

# Mentoring Skills Workshop

## Workshop Objectives

In this workshop you will learn about mentoring and what it takes to be a mentor. By the end of this workshop you should have a much clearer idea of mentoring and more specifically, you will be able to:

- Describe what mentoring means to you
- Describe a model of mentoring
- Outline the benefits of mentoring
- Describe the roles and responsibilities of mentors and mentees
- Outline the critical skills required by mentors
- Describe potential phases in the mentoring relationship
- Utilise some tools to help manage the mentoring relationship

## Workshop Program

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## So, what is mentoring?

### Introduction

If you have knowledge or experience or are simply a good listener you have probably already been a mentor – helping someone to learn, sort out a problem or devise a plan. It may have happened spontaneously and the word ‘mentor’ may never have been used.

The term ‘mentoring’ is being used more widely now in our society and people are often encouraged to seek out a mentor. So, what is mentoring and how does one become a mentor?

### So, what is mentoring?

Mentoring is often seen as a relationship between a senior and a more junior person – like a master and an apprentice. This can be a useful approach to mentoring but can also pose some problems for adult learners. Mentors can get just as much out of the relationship as a mentee and being seen as a teacher, coach etc can be unhelpful and limiting. Mentors may also be asked, often inappropriately, to lobby on behalf of their mentee.

Viewing mentoring as a learning partnership can be more helpful. Status and power can be ignored, mentors do more listening and questioning and advice is only offered once the mentee has had the opportunity to explore the options for themselves. This approach has a lot to recommend it.

### Definitions

*Mentor: “A wise and trusted guide”*

**The Macquarie Concise Dictionary (2<sup>nd</sup> Edition)**

*“Mentors are helpers. Their style ranges from that of a persistent encourager who helps us build self-confidence, to that of a stern taskmaster who teaches us to appreciate excellence in performance. Whatever their style, they care about us and what we are trying to do.”*

**Shea, Gordon (1992) Mentoring – a practical guide Crisp Publications**

*“Mentoring is a relationship which gives people the opportunity to share their professional skills and experiences, and to grow and develop in the process. Typically, mentoring takes place between a more experienced and a less experienced employee.”*

Office of the Director of Equal Opportunity in Public Employment. (1997) *Mentoring Made Easy: A practical guide for managers.*

## The SUN Mentoring Register

The SUN Mentoring Register is to assist SUN members to find a mentor within the SUN Network. The Register is provided in response to widespread support from SUN Members.

### How does the Mentoring Register work?

1. Potential mentors complete the online Expression of Interest to Register as a Mentor, which is then sent to the SUN Committee for verification.
2. Mentor details are placed on the SUN mentoring web page.
3. Potential mentees identify what they want from a mentor.
4. Potential mentees review the mentor profiles on the site.
5. Mentees contact those mentors who best match their needs and preferences to discuss the possibility of establishing a mentoring relationship.
6. Mentees select their most suitable mentor.
7. Mentors and mentees agree on a period of time for the mentoring relationship.
8. Mentors advise the SUN Committee that they have entered into a mentoring relationship.
9. Mentors and mentees conduct the mentoring relationship, with support from the SUN Committee.
10. When the mentoring relationship ends, mentors advise the SUN Committee.

## Mentoring Model

When mentoring is defined broadly there are many possibilities for its use. Mentoring can be used in the following contexts:

- *Job orientation* – someone who helps you settle in to your new job
- *Career coach* – someone with whom you review your career goals and plans
- *Skills coaches* – someone who will help you develop specific skills
- *Professional or personal development* – someone who will help you grow
- *Confidant* – someone who is there for you
- *Technical advisor* – someone with whom you can discuss technical questions
- *Correspondent* – someone to whom you explain your ideas

In its simplest form the mentoring model can be the mentor enabling their mentee to figure out where they are going, where they want to be, how they will get there and how they are progressing.

