

## **Let's get friendly! (But not too friendly):**

A guide to knowing your boundaries when it comes to your e-mentoring relationship

The Upward Bound T.I.M.E. e-Mentoring program has established some guidelines and procedures that should be followed by both mentors and mentees when interacting. These boundaries are meant to protect both the mentor and mentee and to create a program structure that prevents misunderstanding and unrealistic expectations. Traditional mentoring programs include thorough mentor screening and a background check. If a mentor wishes to expand their relationship with a mentee beyond the parameters of the T.I.M.E. e-mentoring program he or she should contact a traditional mentoring program that will facilitate screening, training and structuring of a more comprehensive mentoring relationship.

**1. T.I.M.E. is an e-mentoring program:** This means that no communication should take place other than through email. Never disclose personal information such as addresses and phone numbers.

**2. Face-to-Face meetings will only occur during a supervised, Upward Bound sponsored event:** Upward Bound holds quarterly events that give mentors and mentees an opportunity to meet in person. These events are supervised by Upward Bound staff and will only take place on the campus of Ohio University. Meetings outside these supervised events are prohibited and will result in the termination of the mentoring relationship.

**3. Respect Confidentiality but Report when necessary:** During the course of a mentoring relationship information may be disclosed between a mentor and mentee of a confidential nature. Be aware that although confidentiality should be respected at all times, there are some instances where situations should be reported. If a mentee reveals issues related to current child-abuse, child-neglect, or threat of harm to self or others it should immediately be reported to the Upward Bound staff. Mentors and Upward Bound staff should use their own judgment and act in consideration of the safety and welfare of those concerned.

**4. Set an example of what appropriate communication consists of:** T.I.M.E. mentees are students who hope to be successful in the professional world. This means that they need examples of what appropriate and professional communication looks like. As a mentor it is your responsibility to be friendly but also convey an air of professionalism. Please do not use profanity or inappropriate references in your emails. Students get enough of this from each other, they need to see something different from you! If an email that a mentor receives from a mentee seems at all inappropriate mentors are to immediately forward the email to the administrator of the T.I.M.E. mentoring program. The following are examples of some boundary violations and inappropriate communications that may appear in an email: A request to borrow something, An

invitation to an outing or social event, A request for contact outside the program parameters, Rude, vulgar or disrespectful statements.

**5. When in doubt, forward questionable emails:** If a mentor or mentee ever receives an email that makes them feel uncomfortable or crosses the line of appropriateness they are always encouraged to forward the email to the program administrator. The goal of this program is to foster healthy relationships, this cannot occur when one member of the match is behaving inappropriately. The T.I.M.E. e-Mentoring program reserves the right to request emails at any time that the administrator deems necessary. Refusal to forward emails will result in dismissal from the program. These guidelines are to promote a safe, responsible program.