II. BUILDING YOUR SUPPORT NETWORK
Being supported means connecting with mentors and knowing when and how to ask for help.

Ask any inspiring person—an entrepreneur, a community leader, a doctor—how they got to where they are today. Almost all of them will talk about the people who taught them valuable lessons and supported them on their journey, even when the going got tough.

On your path to college, you’ll need to surround yourself with people who believe you can get there. You are college material—don’t let anyone tell you otherwise.
Building your support network

High school is filled with many decisions: which classes to take, what extracurricular activities to try, which colleges to apply to. When the path is unclear, it’s easy to get stuck. The good news is, you don’t have to make these decisions alone. Adults and peers alike can provide advice and support.

This section will help you identify and build relationships with potential mentors. It will help you connect with people who believe in you and will help you overcome any doubts you encounter—from yourself or anyone else—about your ability to attend and succeed in college.

01 HOW MENTORS CAN HELP

02 YOUR SUPPORT NETWORK

03 BUILDING YOUR SUPPORT NETWORK
How mentors can help

A mentor is someone you can trust to answer questions, provide advice, support your aspirations, and keep you accountable.

Mentors can be friends, parents, teachers, counselors, or anyone who’s come to know you well and will support your goal to attend college.

A MENTOR PROVIDES

**INFORMATION**

Knowledge and advice that help you develop a skill or better understand a problem

This might look like:
- Helping explain how to apply for financial aid and ways to budget for college
- Providing guidance and instruction when you’re having a difficult time with a class
- Connecting you to learning opportunities in your community
- Reviewing your college essays and suggesting ways to improve your application

**EMOTIONAL SUPPORT**

Comfort, understanding, and encouragement that can keep you accountable and help build courage and confidence

This might look like:
- Supporting you when someone in your life is telling you you’re not college material (they’re wrong)
- Listening to doubts you may have about your high school experience and goals
- Encouraging you when you do well on a test and/or checking in on you to make sure you’re doing your homework

**PERSPECTIVE**

Advice based on prior experience that helps you work through a challenge and/or make a decision

This might look like:
- Suggesting college majors and/or career paths based on your interests and skills
- Explaining how they overcame a challenge similar to the one you’re facing
- Recommending ways to make new friends or how to get more involved at school
UNDERSTAND

Your support network

Each mentor in your life can provide different perspectives, information, and support.
FACT:

Strong relationships with adults and friends make it easier to take on challenges—especially if someone is doubting you.
UNDERSTAND

Building your support network

Fill in the worksheet on page 10 as you follow the steps below.

Make a list of the people in your life who might be good mentors.

Think about people you trust and admire who believe in your goal to attend college.

Who can you count on to give you advice and support as you go through high school and apply to college—even when the going gets tough?

Reach out to potential mentors.

Call, text, or email the people on your list to schedule a time to meet in person.

Before the meeting, make a plan to discuss the following topics:

1. Tell them you want to attend college, and discuss your other goals for high school.
2. Explain why you want them to be your mentor and ways you think they can help.
3. Ask them whether they are willing to meet on a regular basis.

Hold yourself accountable.

As you develop a relationship with a mentor, make sure to respect their time and express gratitude.

Need help finding a mentor?

Here are steps you can take if you’re having trouble finding a mentor:

- Reach out to an adult or friend who can connect you to other potential mentors
- Visit a youth or community center and ask them to connect you to additional resources
- Check out the resources on page 9 for additional resources and tools
THE PLAN

Build a group of people I can look to when I need support and advice

THE STEPS I WILL TAKE

1. Identify five potential mentors

2. Ask a trusted adult to be a mentor

3. Reach out to friends who can help

4. (Write my own)
Want to learn more?
These resources will help you get started.

## RELATIONSHIP BUILDING

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<th>Mentorship advice</th>
<th>Ask your counselor</th>
<th>Connect with other students</th>
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<td>Learn why a mentor is important, and how to find one, in this article.</td>
<td>Use these questions to start a conversation with your counselor about preparing for college.</td>
<td>Join the I’m First online community of first-generation college students to get help and share stories.</td>
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**Find a mentor**

Search the Mentoring Connector database to find a mentorship program in your area.

**Mentoring stories**

Watch videos and read stories about real-life mentor relationships and the impact they’re having on students.
WORKSHEET: REACHING OUT TO MENTORS

STEP 1:
Create a list of goals for high school.

**GOAL 1**
I want to go to college

**GOAL 2**

**GOAL 3**

STEP 2:
Make a list of people who might be good mentors.
Think about why you want them as a mentor, and how they can help.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>NAME</th>
<th>Ways they can help</th>
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STEP 3:
Reach out to these people for help in shaping your goals and figuring out your best path to college.
Continue your journey, grow your knowledge.

Don’t forget to check out these other XQ College Pathfinder resources.

There’s more to come.
We will keep adding new tools and resources.

We’d love to hear from you!
What do you think of this guide? How can we make it better? Are there other resources you’re looking for? Please let us know!

Send Feedback