Mentoring that takes place between individuals can be given different labels depending of the extent of the formality of relationship and the difference in status of the people participating in the relationship. For example, Peer mentoring is a type of mentoring relationship where colleagues or staff at similar stages in their careers support each other either individually or in groups.

## Mentoring Model

### ***Initiate exploration***

What is the current situation?  
What factors are impacting on the situation?  
How do they affect the situation?  
Why should it change?



### ***Facilitate learning***

What do we know?  
What are the implications?  
What could be different?  
What might be done?  
What might be the consequences of the actions contemplated?  
What then, are realistic goals?



### ***Guide the planning process***

How might the goals be achieved?  
What actions would be needed?  
How will it be done?  
What resources will be needed?  
How will progress be monitored?



### ***Support experimentation***

How is it going?  
Are adjustments needed?  
Are the expected outcomes being produced?  
Are there unexpected outcomes?  
What could be done differently next time?

## Benefits of mentoring

Mentoring benefits both people in the mentoring relationship. By approaching mentoring using the model described above the mentee does not become dependent but develops their critical thinking skills. The mentee is empowered and they take responsibility for their actions. In this model, the mentor does not have to be older, wiser or specialised in a particular field. Both parties can find the experience rewarding and satisfying.



### Activity: Personal benefits of being a mentor

Below are some benefits mentors have identified. Which ones do you think apply to you?

- Contribute
- Acquire and practice a coaching style of leadership
- Re-energise a plateaued career
- Extend your network
- Obtain new perspectives, opinions
- Gain additional recognition and respect
- Awareness of own skills
- Challenge and achievement
- Self-development
- Put something back
- A sense of satisfaction
- Grow people better
- Contribute to the future
- Involvement, focus on others

In what other ways do you think you might develop as a result of being a mentor?



## Activity: Other benefits of mentoring

What are the benefits to the following from mentoring?

Mentee:

Mentor:

The University:



## Roles and Responsibilities

### Mentor's role and responsibilities

The mentor's role is to listen, provide constructive feedback and help their mentee consider options. They may refer them to resources and facilitate decision making and share their own experiences. They might help to identify areas for development, coach their mentee and allow opportunities to practice new skills. They may be a sounding board, ask questions to cause further exploration of ideas or to challenge their mentee's thinking. They provide guidance, not direction and do not solve problems but act as a collaborator in the problem solving process.

Primary responsibilities you have as a mentor include:

- Maintaining confidentiality
- Being accessible
- Listening actively to your mentee
- Promoting responsible decision making
- Motivating and supporting your mentee to achieve their goals
- Ensuring a professional relationship
- Acting as a role model
- Recognising when it is time to relinquish the mentoring role

There are a few key differences between a mentor and a supervisor. Where a supervisor has management responsibilities, a mentor is an advisor. Mentors are NOT empowered to take action on behalf of their mentee.

<b>Supervisors</b>	<b>Mentors</b>
Determine job responsibilities and work objectives	<i>Counsellor</i> – help them take stock of where they are and where they want to be.
Supervise job performance	<i>Consultant</i> – facilitate decisions making and assist with option exploration
Performance appraisals and recommend training and development	<i>Coach</i> – assist and motivate mentee to implement plans and achieve goals

Supervisors who choose to use mentoring skills need to make it clear when they have their mentoring hat on and when they are in supervisor mode. Supervisors who are mentors of staff who are not their subordinates need to be considerate of the mentee's manager. Some managers can be threatened by the influence of a third party. Supervisors who have staff who have other mentors need to allow time for their staff to participate in the mentoring relationship. Allow the staff member privacy. Encourage development of career development proposals, action plans and goals and help staff access the resources they need.



### **Activity: Advantages & disadvantages of mentoring subordinates**

List the advantages and disadvantages for each party in the relationship when a supervisor mentors a subordinate:

Advantages for Supervisor

Disadvantages for Supervisor

Advantages for Subordinate

Disadvantages for Subordinate

Reflections:

What are the implications for you mentoring your subordinates?

