

Queer Connections: LGBT Mentoring Program: Mentee Manual

Mentoring builds relationships between mentors and mentees who share an LGBTQIA+ identity. Mentors and mentees co-create their relationship, defining boundaries, learning from each other, and working toward mutually agreed upon goals. In their mentors, mentees find positive examples of professional people who have navigated college and possibly the professional world as out members of the queer and trans community. Mentors offer experiences and advice to assist mentees on their own journeys. At the same time, mentees have much to teach mentors from their own life experiences, educational paths, and identity journeys.

Mentoring programs on college campuses are aimed at improving the success and retention of participating students. Because of this, mentees participating in Queer Connections will also benefit from targeted success coaching and outreach. This outreach is to ensure that QC mentees have access to the tools and support to develop skills for academic success while building personal connections, via their QC mentors, to the Grand Valley State University community.

Mentees should be willing to:

- ✓ Share their own stories and experiences with mentors;
- ✓ Demonstrate a willingness and desire to learn;
- ✓ Work with mentors to develop and define 2-3 achievable goals to be worked on during the course of the mentoring relationship;
- ✓ Be proactive in reaching out and maintaining the mentoring relationship;
- ✓ Be responsive to mentor outreach and requests;
- ✓ Set and communicate personal boundaries, including guidelines for meeting places, duration and frequency of meetings, and needs for confidentiality;
- ✓ Identify and explore campus and community resources;
- ✓ Respond promptly to check-in and feedback requests from the LGBT Resource Center.

Mentoring is not a substitute for counseling. Queer Connections mentors are not directly affiliated with or staffed by the University Counseling Center. Mentees who are struggling with mental health concerns, including but not limited to depression, substance abuse, suicidal thoughts, or abuse should contact the Counseling Center for assistance.

If you have general questions or concerns at any time, feel free to reach out to the Queer Connections program coordinators:

DL McKinney: mckinndl@gvsu.edu, 616-331-8991

Selected GVSU Resources:

University Counseling Center: www.gvsu.edu/counsel, 616-331-3266

Student Academic Success Center (SASC): www.gvsu.edu/sasc, 616-331-3588

Financial Aid Office: www.gvsu.edu/financialaid, 616-331-3234

Campus Climate Concern Reporting: www.gvsu.edu/ccr

Disability Support Resources: www.gvsu.edu/dsr, 616-331-2490

Housing Office: www.gvsu.edu/housing, 616-331-212

Dean of Students Office: www.gvsu.edu/dos, 616-331-3585

Victim Advocate: www.gvsu.edu/vro

Selected Community Resources:

Grand Rapids Pride Center: www.grpride.org, 616-458-3511

Red Project: www.redproject.org, 616-456-9063

GIFT (Gays in Faith Together): www.gaysinfaithtogether.org

Grand Rapids Trans Foundation: www.grtransfoundation.org

Emergency Hotlines:

911

Trevor Project: 866-488-7386

Trans Lifeline (Hotline): 877-565-8860

GLBT National Hotline: 888-843-4564

Suggested conversation starters:

Introductions:

Take turns sharing your stories with one another.

- How has your LGBTQIA identity shaped your professional, personal, and educational journeys?
- What are some of your strengths and weaknesses?
- What have you identified as some of your knowledge gaps that you can work on filling together?
- What (if anything) makes you nervous about beginning a mentoring relationship?
- What are you excited about or looking forward to?

Icebreaker:

- What are 2 things that you hope to learn from your mentor?
- What are 2 things that you can teach your mentor?

Goal Setting:

Discuss/brainstorm a list of possible goals. Together, select 2-3 that are specific, measurable, action-oriented, realistic, and that can be accomplished during your six-month mentoring relationship.

Tips for successful mentoring:

- Make sure your relationship is co-created: Mentoring is distinctly different from teaching, supervising, or parenting, and it may take a time for your relationship to find its rhythm. To help establish parity, make sure your mentee has an equal say in determining meetings (time, location, frequency) as well as discussion topics and activities.
- Focus on achieving your goals: The goals should be both measurable and achievable within the timeframe of the program. This ensures that both you and your mentee begin with a clear and agreed-upon sense of how you will know the goals have been achieved. Once the goals are established, work with your mentee to determine specific steps you

can take together to achieve them. Achieving goals is important for the mentee's sense of progress, productivity, and accomplishment.

- Have fun!: Your mentoring experience should be joyful and rewarding, at least some of the time. Check in with your mentee often, and be adaptable. Remember that plans may need to shift and change according to needs, and that's ok. Reflect often on your own experience. If you need to process, troubleshoot, or get feedback, reach out to the Queer Connections program coordinators. We are here to support.
- Be a good listener. This might seem obvious, but some newer mentors get caught up in needing to appear a certain way and position themselves as mentors that they forget to pay close attention to what their mentees are saying. Remember that undergraduate students simply don't have a lot of opportunities to talk to faculty and staff outside of an evaluative (instructor/supervisor-to-student) context.
- Don't be discouraged: Sometimes mentees (and mentors) are unresponsive. Students may not be adept at managing their time and may discover they don't have the capacity to commit as they thought they did. If your mentor "goes dark," check in with the program coordinators.

