

Mentor Express Discussion Topics for Mentors and Mentees

February 2021

Discussion Topics for Mentees and Mentors

1. Meet online or at the mentor's office. If meeting in person, introduce the mentee to other lawyers and support staff. Tour the office to see how the mentor's practice is organized.
2. Responsibilities and division of duties between lawyers, paralegals, assistants and other office employees.
3. Legal Aid, Pro Bono Law Alberta and opportunities for charitable work as a lawyer. Discuss how to fit volunteer work into a busy practice.
4. Office politics and boundaries for acceptable behavior between lawyers and support staff.
5. Opportunities and benefits of greater bar association involvement. Are there any bar association meetings you could attend together?
6. Time management skills and software.
7. What to include in standard retainer agreements.
8. Ways to protect client confidentiality.
9. How to recognize and deal with conflicts of interest.
10. Law office management systems:
11. Records of client-related expenses.
12. Billing systems and frequency of billings.
13. Filing systems.
14. Document retention plan.
15. File recall and diary systems.
16. Online research.
17. Common client management errors and malpractice complaints, how to recognize them and how to avoid them.
18. Obligations to report misconduct to the Law Society and potential insurance claims to ALIA.
19. How to deal with difficult clients and how to maintain good client relationships.
20. The unwritten rules of civility between lawyers and when dealing with members of the judiciary. How to respond to difficult lawyers or judges.
21. What to do when the mentee encounters unethical conduct by others or if they are asked to do something unethical or unprofessional by a senior partner or a client.
22. Client development techniques that have worked for the mentor.
23. How to conduct effective Questioning or court applications remotely.

24. Different forms of dispute resolution (mediation, arbitration, judicial dispute resolution, mini-trials, summary judgment applications, trials) and their relative strengths and weaknesses.
25. Techniques for conducting successful mediations and negotiations.
26. The mentee's career goals and steps to achieve them.
27. Ways to balance the mentee's career and personal life and how to keep job pressures in perspective.
28. The value of a business plan and what it should include.
29. Substance abuse and mental health issues, what to do if the mentee or a colleague may have substance abuse or mental health problems, and the resources available to get help.
30. How to manage law school debt and any financial pressures the mentee may be facing.
31. Different uses of a law degree and alternate career paths, including big firm v. small firm, private practice v. in-house positions, government and not-for-profit sectors.
32. Possible job search strategies.
33. Ethical ramifications of leaving a firm.
34. Planning for retirement and developing an exit strategy that complies with the mentee's professional obligations.