## Mentee's role and responsibilities

Mentees can approach their mentors to discuss issues and ideas. They may want feedback or advice or a chance to get something off their chest. Through the questioning of the mentor, the mentee may achieve a greater clarity about a situation or see a different perspective.

Whatever is discussed, however, it is the mentee who makes the decisions and takes any actions required. The mentee is responsible for their decisions and actions.

<b>Good mentees are:</b>	<b>Mentees typically want:</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ Motivated</li><li>○ Proactive</li><li>○ Open minded</li><li>○ Self-directing</li><li>○ Introspective</li><li>○ Self-disciplined</li><li>○ Enthusiastic</li><li>○ Communicative</li><li>○ Appreciative</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ advice on career paths/options</li><li>○ to learn how to develop maximum potential</li><li>○ assistance in forward thinking</li><li>○ to set career goal and strategies for achieving them</li><li>○ to expand networks and broaden horizons</li><li>○ to learn new skills</li><li>○ a person has been successful to use as a role model</li><li>○ to raise their profile</li><li>○ to get the big picture view</li><li>○ to develop better life perspective – balance work and home</li><li>○ awareness of promotional opportunities</li><li>○ help with job applications</li><li>○ access to a variety of resources</li></ul>





## Activity: Clarifying Expectations

What would you consider reasonable and unreasonable expectations of mentoring partners?

Reasonable to expect of mentees                      Unreasonable to expect of mentees

Reasonable to expect of mentors                      Unreasonable to expect of mentors



### Skills of Effective Mentors

An effective mentor has been described as one who:

- M** – Manages the relationship
- E** – Encourages
- N** – Nurtures
- T** – Teaches
- O** – Offers Mutual Respect
- R** – Responds to the Mentee's needs

(Clutterbuck, David. (1985) *Everyone Needs a Mentor*. Institute of Personnel Management, Bugbrooke, UK.)

#### M – Manages the relationship

- Has high level self-management skills
- Is assertive
- Has good knowledge of the organization
- Models effective leadership and management skills
- Has excellent interpersonal skills

#### E – Encourages

- Motivates others
- Is a good role model
- Able to provide clear and objective feedback

#### N – Nurtures

- Able to promote personal growth
- Has ability to maintain work-life balance
- Acknowledges need to maintain health
- Respects higher goals, values and spiritual needs

#### T – Teaches

- Able to undertake needs assessment
- Able to facilitate learning
- Provides resources

#### O – Offers mutual respect

- Accepts differences in values, interests etc

#### R – Responds to the Mentee's needs

- Does not seek to impose advice on the basis of one's own needs



## Activity: Self assessment

Rate your need to develop the key skills of mentoring:

	Need to Develop				
	Low	Moderate			High
<i>Manages the relationship</i>					
Self management	1	2	3	4	5
Assertiveness	1	2	3	4	5
Knowledge of organization	1	2	3	4	5
Management and leadership	1	2	3	4	5
Interpersonal skills	1	2	3	4	5
<i>Encourages</i>					
Motivation	1	2	3	4	5
Role Model	1	2	3	4	5
Feedback	1	2	3	4	5
<i>Nurtures</i>					
Personal growth	1	2	3	4	5
Balance	1	2	3	4	5
Health	1	2	3	4	5
Respects higher goals	1	2	3	4	5
<i>Teaches</i>					
Needs Assessment	1	2	3	4	5
Facilitates learning	1	2	3	4	5
Providing resources	1	2	3	4	5
Offers Mutual respect	1	2	3	4	5
Responds to mentee needs	1	2	3	4	5

**Reflection:**

Skills I want to develop further:

## Building rapport

While offering unconditional positive regard may be beyond what can be offered in a mentoring relationship, mentors should, at a minimum, be objective and non-judgmental as far as possible. This does not mean necessarily agreeing on everything, but it is important to be able to relate to each other.



