



**OUR MISSION:** Women and Youth Supporting Each Other empowers young women by providing the resources and support necessary to make positive life choices and create community change.

# Conversation Checklist

## Mentor Training Component: 3. The Role of a WYSE Mentor

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### What to Do in a Conversation with Your Mentee

- ✓ Paraphrasing
- ✓ Door Opening
- ✓ Probing
- ✓ Perception-Checking
- ✓ Verbal Communication
- ✓ Non-Verbal Communication
- ✓ Open-Ended Questions
- ✓ “I” Messages

### What Not to Do in a Conversation with Your Mentee

- x Directing, Ordering, Commanding
- x Threatening, Warning, Punishing Moralizing, Preaching,
- x Obliging Persuading with Logic, Arguing, Instructing,
- x Lecturing Advising, Recommending, Providing Answers or Solutions
- x Criticizing, Name-calling, Blaming, Evaluating, Judging Negatively, Disapproving  
Kidding, Teasing, Making Light Of, Joking, Using Sarcasm
- x Diagnosing, Psychoanalyzing, Interpreting, Reading-In
- x “You” Messages

### Suggestions for talking with your mentee:

At first, it may be easiest to talk about more general or seemingly superficial topics, such as what movies she likes, what kind of food she likes to eat, who her best friends are, what she likes to do after school and on the weekends, etc. If your mentee tends to answer all of your questions with very simple answers or without enthusiasm, you can start to talk about yourself. A good way to get your mentee to talk is to start by telling your opinion, then asking a question about the same topic. For example, “I think that reality TV is so ridiculous, what so you think about it?”

When your mentee responds to one of your questions, it helps to focus on her responses and elaborate on her opinions. Ask more questions and show that you are



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interested in what she thinks. If you become absolutely stuck in conversation...you can tell a funny story about yourself or your friends, ask more questions, start talking about yourself, or bring up new pop culture stuff that she would know about.

Do not be shy about talking with your mentee about session topics! It is important that you are a resource for your mentee and you shouldn't feel awkward about discussing WYSE stuff with her. If she doesn't want to talk about a specific topic, that's okay, but you can totally ask her opinions on things discussed at session. Just say, "What did you think about the birth control session? What had you heard beforehand? What do your friends think about that kind of stuff? Etc."

Be honest and open with your mentee. Talking may be difficult at first, but if you are patient and persistent (not pushy), you and your mentee will become more comfortable around each other and conversation will start to come easier. Always pay attention to things that your mentee shows interest in and think of ways to get her talking about the things that she cares about.

### **How to establish a good relationship with your mentee:**

When you get your mentee, hug her! Be more excited than you have ever been for anything in your life! Make a real effort to get to know her right off the bat. She will appreciate that you remember her fun facts and it will show that you are interested in her.

Make sure to establish a good relationship with your mentee's parents as soon as possible. This may require persistence, but it will make your individual outings go a lot smoother. Find a good way for you and your mentee to communicate with each other at least once a week. If you talk about it beforehand, you won't be constantly frustrated trying to get a hold of her.

When hanging out with your mentee, try to encourage her schoolwork and any hobbies that she may have. Helping her with her homework or making crafts, cooking, or watching a Broadway musical can be a great way to bond with her, and it will help her to focus on positive things outside of school. Be careful not to assume anything about your mentee and keep a very open mind.