Remember some key strategies for effective text-based communication – There were some common things that successful text-based matches shared in their communication styles:

1. Mentors avoided closed questions that could easily be a conversation-killer when responded to with a short response by the mentee.

2. Mentors used emojis, GIFs, memes and other "digital" flourishes to convey emotions, make their messages more visually appealing, explain complex nuances, and to inject some humor into the interactions. The more of these digital "assets" adults can use in their text communications, the better. Meme culture in particular is a digital language that will be familiar to most mentees and might help them feel more connected to or understood by their mentor. However, mentors should only use these types of content when the conversation is fairly light.

3. Mentors used appropriate self-disclosure to let mentees know they understood their perspectives. Obviously, most of us have not been through a global pandemic before, but chances are mentors have experienced some of the emotions that mentees are feeling right now—we have all felt uncertain, isolated, or anxious in the past. Sometimes sharing a personal experience that lets the mentee know you understand their feelings and concerns can go a long ways toward building trust and opening up more dialogue.

4. Mentors avoid language that could be easily misunderstood. Conversation tools such as sarcasm, irony, and "gallows' humor" may all seem appropriate in a crisis, but these types of communication are much more clearly experienced in-person and successful text-based matches tended to avoid using language that could be misinterpreted. They were especially clear to label things such as dry humor and sarcasm as "a joke" so that there was no ambiguity about intent.

5. Successful matches addressed misunderstandings in their conversations when they did occur. If two people communicate via text long enough, it's extremely likely that one participant will take issue with the tone, content, or "meaning" of a message. What's critical is that participants talk it through and clear up any misconceptions that may linger into future interactions.