### Activity: Building Rapport

In your groups discuss the following:

1. How does it feel to experience rapport?
2. How do you build rapport?
3. How do you break rapport?

## Listening

Active listening involves choosing to concentrate attention and expend energy on communication. It demonstrates your interest in the speaker and encourages them to communicate with you.

Reflective listening involves reflecting back to the speaker. It can mean more than paraphrasing and repeating the speaker's message. It can allow you to explore and examine incongruence between verbal and non-verbal messages.



### Activity: Active Listening

In your groups discuss the following case study and come up with suggestions for dealing with the situation:

You're in a meeting with your new mentee. They are looking to you to help them determine an appropriate career path and experiences that will help them meet their career goal. The goal is quite clearly stated but their body language and some of the language they use implies that perhaps they aren't so sure about this direction. How would you raise these apparent inconsistencies with them?

## Questioning

The purpose of questions is to draw out information and to gain clarity. It is important that your mentee doesn't feel interrogated or that they are being judged. If they feel that they have to justify themselves, they may block communication which could prevent them considering alternatives.

### 10 tips to better questioning

1. Rephrase questions to avoid beginning with a 'why'
2. Ask one question at a time
3. Wait for the answer
4. Ask questions that prompt deep thinking
5. Seek to promote insight
6. Ask about, and listen for feelings as well as facts
7. Respond to non-verbal communication with feedback
8. Use non-verbal communication to keep questions from sounding interrogative
9. Move from the general to specific
10. Challenge assumptions and generalisations

### Sample questions to try

#### Career discussion:

- What is most important to you in your life and work?
- What career options have you considered?
- Which are the skills you are best at and enjoy using most?
- What are your career goals?
- What potential constraints must you take into account when planning your career?

#### Skills development discussion:

- What changes are you likely to need to deal with in the near future?
- What results would you like to achieve, that you are not achieving now?
- What new skills do you want to develop?
- What knowledge, information or qualifications do you need to acquire in the near future?

#### Probing – getting the person to talk more:

- Can you say a little more about...
- Would you expand on that idea...
- Perhaps you'd like to tell me...

#### Cushions – softening a confronting question:

- Do you mind if I ask...
- I'm wondering...
- Would you like to tell me...



## Activity: Questioning

In pairs, each take turns in the role of mentor and mentee. Choose an area to explore from the ones above and test out some of the questions, phrasing them in your own words.

Type of mentoring discussion: \_\_\_\_\_

Questions asked:

What worked?

What didn't?

## Providing advice

Be cautious when giving advice. Sometimes advice given prematurely will prevent the real issue being discovered and resolved.

Advice that sounds like a recommendation may detract from the mentee taking responsibility for their own decisions and actions. Remember, what worked for you might not work for them.

If you tell your mentee what you think they should do, there is little opportunity for learning to take place – “Give a person a fish and you feed them for a day – teach them how to fish and they feed themselves for a lifetime”.

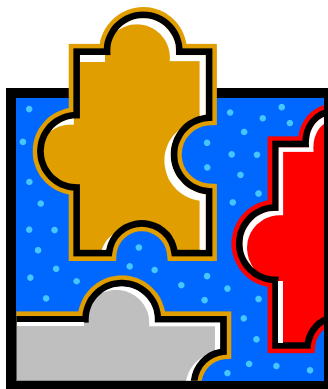
Consider who bears the responsibility if you advise a course of action that brings unintended negative consequences.

Use anecdotes, examples and metaphors – they are powerful tools to impart wisdom.

