



Alternative Approaches to Peer Mentoring

Virtual Options During COVID-19 Pandemic

As the COVID-19 pandemic continues, direct face-to-face peer mentoring has become more challenging due to state regulations and the need for social distancing.

The good news is that there are other ways to stay connected with your peers.

Consider using some of these **alternative methods**:

- Direct phone calls
- Secure conference calls
- Social media
(i.e., Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, LinkedIn)
- Private online discussion boards
- Video calls and/or messaging
- Texting or messaging applications
- Web conferencing

To help you make these connections, these are some examples of online (virtual meeting) **tools** to consider:

- **Zoom** <https://zoom.us>
- **GoToMeeting** <https://www.gotomeeting.com>
- **Skype** <https://www.skype.com/en>
- **WhatsApp** <https://www.whatsapp.com>
- **Google Hangouts** <https://meet.google.com>
- **FaceTime** (iPhone Users Only)
<https://apps.apple.com/us/app/facetime>
- **Facebook Groups** <https://www.facebook.com>

IMPORTANT

Although the above tools are free, some will require you to create an account and/or download an app. Always read the User Agreement Policy carefully for any chosen tool.

To use these online platforms, here are some **equipment and resources** you might need:

- **Internet service**
(at home and/or through your phone service provider)
- **Mobile phone, tablet and/or computer**
- **Built-in camera**
(included with most smartphones and some computers)
- **Headset/microphone**
(if your computer does not have a built-in microphone)
- **An active account** on the platform of choice
- **A downloaded program or app** for the platform of choice



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Tips for effective mentoring through virtual methods

- Coordinate a day and time that both parties are available.
- If you're new to some of these systems, do a practice call with family or friends so that you are comfortable with using the virtual application.
- Activate your camera to be more personable and engaging, while being mindful of your space and background. Make sure you're comfortable with the personal space you will be sharing through video.
- Ask your mentee to activate his or her camera if possible. This can help in communication through body language and visual cues.
- If discussing an educational resource, explore ways to electronically share it before the meeting, or share your screen if you have that capability.
- When interacting via writing (texting or email), be mindful of how a message can be interpreted without a verbal tone (for example, avoid using all capital letters).
- Be flexible with unexpected situations, such as interruptions from family or animals in your mentee's environment.
- Remember to use active listening and positively promote self-care management.



For more information or to file a grievance, please contact us:

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