# Table of Contents

PASSAGE USA Overview & Goals ................................................................. 3
Important Definitions ................................................................................. 5
Peer Mentor Responsibilities ................................................................. 6
Effective Mentoring Characteristics ..................................................... 7
Confidentiality & Code of Ethics ................................................................. 8
Common situations and problems ......................................................... 10
Problem Solving .................................................................................... 11
How to get started .................................................................................. 12
Improving Social Skills ........................................................................ 13
Providing Academic Help ..................................................................... 14
Helpful Resources ................................................................................. 15
Mentor-Mentee Contract ....................................................................... 16
Schedule ................................................................................................. 17
Contact Information ............................................................................... 18
PASSAGE USA Overview & Goals

PASSAGE USA is a post secondary education for students with intellectual disabilities (ID). The program is part of The University of South Alabama, housed in the College of Education. Students enrolled in PASSAGE USA take a variety of college courses, both inclusive and specialized to the program. Students take four classes a semester, one of which is a work experience/ internship.

For each student enrolled, PASSAGE USA faculty and staff work with the student to develop his or her personal plan for his or her future adult life and career. This is done through using Person-Centered Planning (PCP) and creating Adult Education Plans (AEP) to achieve these goals.

Each semester PASSAGE USA can admit ten new students into the program. Students qualify for the program if they are:

- Between 19-25 years old.
- Not receiving special education and related services from the public schools.
- Diagnosed with an intellectual disability (ID), as defined by an IQ of 70 or below and low adaptive behavior.
- Uses functional communication, reading, and math skills.
- Functions independently without attendant care.
- Gets from one place to another without assistance from another person.
- No current, serious, or chronic history of criminal conviction.
- No current or chronic history of inflicting physical harm to self or others.
- No medical conditions that are communicable by casual contact.
- Uses self-help skills and safely functions without direct supervision.
- Motivated to continue education and further develop employment and independent living skills.
- Has a Smartphone and uses it for calls, texts, and email.

Applying students must complete an application and an interview. Students are then admitted based on these interviews.

Throughout the program, students work on developing independent-living and work-related skills, as well as improving social skills. After the completion of the program, usually after two years, students will earn a certificate of completion and walk in South Alabama’s graduation ceremony.

All students are paired with a paid peer mentor (primary mentor) who will work with them throughout the semesters on social, academic, independent living, and work-related skills.
Students will also work with volunteer peer mentors throughout the semesters. Volunteer peer mentors will work with the student on the same skills, but not for the same times as their primary mentors. Peer mentors will act as models for appropriate behavior, tutors, friend, and advocate.
Important Definitions

**Adaptive Behavior**

“Conceptual, social, and practical skills that people have learned in order to function in their everyday lives.”—William Heward

When working with individuals with disabilities, this term refers to how those individuals are able to adapt to their environment. Students diagnosed with ID have low adaptive abilities and must work towards these skills.

**Adult Education Plans (AEP)**

These plans will function similarly to IEPs used in K-12 education. A team at PASSAGE USA, which will include the student, will put together a plan of goals and benchmarks for the student to reach. These goals will be made to help the student reach his/her ultimate goal as defined through PCP.

**Intellectual Disability (ID)**

A disability defined by “significantly sub-average general intellectual functioning existing concurrently with deficits in adaptive behavior and manifested during the developmental period that adversely affects a child’s educational performance.”—William Heward

Individuals diagnosed with ID often have trouble generalizing information, low cognitive functioning, difficulty with attention, poor communication skills, difficulty maintain friendships, and behavioral problems. However, many individuals with ID also have a tenacity and natural curiosity to learn.

**Peer Mentor**

A Mentor is someone who acts as a role model for another individual. This person is typically older or has more experience in the given field. Mentors help mentees complete tasks, reach goals, and adjust to new situations. Peer mentors are mentors who are typically around the same age as their mentees, but further along on their academic field. Peer mentors can act as a friend, coach, companion, supporter, advisor, role model, and a person to talk to. Peer mentors are responsible for supporting students’ in academic and social settings and helping students to naturally fit in to the USA community.

**Person-Centered Planning (PCP)**

PCP is a transitional planning strategy that focuses on an individual’s desires, goals, and needs. This is used to help the individual meet his or her goals in adult life after high school. PCP is a collaborative process, involving an entire team of people, and allows the individual opportunities to be very involved with the process.

**Self-Advocacy**

The ability to speak for oneself, stand up for oneself, and take action for oneself. This is used to help students gain independence and work towards their own goals. Mentors can help students learn self-advocacy by assisting students with tasks and slowly let students do more and more
by themselves and model how to independently complete tasks. The most important thing to remember when teaching self-advocacy is to not do the work for the student, but with him or her and allow the student time to work and gradually gain independence.
Peer Mentor Responsibilities

There are many tasks you will undertake as a peer mentor. You will work with students during your scheduled times and in a variety of settings. The following is a list of peer mentor responsibilities.

Your responsibilities as a peer mentor are:
- Support PASSAGE USA students in social, independent living, & academic situations
- Help mentees achieve goals
- Participate in PASSAGE USA events
- Complete all office responsibilities
- 10 hours/week (for paid mentors)
- Work scheduled times
- Tutor students in the class-work
- Teach self-advocacy
- Advocate for diversity in the USA community
- Model appropriate behavior in all settings
- Set high expectations for mentee & help him/her reach those
- Help mentee fit naturally in USA’s campus and community
- Form and foster life-long friendships!

Your responsibilities are NOT:
- Doing the work for your mentee
- To act as a therapist, teacher, or parent
- To be responsible for student’s transportation to and from campus
- To know the answers to everything
- To be perfect

As a peer mentor you will likely face challenges. These may be in the form of scheduling conflicts, negative attitudes toward your mentee from your fellow students, loss of patience, setbacks, or a lack of progress. While there may be times where your task is extremely difficult, you will have more positive experiences. If you have a problem with anything that you cannot solve or do not know what to do, please ask any PASSAGE USA faculty or staff! Don’t get too upset with minor setbacks, keep moving forward and remember that all progress take time and effort!

AROUND HERE, HOWEVER, WE DON’T LOOK BACKWARDS FOR VERY LONG. WE KEEP MOVING FORWARD, OPENING UP NEW DOORS AND DOING NEW THINGS, BECAUSE WE’RE CURIOUS...AND CURIOSITY KEEPS LEADING US DOWN NEW PATHS

—WALT DISNEY
Effective Mentoring Characteristics

*Communication Skills*

Having effective communication skills allows for you and your mentee to understand and be able to respond to each other effectively. There are three important skills necessary when mentoring:

a. **Listen**—Hear and understand what your mentee is telling you. Don’t just be quiet while he/she speaks and wait until your turn to talk. Be an active listener. Ask questions and for further details. Care about what your mentee is telling you.

b. **Observe**—Look for nonverbal forms of communication as well. How is your mentee holding him/herself when speaking, what tone of voice is he/she using, what other forms of body language is being used.

c. **Speak**—Be clear in what you are saying. Make sure your mentee understands what you are telling him/her. Clarify concepts as needed. Differentiate your opinions from fact.

*Be consistent*

Be consistent with what you are telling your mentee to do (model appropriate behavior). This should be done in all settings: social, academic, work, and independent living.

*Accountability*

Be accountable for your actions. If you do something wrong, admit your mistake and try to fix it. If you commit to being somewhere or doing something, be accountable and attend to your commitments.

*Authenticity*

Be true! If you really care about your mentee and his/her progress and interests it shows and will help to create a better web of teamwork and trust.

*Build Teamwork and Trust*

By working together, you will help your mentee make the most progress. Nothing should be done entirely by you, nor by your mentee. Trust each other to be a team.
Confidentiality and Code of Ethics

Confidentiality builds trust between you and your mentee. It shows that the conversations between yourself and your mentee are protected. The same as you wouldn’t tell your best friend’s secrets, you should keep your mentee’s information and conversations with you private.

Confidentiality may sometimes have to be broken, for the well-being of your mentee or others. However, this still does NOT mean that you should share personal information with everybody. If such a situation arises please share your knowledge with:

- PASSAGE USA faculty & staff
- Relevant USA faculty & staff
- Anyone who would already know the confidential information
- Law enforcement (if applicable)

Never share confidential information with the following individuals:

- Your parents and family
- Other peer mentors
- Friends
- Roommates
- Significant others
- Other students
- Non-relevant faculty & staff

The following page is the peer mentor Code of Ethics. This should be followed at all times when working with my mentee and when not. During training, you will receive the same form that you will sign and turn into PASSAGE USA faculty/staff. This copy is yours to keep and use as a reference.
PASSAGE USA Peer Mentor Code of Ethics

1. I will not participate in or tolerate in any form of discrimination on the basis of ethnicity, race, gender, sexual orientation, age, religion, national origin, marital status, political belief, disability, or any other factor.
2. I will advocate for my mentee and help him/her to the best of my ability to reach his/her goals.
3. I will respect my mentee’s privacy and that of others enrolled in PASSAGE USA. I will practice confidentiality of all personal information in public and when speaking with friends and family.
4. I will advocate for the important role that diversity plays, not only at the University of South Alabama, but in the entire community. I will advocate for the full inclusion of all individuals in various settings despite various abilities and needs.
5. I will never participate in sexual/intimate activities with my mentee. I promise to report to PASSAGE USA faculty, staff, or appropriate authority if I am made aware of this or any other type of inappropriate conduct by one of my peers.
6. I will never threaten, verbally abuse, intimidate, or use physical force on my mentee. I promise to report to PASSAGE USA faculty, staff, or appropriate authority if I am made aware of this or any other type of inappropriate conduct by one of my peers.
7. I will work to better understand my mentee and other individuals with intellectual disabilities.
8. I will conduct myself in a responsible and professional fashion when acting as a peer mentor. I understand that while I am acting as a peer mentor, I am also acting as a social role model and model appropriate behavior.
9. I will maintain high integrity while mentoring; I will be punctual, honest, keep commitments, and understanding.
10. I will hold my mentee to high standards as appropriate. I will not accept anything less than what my mentee is capable of and will not accept a disability as an excuse.

I agree to all of the standards above and am committed to helping my mentee succeed. I understand that violating any of the above standards may result in termination of my role as a peer mentor. I also understand that if I do not report the inappropriate actions of others, then I may be equally as guilty.
Common Situations and Problems

For most students, making the transition from high school to college is difficult. Students are in a new environment, away from home and their families for the first time, classes can be challenging, and there are no teachers telling students when to study. For students with disabilities, these situations can be even more challenging. Some situations and problems that your mentee might encounter are:

- Missing family
- Living in a new place
- Making new friends
- Organizing school material
- Following their schedule
- Being punctual
- Understanding teacher directions
- Paying attention in class
- Being their own advocates
- Acting in a socially appropriate manner

Challenges are expected. If we didn’t expect students to run into any problems, there wouldn’t be a need for everyone to have a peer mentor.
Problem Solving

Step 1: Recognize that a problem exists. Accept it and accept the responsibility to try and fix it. Have a positive attitude—whatever is wrong can be fixed!

Step 2: Can you solve the problem or do you need help? How serious is this problem and who does it affect? If you are unsure what to do, always talk to your supervisor and ask for suggestions.

If you cannot solve this problem, speak to PASSAGE USA faculty/staff or appropriate USA faculty/staff. Follow directions given. If at any point during this process you have questions or are unsure what to do, ask!

If you can solve this problem, continue to step 3.

Step 3: Talk to you mentee. Be positive and understanding, but get the point across. Explain what the problem is and why it is an issue. Speak calmly and in a non-accusing fashion. Say you will solve the problem together as a team.

Step 4: Plan. With your mentee, plan your course of action. What should you do? What changes need to be made? Sit down and plan out exactly what to do, when to do it, and where to do it. Identify a goal. Remember that explicit instructions will help your mentee better understand. Also, plan for success and failures. What benefits will there be for milestones (such as making an A in the class). What are your plans if you and your mentee hit a roadblock?

Step 5: Put your plan into action. Work as a team with your mentee towards the identified goal. Celebrate small triumphs and work to get past small bumps. Throughout this stage of the process, have a good attitude! Inspire and encourage your mentee to keep working. If you find that your plan isn’t working, don’t give up! Just go back to step 4 and try something else.

Step 6: Celebrate achieving the goal! Congratulate your mentee and tell him/her to keep working hard to keep this behavior going.

The problem is not the problem. The problem is your attitude about the problem. Do you understand?
--Captain Jack Sparrow; Pirates of the Caribbean
How to Get Started

Building a relationship takes time and hard work. During orientation you will have time to start to get to know your mentee and begin team building. But this is not everything! Gaining trust and a relationship will take much longer than the short time during orientation. Here are some tips of how to start the semester:

*Take your time.* Everybody has a different attitude toward others and reacts differently to new situations and people. Don’t expect an instant, perfect connection.

*Take time just to get to know each other.* While it is important to work with your mentee in academics and other required areas, it is also important to know each other. You didn’t just become instant friends with your best friend; you most likely got to know each other first. The same applies when mentoring.

*Let your mentee know about you as well.* There is no I in team, nor U. You should both be equal team members and know about each other equally.

*Don’t be afraid!* You aren’t going to mess up by saying something wrong. Just be yourself and do what you can to help your mentee succeed.

*Be honest.* If you don’t know what to do or understand something, admit it. Tell your mentee that you do not know. He/she will not be angry with you for not knowing. Then try to find the answer. Ask for help. It is always better to admit your mistakes or lack of knowledge than lead somebody wrong.

*Be supportive.* The first few weeks of class are going to be challenging to your mentee. Be supportive of him/her. Ask if you can help, give suggestions, listen to his/her struggles. Remember how important communication skills are.

“The scariest moment is always just before you start”

---Stephen King
Improving Social Skills

Many individuals diagnosed with ID have difficulty learning and using appropriate social skills. This affects students’ ability to create and maintain friendships. One of PASSAGE USA’s goals is to help students improve social skills. This may seem like a difficult task, but here are some tips to help!

**Model appropriate behavior ALWAYS!** Students will have trouble generalizing, so to help you need to demonstrate appropriate behavior in every applicable setting. Some behaviors will be more appropriate in different situations than in others, such as when you can speak loudly or yell. This behavior would not be appropriate in class or in the study room, but it would be during a football game or at the Recreation Center. Demonstrate the difference and answer any questions your mentee might have.

**Value your mentee’s efforts and give frequent feedback.** Show your mentee that you know he/she is trying and improving. Tell your mentee where his/her skills have improved and what, specifically, he/she is doing right. Then give your mentee some constructive criticism of what could be improved. Word everything in a positive way. A good strategy is for every negative comment; there should be at least two positive ones. Sandwich the negative comment in-between the two positive ones.

**Talk to your mentee about how certain behaviors can affect others.** If your mentee is having trouble with a particular social behavior, ask him/her how that may affect others. Does it make other students uncomfortable; is it distracting, do they seem happy? Explain why the behavior is inappropriate.

**Ask your friends to help.** If you are working with your student in a social setting with students who are not peer mentors (i.e. a football game, school organization meeting, cafeteria...) ask those around to help model appropriate behaviors and give feedback to your mentee. Extra examples are always helpful. Don’t tell them everything about the student, remember confidentiality, but tell them that your mentee is learning a particular social skill and ask them to model that skill while they are together. Other students can also give feedback when he/she is doing something well.
Providing Academic Help

Helping your mentee academically may be very challenging at times. Students with intellectual disabilities have low cognitive functioning and typically struggle with school work. This may seem like a daunting task, especially if you have never tutored anyone before. But here are some ways to help your mentee succeed academically.

*Teach one thing at a time.* While there may be a lot to cover before a big test, don’t do it all at once. Go over one concept at a time, slowly. When your mentee has learned and can demonstrate understanding of that concept, then move on.

*Go step-by-step.* If what you are working on involves multiple steps, go through the process in order. Again do each step one at a time. This can also work for tasks, which may not necessarily have multiple steps. Break the large task into smaller steps and then take each step at a time. This process is called chaining.

*Repetition is key.* Your mentee is likely going to need to be taught a skill multiple times before it is learned. Be prepared to go over the same concept multiple times and allow for many practice attempts. Don’t lose patience or give up if a skill is not learned immediately. Remember, practice makes perfect!

*Generalization is needed.* Your mentee is also likely going to need help generalizing information. Be prepared to show your mentee that one concept can transfer to another. For example, if you are working on writing a summary for a history class, you may have to go over the same process again for another class.

*Use prompting.* Help your mentee by prompting him/her to make the appropriate response (this works for teaching academic and social skills). Use hand gestures or verbal cues to help your mentee remember the behavior.

*Don’t do the work for your mentee.* While it may seem to help your mentee, nobody benefits from this. Doing the work yourself takes away your mentee’s opportunity to learn and will set them up for failure when they have to perform the task in class. This could also damage your mentee’s self-confidence and make him/her dependent on you to do the work. In addition, this will hurt you. By doing the work yourself, you are participating in academic dishonesty which can have serious implications to your academic career.
Helpful Resources

Here are some extra resources that may help you throughout the semester.

Information on ID

http://www.projectidealonline.org/v/intellectual-disabilities/
http://www.healthyplace.com/neurodevelopmental-disorders/intellectual-disability/types-of-intellectual-disabilities-list-and-examples/

Skills Instruction

http://www.uloop.com/news/view.php/177170/5-Tips-for-Students-Interested-In-Peer-Tutoring

Mentoring

http://www.mentoringpittsburgh.org/media/W1siZiIsIiIwMTQvMDUvMDcvMTRfMTRfNDFfOTM4X1BlZXJfTWVudG9yaW5nX0hhbmRib29rLnBkZjJdXQ/Peer+Mentoring+Handbook.pdf?sha=aa29c204
http://www.waisman.wisc.edu/hrtw/PPM.pdf
https://youtu.be/qXh67DtyIo

Please note, that all of the above sources have been found for your personal use. No single link will have everything you need, nor be about your exact situation.
# Mentor-Mentee Contract

Mentee Name: ___________________  Mentor Name: ___________________

Semester: ____________

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Task</th>
<th>Student Responsibility</th>
<th>Mentee Responsibility</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
# Schedule

Please use this space to record your weekly schedule. Print extra copies as needed. You may be asked to attend some special events that are not weekly, note these as applicable. This space is for your connivance.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Sunday</th>
<th>Monday</th>
<th>Tuesday</th>
<th>Wednesday</th>
<th>Thursday</th>
<th>Friday</th>
<th>Saturday</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>8am</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9am</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10am</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11am</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12pm</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1pm</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2pm</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3pm</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4pm</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5pm</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evenings</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Special Events</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Mark as needed)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Contact Information

PASSAGE USA Office................................................................................................................. (251)380-7558
PASSAGE USA Email.............................................................................................................passageusa@southalabama.edu
Facebook.........................................................................................................................PASSAGE USA
Twitter..........................................................................................................................@PassageUSAsouth
Pintrest..............................................................................................................................passageusa

Please use the remainder of space to add any additional contact information needed.