

- Send reminders for sessions. People can get busy and/ or need reminders.

☑ COMMUNICATION

- Have open communication
  – mentoring is about being a team and helping each other.

- Work together to pick a suitable program to connect on. You do not need to stick to one platform. Ideas: Zoom, Teams, Collaborate, FaceTime, Skype.

- Introduce yourself to family, caregivers, support people and others.

- Encourage video participation as it can enhance engagement, be more personal and help you to create greater connection.

- Utilise group chats or video meetings with other mentors and the Up the Hill Project Coordinator.

- Try and connect with peers in your participant's classes. It is important to feel included and make connections with others.

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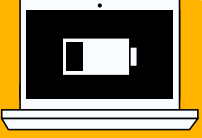
☑ BE PREPARED

- Check your device – check for updates, check battery levels, check you have the right programs downloaded, check your internet connection, check if links are working.

- Prepare to be flexible. Online mentoring allows participants and mentors to have more flexibility and choice about when and how you connect.

- Prepare a suitable working environment. Avoid distractions, loud noises and other people. Encourage your participant to also pick a spot in their environment that would be suitable.

- Silence is not always bad or awkward. Sometimes you need to let the participant lead.
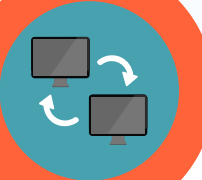
☑ BE CREATIVE

Online mentoring is not the same as face-to-face mentoring. How you build relationships and rapport will be different. You could:

- Have variety in the activities you do. Perhaps have some more activities/ ideas on standby.

- Base activities/ conversations on the mentees interests.

- Make it fun: use pictures, videos, share screens, ask questions.

- Mentoring does not have to be all about the topic, you could play online games together. You can Google different options - use words such as 'icebreakers' and 'online games'

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☑ **BE PATIENT**

- The internet and technology does not always work - it can be slow or have some troubles!

- Do not expect instant responses or replies when communicating online.

- For some people, technology may not be part of their everyday life. Take time to support the development of these skills.

- Find relevant resources (online videos, infographics, websites) and utilise home supports.

NEED SUPPORT?

Contact the Up the Hill Project Coordinator

upthehill@flinders.edu.au
(08) 8201 3382

Utilise the support available around you -
talk to other mentors