

Arianna Thomas-Winfield

As a peer mentor, I am committed to being a personal and intellectual resource to my fellow colleagues, especially to those who are new to the Sociology program and unfamiliar with how the program operates. I try to use my area of expertise (inequality) to create and foster relationships with others who share the same area of interest. In doing so, I welcome conversations with others that allow our similarities to become apparent. As a result, a door to potential opportunities is opened as my peers and I share our research plans and career goals for the future, leading to potential collaboration or general support. Furthermore, as a mentor I am approachable, reliable, and patient, available for people when they seek out my help. More importantly, I am not only interested in mentoring others educationally, I also care about mentoring others *personally*. In particular, I use my own social identities and experiences to reach out to people in underrepresented groups (e.g., race/ethnicity, sexuality), and offer a sense of belonging and inclusivity. Also, from sociological literature (and my own sociological research) I have learned how important it is for people of color to have mentors who are also of color. It is important for a mentor to not only provide professional support, but to be *aware* of the complex identities and backgrounds people have, and how those social characteristics interact with and play out in institutional settings. Similarly, as a teaching mentor, I am committed to the personal and intellectual development of my students. I provide students with plenty of opportunities to share their ideas with me and their peers. It is important to me that students feel comfortable and safe to vocalize their thoughts in a group or one-on-one basis. More so, I encourage students to apply sociology to their everyday lives or to their own disciplines. Instead of solely teaching sociology, I want students to implement sociological thinking into other

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classes, projects, and aspects of their lives. In this way, learning is not passive, but active and memorable.