## Problem solving

Try the following problem solving approach with mentees:

1. Define the problem, distinguishing between facts and assumptions
2. Specify objectives and determine a desired outcome
3. Develop options and alternative actions
4. Evaluate options, considering positive and negative aspects, before and deciding the most appropriate action
5. Take action and implement the decision
6. Evaluate and review outcomes





## Managing the mentoring relationship

### Phases in the relationship

The mentoring relationship is likely to pass through phases just like other types of relationship. These phases may include the following:

#### Initiation

Initial contact  
Time to define the relationship  
Rapport building is key element



#### Development

Focus on goals and tasks  
Care needs to be taken to avoid over-dependence  
Mentor helps mentee discover options



#### Maturity

Mentee becomes autonomous  
Mentor becomes less influential  
Development has peaked



#### Disengagement

Need for relationship is less evident  
Can be sad/happy time as partners realise relationship is coming to an end  
Acknowledgement of end is useful as transition may not be easy



#### Redefinition

Need for the relationship to be redefined

# Mentoring meetings

## Meeting structure

A typical mentoring conversation may follow the following structure:

1. Establish rapport
  - shake hands
  - small talk
  - match voice tone and tempo
  - match posture
  - ask a question
2. Opening questions/statement
  - “Tell me about your career so far...”
  - “What are your goals for this meeting?”
  - “Do you have a goal you would like to achieve in the next 12 months?”
3. Active listening, minimal response
  - “Tell me more about...”
  - “Mm hm...”
  - “Go on...”
  - Nodding
4. Reflective questioning for clarification
  - “So what you’re saying is...”
  - “What I’m hearing you say is... Is that right?”
  - “You seem concerned about this task?”
  - “You feel ... because...”
5. Summarising
  - “Let me see if I can draw this together...”
  - “So, let’s summarise.”
  - “The main points we’ve discussed are...”
6. Advice
  - “What you may need to consider doing is...”
  - “One way you could handle that might be to...”
  - “Perhaps you need to gather more information before deciding...”
7. Options exploration
  - “I see that... is an area to work on, let’s discuss some ideas for addressing that.”
  - “Let’s see if we can figure out the best way for you to get the training/experience/exposure you need to ...”
  - “What ideas do you have for developing your skills to achieve your goals?”
8. Action planning

## Tips for your first meeting

- Set aside at least an hour of uninterrupted time
- Use your rapport building skills
- Have a 'getting to know you' type of conversation
- Discuss the purpose of your mentoring partnership and some principles for its operation
- Have a draft agenda to provide structure
- At the end of the meeting, set a time and date and place for the next meeting and a draft agenda for it
- Aim to develop a pattern for your meetings



### Activity: Preparing for your first meeting

Take some time now to think about what preparation you can take to prepare for your first meeting with your mentee (even if you don't have one yet!). What will you need to discuss in your first meeting? Where would the meeting take place? What would you take with you? What else??

## Goal setting

When people have clear goals, their efforts are more likely to produce the desired results. While goal setting is most likely to centre on the mentees needs, remember to consider your own needs as a mentor – you can expect to gain from the relationship too!

### Goal Setting Model

Help your mentee achieve their goals by using the following model:

- A** - Ability
- C** - Clarity
- H** - Help
- I** - Implementation Plan
- E** - Environment
- V** - Values
- E** - Evidence

*Ability* – Is the goal within their ability to achieve? How can the necessary skills, knowledge and personal attributes be acquired?

*Clarity* – Help them to become clear about what they really want. Why is it important to them? Getting clear about the gap between what is desired and the current reality is essential so that ways of making a change can be explored.

*Help* – What assistance do they need? What resources are required? Where can these be accessed? Who can help?

*Implementation Plan* – What steps need to be taken? What is the time frame? How will motivation be maintained? Have milestones been set?

*Environment* – Will factors in the personal, work or the general environment support or inhibit the achievement of the goal?

*Values* – the goal should be consistent with the mentee's sense of what is important in life. This helps to maintain motivation. Remember that these may not be the same as the organizations values or other people's values.

*Evidence* – How will they know when their goal has been reached? What will they see, hear, feel?

