



The Massachusetts Advocates for Children’s Young Adult Leaders Fellowship model includes pairing each fellow with a legal intern for ongoing mentoring and discussions about advocacy. When a new law student starts working at MAC, the Fellowship supervisor and Fellow should provide an overview of the mentor-mentee partnership. This partnership supports the fellows to assume increasingly more challenging advocacy skills, with intern support, and to apply those skills in case advocacy, legislative and training activities. The supervisor should also provide ongoing guidance to the legal interns regarding their roles as mentors.

Given their busy schedules, the interns and fellows find

weekly informal coffee breaks outside the office to be the best opportunity to reflect on their mutual advocacy work and the skills they need to do this work well. It is also not unusual for the interns and fellows to discuss and support each other regarding the range of ‘soft’ job skills they needed for their work.

The following schedule of discussion topics will help facilitate conversations between interns and fellows that promote increased understanding and application of advocacy skills. The fellowship supervisor may find it useful to provide some direction to the interns and fellows for each of these meetings.

COFFEE BREAKS	TOPICS	SUGGESTED DISCUSSION POINTS	EXAMPLES OF RELATED ‘SOFT’ JOB SKILLS DISCUSSED DURING COFFEE BREAKS
#1	Overview of the Young Adult Leaders Fellowship and the role of mentoring	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discuss the fellowship program. • Discuss any experiences with mentoring/being mentored. • Make a plan to send resumes to each other before next coffee break. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How to learn everyone’s name and what they do at the organization. • Who to go to for help.
#2	Sharing resumes/ reflecting on Individual Education Program (IEP) and school experiences	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Take turns summarizing resume--specifically, how experiences led to work at a legal organization • Discuss school experiences, especially any connected to special education, IEPs, or accommodations. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discussing when there are appropriate times at work to share personal and professional experiences related to special education and disability advocacy.
#3	Working on individual cases	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discuss the importance of confidentiality in advocacy and legal work. • Review strategies for reading case files and remembering important information. • Discuss questions to ask in pre-meetings for individual case meetings. • Review strategies for attending meetings. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strategies for remembering confidential information but not disclosing it. • Reading methods reading technical information. • Rehearsing ways to use professional manners at meetings. • How to respond to conflict in meetings.
#4	Preparing trainings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discuss successful methods for outlining and preparing trainings. • Fellows share drafts of trainings and ask for feedback. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Seeking help and feedback from colleagues.
#5	Participating in school/ district advocacy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Plan for participation in school/district meetings. • Debrief about meetings: what went well; what makes some work hard for schools to do. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How to prepare for meetings. • Sharing active listening strategies at meetings.
#6	Attending legislative hearings and meetings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discuss the purpose of legislative hearings and meetings. • Discuss the role of fellows and interns at state house meetings. • Review specific bills or laws that the advocacy or legal organization is promoting. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reviewing the purpose of legislative meetings and hearings with supervisor.
#7	Taking a role in organizational outreach activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discuss the outreach activities that the fellows and interns may be engaged in: mailings, fundraising, marketing, annual awards, etc. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Re-prioritizing work assignments during special work events. • Rehearsing how to co-host events with colleagues
#8	Evaluating the advocacy experience	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fellow and intern complete end-of-term evaluations of advocacy experience. • Review successes and challenges of experiences. • Fellows create summary list of new advocacy skills developed as a result of the fellowship. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Developing and using self- assessment skills to evaluate fellowship and intern experience.