



Mentors: Finding a Good Fit

When identifying a mentor to facilitate the program with athletes, these are some factors to consider. This is not intended to be an exhaustive list of requirements, rather guidelines to consider in hopes that the mentor will be credible and relevant with young people.

Ideal Characteristics and Attributes of Mentors:

- » **Female-Identified:** Athletes As Leaders addresses sensitive topics with athletes, including sexual assault, body image, and internalized sexism. Because of this, women, or folks who have been raised as a girl, will likely have a higher comfort level discussing these topics and a deeper understanding of the issues. Athletes may feel more at ease having a discussion space just for girls & women. We recognize many girls' teams are coached by men, and so partnering with a mentor from the community may be a good option.
- » **Near Peers:** In focus groups, high school athletes report that they want to hear from "near peers"- which generally means someone who is a little older than them, within about 10 years. The program is based on social norms change, and having a facilitator who they feel is relatable may make the messages more relevant and credible.
- » **Well Trained:** Ideally facilitators have completed education or training related to sexual assault, dating violence, primary prevention (vs. risk reduction), feminism or women's studies, and anti-oppression. This is not a requirement, however the Athletes As Leaders training (and review of the facilitation guide for mentors) is essential. Experience working with teens, facilitating groups, or public speaking is a plus!
- » **Diverse mentors:** It is important for youth to have role models and mentors who they can relate to, as well as diverse role models from under-represented groups. You may have one or two mentors co-facilitate a group. Consider diversity and representation of different identities and backgrounds.

- » **Committed to completing the program:** Consistency is important, and your facilitator(s) should be asked to commit to the full season. Each program session is designed to be facilitated for 20 minutes once per week, but also consider travel time, set up, clean up, etc.
- » **Interested in building relationships:** Relationships are key. We have lots of [great tips on relationship-building](#), so build in time for this, too.
- » **Someone who is passionate about creating a safe and respectful community for all!** It's okay if the mentors don't have all of these characteristics! The mentors' enthusiastic approach and sensitivity to the topics will go a long way. And, Athletes As Leaders utilizes YouTube videos featuring diverse perspectives from young people, and each session has clear scripts for facilitation, so it's easy to follow along!

Who can Mentors be?

- » Sexual Assault Prevention Advocates
- » Domestic Violence Prevention Advocates
- » High School Alumni and Former Athletes
- » College Athletes (could be an internship)
- » University students and graduate students majoring in: women's studies, sociology, sports psychology, social work, health education, public health, or related fields
- » Interns and practicum students
- » Head Coaches or Assistant Coaches
- » Team Captains
- » Current athletes- ideally those who have been through Athletes As Leaders in a previous season, and/or those who tend to be natural leaders on the team

Make sure to follow the policies of your school or athletic organization to select and screen (i.e. complete background checks) for volunteers, interns or staff who you invite as mentors. More recommendations can be found in our [Recommended Policies](#).