## A mentoring plan

### Steps in developing a mentoring plan:

1. Consider **why** you and the mentee are entering into a mentoring relationship. Write a statement of purpose describing why this is important.
2. Think about **what** you want to achieve through mentoring. What will you work to achieve? What outcomes will indicate you have achieved this?
3. Begin to plan **how** you will proceed. What special challenges might you expect as you work towards your goal? What will help you achieve your goal?
4. What else do you need to consider?
5. Time plan – list milestones, indicators of progress, actions steps and expected completion dates.

## Mentoring Agreements

Many people in mentoring partnerships find it useful to create a formal mentoring agreement at the start of the relationship to help clarify the purpose and goals of the relationship.

Some partnerships create a written document outlining how the relationship will work, what goals are to be achieved and within what timeframe, how the relationship can be ended, frequency of meetings etc.

Of course, many relationships exist without such formal documentation, however it is recommended that, at the very least, some discussion of these aspects is covered in the initial mentoring meetings.

A sample Mentoring agreement is included in the appendix.





**Support and Referral Information**

<b>Unit</b>	<b>Service Provided</b>	<b>Contact Details</b>
<b>Staff and Student Equal Opportunity Unit</b>	Provide legal and policy advice to staff on harassment and discrimination.  Providing equal opportunity policy development, promotion and training for staff and students.	Level 2, Margaret Telfer K07, 71-79 Arundel St, Glebe. Phone: 9351 2212 Fax: 9351 3195 <a href="mailto:admin@eeo.usyd.edu.au">admin@eeo.usyd.edu.au</a>
<b>University Health Service</b>	Provision of full general practitioner services and emergency medical care to the University community.	Level 3, Wentworth G01 Phone: 9351 3484 Wentworth 9351 4095 Holme 9351 9224 Cumberland Fax: 9351 4110 Wentworth <a href="mailto:P.Brown@unihealth.usyd.edu.au">P.Brown@unihealth.usyd.edu.au</a>
<b>Staff Support and Development Unit</b>	Training and development for University staff through both scheduled training and customised, in-house programs.  Performance Management & Development (PMD) training, advice, and coordination.	Level 2, Margaret Telfer K07, 71-79 Arundel St, Glebe. Phone: 9351 4838 or 9351 5871 Fax: 9351 4951 <a href="mailto:info@ssdu.usyd.edu.au">info@ssdu.usyd.edu.au</a>
<b>Staff Support</b>	Advice and assistance to staff experiencing health problems which are impacting on work performance.  Offer the opportunity to attend professional, confidential counselling with an external provider.  Advice and assistance to Heads of Departments/Units in dealing with performance issues, conflict or associated problems.	<b>Jan O'Reilly</b> Phone: 9351 5875 <a href="mailto:j.oreilly@ssdu.usyd.edu.au">j.oreilly@ssdu.usyd.edu.au</a>  <b>Tina McAloon</b> Phone: 9351 4101 <a href="mailto:t.mcaloon@ssdu.usyd.edu.au">t.mcaloon@ssdu.usyd.edu.au</a>
<b>Institute for Teaching and Learning</b>	Seminar and workshop programs, web-based workshops and other resources to support teaching staff.  Individual confidential consultations with teaching staff.	Level 3, Carslaw F07. Phone: 9351 3725 Fax: 9351 4331 <a href="mailto:itl@itl.usyd.edu.au">itl@itl.usyd.edu.au</a> <a href="http://www.itl.usyd.edu.au/">http://www.itl.usyd.edu.au/</a>

## **Additional Resources**

Rolfe-Flett, Anne. (1998) *Develop Your Mentoring Skills*. Synergetic Management Pty Ltd Australia.

### **Websites:**

SUN Mentor Register Website: <http://www.usyd.edu.au/sun/html/mentor.htm>

Australian Mentor Centre: <http://www.australianmentorcentre.com.au>

Mentoring Australia: <http://www.dsf.org.au/mentor/>

The Growth Connection: <http://www.growconnect.com.au/mentor.html>

