

DOS AND DON'TS FOR MENTORS IN VTCs



This list of what mentors should **not** do is not a substitute for a thorough familiarity with the policies and procedures of their Veteran Treatment Courts. It is meant only as a quick reminder of proper mentor protocol.

THE FOLLOWING ARE SOME OFFERED **DON'TS**

- Preach to your mentee.
- Impose your values, lifestyle or beliefs on your mentee.
- Appear to be judging or evaluating your mentee, unless it is in a positive way.
- Ask a lot of questions or otherwise pry into the veteran mentee's personal life. Wait until your mentee is ready to divulge something to you.
- Allow your relationship with your mentee to deteriorate to the point the mentee lacks trust in you; open communication and commitment to the process are key.
- Become sexually involved with your mentee.
- Hug your mentee without asking permission (i.e., respect boundaries, both stated and implied).
- Consume intoxicants when you are with your mentee.
- Abandon your mentee. You made a commitment to help, so stick to it and foster a teamwork attitude, while setting the example of resilience.
- Try to be the mentee's mental health counselor. The VTC collaborative team will take care of that.
- Breach a mentee's confidence, unless keeping the confidence violates VTC policy.
- Interrupt when your mentee is speaking (a key to active listening).
- Get defensive if your mentee is hostile; be patient and tolerant.
- Become a source of finances for your mentee (establish boundaries early on to ensure there are no implied expectations).
- Try to offer quick solutions. Allow your mentee to vent before trying to get to the root of the situation, and then try to find a solution.
- Speak on your phone or read your messages while you are with your mentee (another key to active listening); turn off your phone.

(Moore & Starks, 2020)