

Mentoring Philosophy: Mandy Bradbury

Number one, I want to have a positive impact on the lives of those I mentor. I want to be seen as open, trustworthy, and compassionate in the eyes of my mentees so that they feel absolutely okay coming to me with any challenges. I will use active listening skills when speaking with mentees and will do everything in my power to build up their self-esteem, academic self-efficacies, and sense of self-worth. I tend to focus on the wellness aspects of mentoring (e.g., mental health, social wellbeing, etc.); but, I know it is also important to zoom out and incorporate other aspects such as professional development, academic support, etc. I will strive to meet all the needs of my mentees, but when I am ill equipped to help them handle a situation, I will support them by directing them to appropriate resources.

As a peer-mentor, I hope to not only build organic one-to-one mentor/mentee relationships, but to also train capable peer mentors within my department to build a sense of community and belonging among our students. Further, I hope to expand this community by including outside disciplines in the circle. I had several mentors over the course of my life and believe it is important to have a community of support behind a person. For instance, maybe have a yoga teacher for spiritual support, an advisor for academic, a peer for social and personal support. It takes a village. Therefore, I am passionate about building a network to connect people of all backgrounds, expertise, and experience.

Further, I feel a sense of belongingness and acceptance is critical for an individual to feel safe to discuss difficult topics and to work through them most effectively. For instance, in the words of Brene Brown, "Because true belonging only happens when we present our authentic, imperfect selves to the world, our sense of belonging can never be greater than our level of self-acceptance." I will model these ideas by being open about my own failures and insecurities to show my mentee they are not alone; however, sometimes it is also important to just let the mentee feel what they feel and be there to listen and empathize with them.