Selected GVSU Resources:

Milton E. Ford LGBT Center: <https://www.gvsu.edu/lgbtrc/>, 616-331-2530

University Counseling Center: www.gvsu.edu/counsel, 616-331-3266

Student Academic Success Center (SASC): www.gvsu.edu/sasc, 616-331-3588

Financial Aid Office: www.gvsu.edu/financialaid, 616-331-3234

Campus Climate Concern Reporting: www.gvsu.edu/cccr

Disability Support Resources: www.gvsu.edu/dsr, 616-331-2490

Housing Office: www.gvsu.edu/housing, 616-331-2120

Dean of Students Office: www.gvsu.edu/dos, 616-331-3585

Victim Advocate: www.gvsu.edu/vro

Selected Community Resources:

Out on the Lakeshore: <https://www.outonthelakeshore.org/> 616-994-8090

Grand Rapids Pride Center: www.grpride.org, 616-458-3511

Red Project: www.redproject.org, 616-456-9063

GIFT (Gays in Faith Together): www.gaysinfaithtogether.org

Grand Rapids Trans Foundation: www.grtransfoundation.org

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Title IX Compliance

Title IX compliance has specific importance for Queer Connections mentors. According to the CDC[1], LGBTQ people experience sexual violence at the same or higher rates as cisgender and heterosexual people. Because Queer Connections encourages the formation of personal relationships, mentees may disclose incidents of sexual harassment, exploitation, or violence to mentors. Queer Connections mentors are required to report any disclosures of sexual misconduct to the Title IX Coordinator as outlined below.

Understanding Title IX

Title IX is a part of the Educational Amendments of 1972. This law protects people from sex-based discrimination in educational programs and activities that receive financial assistance from the federal government.

Title IX states that:

"No person in the United States shall, on the basis of sex, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any education program or activity receiving Federal financial assistance."

Title IX covers sex-based discrimination in the following categories:

Sexual harassment, sexual violence, dating violence, domestic violence, stalking, sexual exploitation, sexual coercion, sexual assault, sexual battery, rape, the failure to provide equal opportunity in athletics, and discrimination based on pregnancy.

What if Someone Discloses They Were Assaulted?

Confidentiality cannot be promised (only counselors in the Counseling Center, the student ombuds, and the victim advocate can do so). Employees must share responsible employee status up front. As a responsible employee, they are required to report.

Reporting Sexual Harassment or Sexual Violence

Faculty and staff who receive complaints of sexual harassment or sexual violence are obligated to report complaints to their department head or the Title IX Coordinator **as soon as they become aware of the incident**. Graduate students not employed by the university must also report incidents of sexual violence that are disclosed to them by their mentees. The purpose of reporting sexual harassment and violence is to prevent sex discrimination on campus, promptly address reported issues, and limit the effects of harassment within the educational environment.

Here is a list of items you should report, so do your best to keep track of this information during the disclosure without taking on an investigator role.

WHO was involved? Who was the survivor, or the potential victim? Who was the perpetrator?

WHAT happened? What type of misconduct was reported, for example, Sexual harassment, sexual assault, stalking?

WHERE did it happen? Did the reported misconduct take place on campus or off-campus? What location was reported?

WHEN did it happen? Date, time, etc.

What about "Why did it happen"? **Please refrain from taking on the investigator role.** If you have information that the student disclosed, please share that with the Title IX coordinator but refrain from asking any "why" questions.

How to report:

Online:

Go to: <https://www.gvsu.edu/titleix/> and click on "Reporting an incident."

[1] Read More here:

http://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/pdf/cdc_nisvs_victimization_final-a.pdf

Queer Connections: First meeting worksheet

Icebreaker (bring to the first meeting):

What are 2 things that you hope to learn from your mentor/mentee?

What are 2 things that you can teach your mentor/mentee?

1. Introduce yourselves with names, pronouns, and a little bit about yourselves
 1. Mentees: Major, hometown, year at GVSU, hobbies/passions
 2. Mentors: Position, department, number of years at GVSU, hobbies/passions
2. Take turns sharing what motivated you to join Queer Connections and what you each hope to gain from the experience.
3. Find a day/time/location that will work for both of you, and schedule your in-person meetings for the next couple of months. Also, discuss your shared hopes and expectations in terms of how (phone, email, etc) and how often you will communicate outside of your in-person meetings.
4. Additional discussion questions:
 1. What are you most proud of?
 2. What is one thing you are excited about this semester?
 3. What is one thing you are nervous about this semester?
 4. How has your LGBTQIA+ identity shaped or impacted your educational or professional journey?
5. Set some goals for your mentoring relationship. If you need a minute to brainstorm, use some blank paper to create word-clouds or mind maps or whatever works best. It might be helpful to think in terms of different areas of growth: personal, professional, academic, etc. Another way to frame this question is to ask, "If our mentoring relationship is successful, I (mentee) will_____."

Goal #1:

Date for completion:

Resources/steps needed:

Goal #2:

Date for completion:

Resources/steps needed:

Goal #3:

Date for completion:

Resources/steps needed: