

CAREER MENTORING



Jourdan, a Bank of England mentor.

What about your life experience made our Career Mentoring programme so appealing to you?

I really benefited from the investment that adults around me placed in my access to extracurricular activities. I identify as black and queer and growing up, a lot of spaces didn't make me feel welcome. I needed that encouragement and I needed that confidence boost. I understand that now I do belong in those spaces, I do have the skills, I do have the credentials and I do have the ability to succeed in them. It was thanks to a few pivotal moments and a few adults who really gave me that encouragement, who guided me and helped me to understand that I shouldn't let these things hold me back. They made a huge difference in my understanding of my role in the wider world so I wanted to return the favour as I realize how important it is to have people to support you when you're trying to discover who you are and what you're going to be.

Some of our students suffer Imposter Syndrome. What are your thoughts on how this programme can help them to overcome it?

Mentoring has made me understand the importance of these kinds of programmes in helping to combat Imposter Syndrome because representation matters. When you envisage certain industries or careers, you picture a certain kind of person in them. If you're not that type of person, it's very difficult to feel as though you belong, to feel as though you are qualified enough to be there. You're continually having to justify your presence either to yourself or to your peers, excessively and often unnecessarily. I'm working at an organisation that has a very long history in Britain. They are working very hard to change the perception that it is an institution just for Oxford, Cambridge, white middle class men. And so it's very important to show that it is possible, that you might have those feelings of Imposter Syndrome, but you don't have to be beholden to them. You can push through, you can overcome them.

What skills do you think that you've developed as a result of being a mentor?

It's helped me improve my empathy. It's also helped me with my communication so, overall, it's been an invaluable experience. My manager pointed out to me that it was a useful experience in helping me understand what it's like to manage a team of people and to be responsible for someone's progress and well being. Also, it was a nice way to gain managerial experience in a friendly environment without my career being on the line in the same way as it would be if I was pushed into that role.

Another skill developed was self-reflection which I wasn't expecting. I found this really useful. Before each session, I would look at the topic theme and think about what I could draw upon from my own experience. It was really helpful to look back at some moments and realize that things that I found really challenging could actually now be used as a story to inspire a mentee and help the next generation to navigate their own difficulties.

“ Organisations such as With Insight Education lay the groundwork for achieving equity in the workplace and across our society at large. ”

What do you think your mentees got out of the programme?

I thought that they ended the programme with a better understanding of their skills, their unique selling points and the fact that they've got more talent and experiences to offer than they thought.

They also came to realise that there is a whole infrastructure that sits behind every business so they should be open to exploring jobs across lots of sectors.

What will you use from this mentoring experience to help you as you work towards your career goals?

Quite a few things. There's the benefit of self-reflection. I now understand that there is a benefit to even some of the darker moments and some of the obstacles and difficulties. Another thing that I found important by doing the programme was understanding the importance of representation. It's really helped encourage and motivate me to think about my career long term, the positions that I want to achieve and the impact that I can have on other people like me entering the field, whatever industry I'm in.

Overall, it's really helped focus my drive to succeed in this career.

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